

## Options in Brief

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### Option 1: Police a Rough Neighborhood

The attacks of September 11 and the aggressive dictatorships of the Middle East prove that the world is a dangerous place. The United States cannot hide from the hatreds that fester in this region. U.S. citizens must accept that the United States' strength and influence in the Middle East and around the world present an irresistible target for hate-mongers and extremists. To ensure U.S. security and the security of U.S. friends and allies, the United States must confront the forces that have aligned themselves against peace and stability before they unleash more havoc. The United States has destroyed the government of the most dangerous and aggressive tyrant in the region, Saddam Hussein. And the United States must stand up to other countries in the region that sponsor terrorism and are trying to acquire dangerous weapons.

### Option 2: Focus on Oil

U.S. citizens have no choice but to recognize that the flow of oil from the Middle East is vital to U.S. prosperity and security. No other issue in the Middle East rivals the importance of energy. U.S. policy in the Middle East must ensure that the United States and its allies have access to the region's oil resources. For too long, the United States' absolute support of Israel has complicated its relationship with leading Arab oil-producers. Economic common sense demands a more balanced approach. Likewise, there is no benefit in picking fights with Iran or Syria. U.S. policies in response to the Arab Spring should encourage stability, cooperation with all new political leaders, and above all keep the oil flowing.

### Option 3: Support Democracy and Human Rights

Over the past two decades, the world has changed for the better. But until recently democracy has made scant headway in the Middle East, where basic freedoms and the rule of law count for little. Regrettably, U.S. policy has contributed to the Middle East's lack of progress. For too many years, the United States has put its oil interests and security concerns ahead of principles. The time has come for the United States to use its enormous influence to nudge the region toward reform. Governments that take steps toward establishing democratic institutions, open societies, and economic freedoms should be rewarded. At the same time, the United States should withhold favors from those that refuse to budge. Change is possible, but only if the United States is willing to commit its strength and its resources and play a fair and evenhanded role with all states in the region.

### Option 4: Break Free of Entanglements

Since the end of the Cold War, much of the United States' foreign policy attention has shifted to the Middle East. But U.S. efforts have only increased anti-American sentiment. The United States must break free of entanglements in the region. The U.S. military presence must be eliminated to avoid U.S. involvement in another, potentially far more deadly and expansive war. The United States cannot continue to serve as a convenient target for extremists. Likewise, the United States should not be held responsible for guaranteeing peace between Arabs and Israelis. U.S. relations with countries in the Middle East should be limited to issues that do not entangle the United States in the controversies of the region.