

3 THINGS TO WATCH IN 2021: MIDDLE EAST

1

Resurrecting the Iran Nuclear Deal

President Biden has pledged to reenter the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but this and future Iranian reengagement may prove difficult because of Trump's "maximum pressure" policy. Biden will also face pushback on the domestic front—as well as from regional partners, including Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—to renegotiate the JCPOA to further limit Iran's disruptive activities.

New Peace Deals & Political Unrest in Israel

Biden's Middle East policy will have to address Arab-Israeli relations and the Palestinian question. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has achieved full normalization of relations with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco, which effectively diminishes prospects for a two-state solution. The Palestinians are evincing signs of greater collaboration, anticipating a more engaged and inclusive Biden administration.

2

3

Lingering Social & Political Unrest in the Arab States

Since 2019, Sudan, Algeria, Iraq, and Lebanon have faced major new challenges to their governments and ruling elites. U.S. policymakers must refine State Department policies to address regional protests and increasingly sophisticated mass movements.