



Shadow Government

Israel Is Growing Increasingly Worried About the Trump Administration

As Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Russia rush to fill the vacuum of leadership in the Middle East, the United States is AWOL.

By [Brian Katulis, Yoram Schweitzer](#) / November 17, 2017

Israel's reaction to U.S. President Donald Trump's Iran speech last month was best summed up by a former senior official we recently met in Tel Aviv: "It sounds very nice, and I like it very much, but what's next?"

What we heard last month in Israel on Iran was less focused on the fate of the nuclear deal and more concerned about glaring gaps in U.S. strategy to deter Iran's destabilizing actions and support for terrorist groups in the wider Middle East.

If and how the Trump administration addresses these gaps in its regional strategy will have implications for America's security and its allies for years to come — and what we heard in Israel is a growing worry that Trump lacks any operable plan at all on Iran.

Historically, Iran has based its own regional foreign policy on opportunism. For decades since the 1979 revolution, Iran's regime has worked to shift political dynamics in key countries across the region to their favor. And for the last 15 years, it has sought to take quick advantage of changing regional dynamics and direct them in its favor. Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq eliminated two of Iran's greatest adversaries: the Taliban and Saddam Hussein regimes. Feeling insecure and encircled by the U.S. military in the immediate aftermath of those two wars, Iran quickly adapted and built new networks of proxies and political allies as balances of power shifted in its immediate region.

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