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Focus: United States and the Near and Middle East

Prof. Barry Rubin

U.S. Middle East Policy: Too Many Challenges and Yet a Single Theme

In his contribution, Prof. Rubin discusses the many challenges the Obama Administration has to face when it comes to the strategy of the U.S. in the Middle East. Prof. Rubin identifies two main problems that need to be solved if the U.S. wants to make progress in its foreign policy. On the one hand, the new administration needs to realize the enormous amount of problems it is facing in the region and find an adequate solution for each. Among others, he suggests putting a high priority on Pakistan and Afghanistan and urges U.S. politicians to try a friendly diplomacy to persuade Iran to change its course. On the other hand, the author clarifies that in case the U.S. wants to achieve these goals, the neo-

conservative U.S. politicians would need to be disempowered. In short, the article underlines the fact that the U.S. still has a long way to go if it wants to bring peace to the region.

Middle East, U.S. Foreign Policy, Obama, Strategy, Iran, Pakistan, Neo-Conservatives

Dr. Patrick Clawson

Modest Change, Not a Breakthrough: Obama and Iraq, Iran and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

As the title suggests, the author identifies three main issues that need to be tackled by President Obama in order to improve the overall situation in the Middle East: A plan for withdrawal from Iraq for the U.S. forces, a diplomatic approach towards Iran and a new initiative to bring the Arab-Israeli conflict back on the agenda. But Dr. Clawson emphasises that no fast breakthroughs are to be expected. Even a rather modest change in U.S. foreign affairs might be a major achievement for the Obama Administration since it has to face other problems at home: the impacts of the economic crisis.

Middle East, Obama, Strategy, Iran, Iraq, Arab-Israeli Conflict

Dr. Lars Berger

Between New Hopes and Old Realities – The Obama Administration and the Middle East

Since the new U.S. administration has made it clear that it is heading towards a break with the foreign policy strategies of the Bush years, the question arises to what extent these sublime aims may be implemented. The author highlights the opportunities and risks of the new U.S. foreign policy approach and brings up the question whether the current political realities in some of the Middle Eastern states allow for a predominantly diplomatic approach.

Middle East, Obama, Strategy, U.S. Foreign Policy, Bush Administration

Dr. Isaac Kfir

Southeast Asia, the United States and the War on Terror: Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia

The Southeast Asian countries of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are of immense strategic importance for the U.S. Although the region stands for a literally "modest" version of Islam, the article focuses on the challenges for the Obama Administration arising from radical Islamist organizations as well as the issues of democratization, ethnic tensions and the impacts of the global economic downturn on the region.

Obama, War on Terror, Southeast Asia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Islamist Organizations

Almut Möller

Perspectives of Israeli-Arab Peace under the New U.S. Administration

In her contribution, Almut Möller aims to evaluate the opportunities arising for the new U.S. administration to revitalise the peace process in the Middle East. Although in comparison to his predecessor President Obama has changed the language of U.S. diplomacy, there are other factors crucial to a possible renewal of Arab-Israeli peace talks such as Israeli settlement activities or the engagement of Syria.

Middle East, Obama, Strategy, U.S. Foreign Policy, Peace Process, Israel Conflict

Dr. Jochen Hippler / Jan Hanrath

Die U.S.-amerikanische Politik im Nahen und Mittleren Osten unter Präsident Obama

The authors discuss the challenges awaiting the new U.S. administration in the Middle East. President Obama's announcements give reason for hope that the peace process may be revived and that the spread of democracy to the Middle East may be a realistic scenario. But the authors also point out that Obama still has a long way to go and many challenges to face: Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and, last but not least, his own stamina.

Middle East, Obama, Strategy, U.S. Foreign Policy, Peace Process, Israel Conflict, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan

Dr. Nikolaus Supersberger

Investment Options in the Iranian Energy Economy in the Light of Scarce Resources and Rising Energy Demand

Dr. Supersberger discusses the investment opportunities the Islamic Republic of Iran holds and gives a specific analysis of how such investment can be realised. He stresses the fact that Iran has an increasingly high energy demand which leads him to the conclusion that the ideal way of solving this problem is to invest in renewable energy and eco-friendly technologies.

Iran, Renewable Energy, Investment