

# Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

## ISSUES

- Intra-GCC disputes weaken cooperation with the U.S. on issues of shared concern.
- Likely leadership transition in Kuwait within the next five years will remove a key pillar of stability and cooperation with the U.S.
- Recovery from the global pandemic, uncertainty in global energy markets, and demographic and climate change within the GCC will challenge regional economies and threaten internal stability.
- GCC governments will increasingly look to Russia and China for political, economic, and security partnership amid doubts about U.S. commitment.

## US INTERESTS

- Security cooperation with the GCC is key to confront regional challenges, including Iran, and to provide a platform for U.S. military operations.
- The GCC states anchor the broader Sunni Arab world and assist the U.S. in achieving the shared objectives of political and economic stability and the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts, including the Israel-Palestinian conflict.
- Cooperation with the GCC is essential for defending freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf and ensuring the security of global energy markets.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Press for a resolution of the ongoing intra-GCC dispute dividing Qatar from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain.
- Launch a serious dialogue with GCC states to coordinate policies on regional issues, including Iranian expansionism and conflicts in Yemen, Syria, and Libya.
- Re-commit the U.S. to maintain a strong political, economic, and security relationship with GCC states and address concerns about declining U.S. interest in the region, while partners in the Gulf should continue to do their fair share.
- Expand the agenda with GCC states to include anticipating and addressing critical regional issues, i.e., climate change, demographic growth, diversification, demands for greater citizen participation in decision-making, and adjusting for global changes in energy demand and the economy.

- Gerald Feierstein