



Executive Summary



Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press

THE FUTURE OF THE ARAB GULF MONARCHIES IN THE AGE OF UNCERTAINTIES

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At first glance, the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with the exception of Bahrain, appear to have weathered the storm of the Arab uprisings with little visible disturbance. A closer look at the region, however, suggests that its perceived stability may very well be threatened in the longer term. This is because many of the region's government policies that are intended to appease their local populations – specifically the expansionary budgets and generous welfare and employment packages of the past 24 months – are intrinsically short-term solutions to wider and longer-term social, economic, and political grievances that characterize the GCC economies as a whole.

In particular, GCC citizens expect long-term institutional reforms and more political freedom. Voices calling for more good governance, transparency, and an inclusive political system are increasing and spreading across the region. There are also concerns over the sustainability of many economic policies in the region, which raise the question of how sustainable current living standards will be.

The repercussions of the uprisings in several Arab countries in the Gulf region are multiple. They include the reviving of democratization demands, the potential of setting precedents of democratic models, and the weakening of Egypt as an important security partner. It would therefore be misleading to believe that the Arab Gulf monarchies will remain resilient indefinitely to

the political awakening in several Arab countries. The GCC states also face various other regional and geo-political challenges that further threaten the wider region's stability. For this reason, the Gulf monarchies' current equilibrium may well be of a short-term nature.

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