

Forecast 2017: Our Writers' Predictions for the New Year



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Egypt

Ayah Aman

In 2017, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi will be heading Egypt's political administration for the third consecutive year, after years of political and economic turmoil that followed the January 2011 revolution and the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood regime in 2013. On the economic front, there will not be any radical reforms, but the situation could be subject to further complications in maintaining austerity policies, while foreign investment could be limited to short-term investments. However, prices will continue to rise and the quantities of medicine and basic goods will still be limited, which will prompt large numbers of citizens to take to the streets and protest the harsh living conditions. Meanwhile, 2017 will not see any developments

on the issue of reconciliation with the Brotherhood. Sisi will nonetheless release small groups of detained young men. Security problems are expected to continue in Sinai.

Shahira Amin

I predict that in the year 2017, Egypt will see a surge in Islamist militancy with the insurgency in northern Sinai spilling into other parts of the country. These attacks will target civilians — especially Coptic Christians — with the aim of enflaming sectarian divisions of the kind seen in Iraq and Syria. Egypt's already hard-hit tourism industry will be dealt a severe blow and the ailing economy will decline further. I also predict the government will intensify its security crackdown on dissent. I expect tensions with Ethiopia over the building of the dam, and Egypt may resort to military force as a muscle-flexing attempt to secure its share of the Nile waters.

Walaa Hussein

Cairo hopes for many things in 2017, including an end to the economic crisis, control of the budget deficit, stability of the local currency after the flotation of the pound, quelling terrorism in Sinai and reaching a solution to the Renaissance Dam crisis. The tourism sector will be slightly revived, while the issue of the Tiran and Sanafir islands will continue to cloud Egyptian-Saudi relations. Cairo will hold on to the stick-and-carrot approach in its relations between the United States and Russia. Sisi's opponents in the upcoming elections will have a strong presence on the political scene. There will also be major propaganda promoting Sisi's land-distribution project, under which 1.5 million acres of land will be granted for cultivation or residential units to citizens. Social media will play a major role in crisis management between Egyptian society and the state.

Gulf

Giorgio Cafiero

To fend off external threats, UAE officials in Abu Dhabi will continue working closely with Washington while seeking to enhance security partnerships with Eastern powers. By assessing Russia's return to the Middle East and sharing Moscow's

...the UAE, Egypt and Jordan will enhance counter-terrorism cooperation with Moscow...

concerns about the rise of extremist forces in the region, the UAE, Egypt and Jordan will enhance counter-terrorism cooperation with Moscow to further combat militant Sunni fundamentalists in the Levant and Maghreb. The UAE has established itself as Russia's closest GCC ally and built a relationship with Moscow that has great potential to mature, despite unease in Saudi Arabia. Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman will follow the UAE's lead in terms of cooperating with Russia to counter transnational security threats facing the Persian Gulf littoral states.

Ibrahim al-Hatlani

Saudi King Salman will likely be the last son of founding King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud to govern the kingdom. The domestic political situation in Saudi Arabia is stable and under control. However, this stability, without a constitutional mechanism to transfer power and ensure the citizens' right to participation and political oversight, will be compromised if the king dies. Although Mohammed bin Nayef's presence guarantees his cousin bin Salman's staying in the medium term crown prince chain, he cannot protect him from the repercussions of rising complaints about the draining economic decisions targeting citizens with limited income.

Amal Nasser

The conflict in Yemen is unlikely to end. A Saudi exit is only possible

The war will continue due to the lack of willingness of the warring factions — especially the domestic ones — to end it.

if a deal is reached between local warring parties. Both the Saudis and the government of President Hadi are counting on popular

retaliation against the Houthis, but this is unlikely as the humanitarian situation is expected to worsen with increasing prospects of hunger becoming a full-scale catastrophe as long as the humanitarian response plan remains partially funded. The war will continue due to the lack of willingness of the warring factions — especially the domestic ones — to end it.

Bruce Riedel

Saudi Arabia will be on the defensive in the Gulf and with America in 2017. Bogged down in Yemen and with Iran and Russia resurgent in Syria, the kingdom will struggle to keep up with its Iranian rival, including in OPEC. Low oil

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prices will impose some unpopular economies at home. In the United States the Saudis will face 9/11 lawsuits and growing skepticism. If the king's health falters, the succession issue will become dominant. All eyes will be on the king's son, Muhammad bin Salman, and whether his judgment is sound.



Iran

Maysam Bizaer

If re-elected in the May 2017 presidential election, Hassan Rouhani's main challenges will be to deal with Donald Trump as the US president, and to pursue his economic policies to tackle unemployment and materialize economic growth. While Trump's stated plans — if implemented — are expected to affect Rouhani's economic goals, facts on the ground indicate that the interest of European and Asian businesses in entering the Iranian market will increase in 2017 at a faster pace. With expected economic growth of over 5%, Iran could further strengthen its position as a key regional power.

Saeid Jafari

A prediction last year that Trump would be the winner of the US presidential election and that the UK would exit the EU would have been doubted. Thus, one must be more cautious when it comes to predicting 2017. The likely trends are that conflicts in the region will continue and the Islamic State will grow stronger as its branches persist in their underground activities. Erdogan's authoritarianism will erode Turkey's democracy and its hostility toward Europe and friendship with the East will be emboldened. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad will survive and a power transition will begin in Syria. Iran and the US will reach minimal agreements and Washington will maintain its pressure on Tehran.

Rohollah Faghihi

President Hassan Rouhani, who is the only chance for the Reformists' survival, will fight for a second term against conservatives who are still divided and striving to reach a coalition around a single candidate. Tehran Mayor Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf is one of the possible candidates, but his reputation has been damaged by a recent corruption scandal. Moreover, the fate of the nuclear deal might be determined in the coming year as Trump takes US presidential office. His decision on whether to destroy the deal will surely affect the outcome of Iran's presidential election. Trump's acquiescence to hawks in Washington may be to moderates' and Reformists' loss.

Alireza Ramezani

President Hassan Rouhani will face a serious challenge in getting re-elected in 2017. He will be under pressure by ultraconservatives at home over a rise of anti-Iranian sentiment in the US Congress and the White House. On the other hand, he will have to persuade the Iranian public to vote for his economic reforms to be implemented during his second term. Despite all pressure, he will win the election, as the Islamic establishment prefers a moderate administration in Tehran to safeguard the achievements of the hard-won nuclear agreement, given the emergence of hawkish elements in Washington.

Ali Hashem

The election of Trump as US president will probably shape the course of regional crises, but won't bring an end to the tragedies in the region. The deal on Iran's nuclear program will probably survive for this year, yet any serious failures will be exploited by the conservatives in the next presidential elections in Iran in May 2017. In Syria, backers of the armed opposition are likely to resume their support with a new strategy. Allies of Assad are expected to invest more effort into supporting him but avoid paying a political price for negotiations.

Mohammad Ali Shabani

Iran will continue promoting multilateral talks on Syria with the inclusion of Saudi Arabia while suspecting that Russia and the United

US sanctions over alleged support for terrorism and human rights violations won't break the nuclear deal...

States may go over its head. As in Syria, a large part of Iranian policy in Iraq after seizing Mosul will be to help contain conflict between the Kurds and the central government. US sanctions over alleged support for terrorism and human rights violations won't break the nuclear deal, with signatories remaining committed to the accord — albeit with lukewarm European pushback against Trump. Iran's Asian trading partners are the winners in this scenario.

Iraq

[Ali Mamouri](#)

2017 will be the end of the Islamic State in Iraq, as Iraqi joint forces are kicking it out of its last strongholds in Mosul. However, the challenges of the post-IS era will not fade away easily. The internal actors — mainly Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites — have already started competing over the spoils of the war. Meanwhile, the regional powers — in particular Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia — are competing for influence. US policy under the Trump presidency will be a crucial factor for Iraq in 2017. Will the United States continue to allow regional actors to compete in this way, or will it put an end to it?

[Mustafa Saadoun](#)

Current events in Iraq make it easy to predict the country's situation in

2017, in the post-IS phase. Like 2015 and 2016, the country is expected to be caught up in a vicious circle of political conflicts between groups affiliated with armed factions, which could be the prelude to what Iraqis

Protests will increase in the upcoming year as the economic crisis inevitably affects the situation in the south of the country...

fear could be a major armed conflict. Protests will increase in the upcoming year as the economic crisis inevitably affects the situation in the south of the country, prompting the residents of Basra province in particular to demand the biggest share of oil. Other southern provinces could follow suit — particularly the liberated areas, whose infrastructure has been completely destroyed and where many residents have fallen

beneath the poverty line.

[Saad Salloum](#)

A major conflict will erupt in 2017 between the Arabs and the Kurds over disputed areas. Violent conflicts will continue in minority areas in Iraq (Ninevah plain and Sinjar in Ninevah province). This will make it more difficult for displaced Christians, Yazidis and Shabaks to return to these regions. In light of the failure to preserve minority groups' rights in the negotiations for peace agreements, minority groups that are involved with the conflict but not active participants will not be able to be part of the settlement process. Minorities could be kept on the sidelines while the fate of their homeland is determined in the post-IS phase.

Israel

[Ben Caspit](#)

The terms “definition” and “arrangement” will be at the center of everything that happens here in 2017. Trump will define the path that his administration will follow only once everything is already in motion, learning from brute experience that the world looks completely different from the Oval Office. There will be an “arrangement” in Syria, where the bloody war is about to exhaust itself. The close relationship between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin will ensure that Damascus and the Shiite axis have a future in the region. Unlike during the Barack Obama era, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will attempt to forge an alliance with Trump, but Netanyahu's hopes may not withstand the test of reality,

particularly now that he is forced to contend with suspicions against him that could coalesce into a criminal investigation.

[Akiva Eldar](#)

In June 2017, Israel will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the “liberation of Jerusalem” from the Arabs, while the Arabs will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the occupation of Jerusalem by Jews. If there is no real progress in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process until then, with active support from the international community, we can expect the situation to heat up by the summer. The lack of any real Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and tumultuous celebrations by young right-wing extremists in the heart of Jerusalem's Muslim Quarter will bring about havoc. Under pressure from the EU, the Trump administration will be forced to take immediate steps to prevent

the Palestinian Authority from collapsing and Hamas from seizing control of the West Bank. Pressure from the far right on Netanyahu will lead to early elections and change the Israeli political map.

[Shlomi Eldar](#)

At the November Fatah conference, President Mahmoud Abbas declared that 2017 will be the “Year of Decision.” He hopes that a Palestinian state will finally be established. Only then could he reap the political benefits of his decades of labor and retire as “founder of the State of Palestine.” But this goal seems far from practicable now. It is already clear that support from the Trump administration is out of reach. With France facing presidential elections, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict won't be a European priority. Unlike Abbas, other Fatah leaders believe that a Palestinian state will not be established soon

Israel (continued)

and that Abbas will end his rule in 2017 regardless. His stepping down, they estimate, will provoke a brutal succession war, forcing the Palestinian Authority to focus more on survival than on fulfilling the vision that motivates Abbas.

Mazal Mualem

Despite all of the investigations into Netanyahu and his immediate surroundings and regardless of internal disputes within the coalition, the Israeli mood at the start of 2017 will be one of political stability. Netanyahu may have started 2016

On the other hand, Yesh Atid chairman Yair Lapid continues to stand out as a key player and the most likely person to run against Netanyahu for prime minister in the next election.

with a narrow coalition, but once current Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman joined the government, Netanyahu finally had a stable government. Not one of the factions that make up his coalition has any interest in leaving it right now, since doing so would result in a new round

Jordan

Osama al-Sharif

For Jordan, the economy will be the biggest challenge in 2017 as the kingdom grapples with a \$1.1 billion budget deficit, a total debt of \$36 billion and sluggish growth, made worse by regional turmoil. The government, which promised to cut expenses as part of an austerity plan, is expected to adopt unpopular measures like raising taxes and ending subsidies to increase revenues. With high unemployment and poverty rates, further austerity measures will present a security challenge as well. Jordan's dependence on foreign aid has grown in recent years as a result of hosting more than 1.2 million Syrians, half of whom are refugees.

of elections. Netanyahu's fourth government also benefits from the total collapse of the Zionist Camp, the major opposition party. On the other hand, Yesh Atid chairman Yair Lapid continues to stand out as a key player and the most likely person to run against Netanyahu for prime minister in the next election.

Uri Savir

This year, the international balance of power will change. Russia will become a more equal partner to the United States, the EU a more fragmented one. European countries will move more to the

radical right. The Assad regime will have the blessing of the United States and Russia and the war against the Islamic State will not

The Palestinians will opt for an armed intifada. Israel will go to elections with Netanyahu as a favorite.

prove successful. The United States will send more ground troops to Syria and may become a target for IS terror. America's standing in the world will deteriorate. The Palestinians will opt for an armed intifada. Israel will go to elections with Netanyahu as a favorite.

Lebanon

Haytham Mouzahem

Lebanon's economy will be better in 2017 than 2016. The tourism and real estate sectors will prosper, especially

The tourism and real estate sectors will prosper, especially in the event of the return of the Gulf tourists to Lebanon.

in the event of the return of the Gulf tourists to Lebanon. Now that the first government under President Michel Aoun has been formed, there will be a breakthrough as work for political and economic reform starts

and allows chronic service-related problems to be solved. However, the sectarian polarization that has colored disputes over ministerial portfolios and the expected adoption of a new law for parliamentary elections — which are supposed to take place in the summer of 2017 — show that Lebanon will witness a struggle for power and for balanced sectarian and partisan representation. Hezbollah will continue to fight in Syria against extremist groups, but it will seek to maintain its alliance with Aoun and contain the Gulf attempts to break it up.

North Africa

Sarah Souli

Six years since the revolution, 2017 is poised to be a relatively stable year for Tunisia. Security has been tightened, municipal elections are on track for March and \$8 billion in foreign investments pledged in November will start rolling in. But the government, accused of corruption, mismanaging funds and ignoring Tunisia's interior, must urgently address the persistent unemployment that has resulted in bubbling tensions and frequent labor strikes.

Looking westward, strategic US-Tunisian relations are likely to

However, should Trump's Middle East policy change, it could have drastic effects on Tunisia, with fighting spilling over from Libya, and more fighters leaving to — or returning from — Syria.

remain the same. However, should Trump's Middle East policy change, it could have drastic effects on Tunisia, with fighting spilling over from Libya and more fighters leaving for or returning from Syria.

Palestine



Asmaa al-Ghoul

The world is falling apart. Gaza will be no better off than Egypt, Syria, Libya and Iraq, where chaos prevails and civilians are getting killed as a result of power struggles. Gaza will approach the brink of war, an internal one this time, as the blockade by Israel, Egypt and the world intensifies, the crisis over salaries and high prices continues and pressure increases on Hamas. One cannot bet on anything. President Mahmoud Abbas will leave office. Regional hostility

toward Hamas will intensify with Trump's presidency and in light of Turkey's withdrawal of its support from the Muslim Brotherhood and Gaza. The world will be preoccupied with regional wars while Gaza will witness internal bloodshed. Israel will continue to aggravate Palestine's never healing wounds.

Daoud Kuttab

The core Israeli-Palestinian relationship of occupier and occupied will not change in 2017, but the Gaza split will be resolved. The Rafah crossing will be opened

for regular movement with Egypt. The Palestinian National Council will meet and Khaled Meshaal will be appointed to a ceremonial position within the PLO. This will be followed by the creation of a national unity government, possibly headed by Fatah's Mohammad Shtayyeh and with Cabinet members close to (but not in) Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, followed by presidential and parliamentary elections. Jibril Rajoub will be appointed deputy to Abbas.

Russia

Yury Barmin

Russia will look to solidify gains in Syria by pushing for a deal with external opposition backers. Moscow will likely seek wider political involvement in other contexts, such as the Libyan crisis and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Putin may double down on IS in Syria, fearing its amassing in Syria after the offensives in Mosul and Raqqa and the return of fighters to the Caucasus. Capitalizing on its growing clout, Moscow will reach out to new regional clients for profitable arms and energy deals.

Vitaly Naumkin

Syria will remain a central issue for Russia's policy in the region and fighting terrorism its key priority. Moscow will intensify efforts to cooperate with the new US administration in this fight. Special attention will be paid to promoting inter-Syrian talks leading to transition. Relations with

Turkey will be on the rise with a possibility of a certain setback given disagreements on the Syrian crisis and the Kurds in Syria. Russia's contribution to pushing forward the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and inter-Palestinian unity talks will be regarded as a means of developing better relations with the Sunni world. One of Russia's goals in the region will be to enhance cooperation with the Gulf states at the energy markets.

Paul Saunders

2017 may be a year of great power politics. Frictions between great powers underlie conflicts in strategic regions in which their interests overlap, including Ukraine, the South China Sea and the Middle East. Over the last several years, America's relations with China and Russia have worsened as China-Russia relations have improved. In the Middle East, this has expressed itself in intensified competition for influence between Washington and Moscow surrounding the civil war in Syria. Trump has begun to change the dynamics in US-Russia and

US-China relations before formally entering office. His determination to put the United States and its interests first could have profound consequences.

Maxim A. Suchkov

Russia will seek to partner with the new US administration in tackling IS. Should such a partnership become a reality it will be key to addressing other challenges in Syria, including bringing the warring parties to the negotiating table, working out a new constitution, forming a transitional government and rebuilding the country. Moscow will look at cooperation with Washington as a way to consolidate its own regional geopolitical assets but also as a mutually beneficial deal since it will help the new American president to end the conflict and commit foreign policy resources elsewhere. Enlisting support on Syria from at least two other regional stakeholders will also be Russia's objective. Other Russian priorities will include strengthening ties with Iran and finding ways to work with Turkey in the region.



Asaad Hanna

2017 will be no better than previous years for Syria. The balance of international powers has not and will not change even after Trump comes to power in the United States. Putin will exploit his personal relationship with Trump to get concessions. However, the US Congress and other decision-makers will work to bring about balance between the parties to the conflict. The Free Syrian Army may lose some of its areas in urban centers, but it will gain more ground in rural areas and win over IS in the north.

As the operations aimed to combat IS continue, the political process will remain intermittent, constantly being suspended and resumed in coordination with the international coalition. IS' presence will shrink to just the cities of Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor.

Kamal Sheikho

Life will return to areas liberated from extremists. IS has lost many areas it previously controlled in Syria after its members were expelled from Kobani in Aleppo's countryside and Tell Abyad in Raqqa's countryside

as well as the towns of al-Hawl and Shaddadi in Hasakah's countryside. However, IS members are still deployed in Aleppo's eastern countryside, in the cities of Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor and the Palmyra desert. Snatching these areas from under IS control requires time and several local and international alliances. Meanwhile, the stories told by survivors who were able to escape this extremist group indicate that it will take years for life to return to normal in areas previously controlled by IS and for residents to feel safe again.

Turkey

Mustafa Akyol

For liberals, 2017 will probably be another depressing year, with no happy turn of events in sight. The key political controversy will be whether President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will establish his presidential system with a new constitution. This is uncertain but quite possible. If it happens, it will be tantamount to a grand political revolution that will leave Erdogan's supporters euphoric while making his opponents even more pessimistic, further deepening Turkey's already extreme polarization. A key issue is the length of the post-coup state of emergency. If the government keeps extending it indefinitely, unchecked executive power will become the new normal. The war with the Kurdish separatists will likely continue, making hawkishness the national mood. The state of the economy is a major puzzle. The economic success story that has kept the ruling Justice

and Development Party (AKP) popular is in trouble. The trouble's size will determine the AKP's future.

Ali Bayramoglu

With the parliamentary voting expected in the first months of 2017 and a referendum shortly thereafter, if there are 330 yes votes, the constitutional amendment process will be the most important

If he loses the referendum, it will be Erdogan's first major political defeat.

development of the year. Turkish society will decide not only whether to accept an executive presidential system, but also whether we will seek a new order or continue with the patriarchal political structure. If the presidential system is adopted, the president will dominate the legislative, executive and judicial powers. If he loses the referendum, it will be Erdogan's first major political defeat. Such an eventuality will mark the beginning of a decline in Erdogan's

political saga while having profound effects on the political balances and climate of the country.

Mahmut Bozarslan

2017 will not be good to the southeastern Turkey and the Kurds. The Kurdish problem will be one of the most important items on the Turkish agenda. A peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem is not likely in the first half of the year. The government and others are talking about starting a new process with important people in the region. There may be a study done, but it will produce no results. The government does not intend to launch a new process with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and pro-PKK parties. Operations against Kurdish political parties and people will continue in 2017. The PKK will not be able to increase military actions in the new year. There may be car bombs or suicide attacks in cities. There is a possibility that IS, which is stuck, may also expand its operations into Turkey.

Turkey (continued)

[Cengiz Candar](#)

A year ago, nobody believed the next US president would be Trump. Forecasting has to take into consideration that the strongest nation in the world will be led by a neo-isolationist who is busy forming the most conservative American administration in history. For international politics, Trump is a bull in a china shop. The US-Russia-China relationship will shape the world in 2017. This is the only certainty in an uncertain future.

[Fehim Tastekin](#)

Uncertainties over Turkey's foreign policy will continue. Developments in Syria and Iraq will put Ankara in a difficult situation. When Moscow and Damascus extend operations north to areas like Idlib, it may increase tension along the Turkish border. There is a serious risk of clashes with the Kurds if Operation Euphrates Shield heads to Manbij and cantons of Rojava. And unless there is a new chapter for peace with domestic Kurds, enmity toward Syria's Kurds will remain. Enacting an amendment giving the president powers over all state institutions will need support from nationalists and right-wingers. Ankara will not return to the negotiation table with the Kurds.

[Metin Gurcan](#)

Trump is likely to become the most unusual US president ever. Will he seek to bring a Pax Americana to the wider region or just seek to manage the existing chaos? Will he aim to increase ambiguity in the region by pumping in more uncertainty or attempt to diffuse it? Will he try to win the support of Russia in the global fight against violent Salafist networks or just exploit the rhetoric of and the fight against IS, to diminish Russia's military capacity and economic power in Syria? Trump will be a test for the US federal institutions' tenacity and resiliency.

[Pinar Tremblay](#)

The economy and terrorism will be the most significant problems to linger into 2017. Turkey's economy could fall into recession, particularly after the April referendum. Erdogan's paranoia will deepen as his government equates opposition with terror. Ankara is investing heavily in prisons and arms, so further arbitrary arrests and fighting in the southeast and Syria are likely. Educated upper-class Turks are more likely than ever to go abroad. Turkification policies for Syrians and Kurds are likely to have consequences. Can Turkey continue to see itself as the peacemaker of Islamists? Turkey may have to choose between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

[Semih Idiz](#)

Domestically, Turkey's focus will be on the transition to an executive presidency and its fallout. The struggle with Gulenists and the PKK will continue, and the economy will loom large in the news. Externally Ankara will adjust to the Trump presidency although the Gulen and PKK issues will continue to cause problems with the US and Europe. Syria and Iraq will continue to be Ankara's main regional headaches while it works to deepen ties with Russia and maintain a delicate balance with Iran. Relations with Israel will continue to develop silently, but ties with Egypt will remain tenuous.

[Amberin Zaman](#)

Turkey is heading into uncharted waters as Erdogan continues with plans to ditch the parliamentary system and gather more power. With the support of nationalist allies, he will likely succeed. Erdogan's blend of aggressive nationalism and Islamic conservatism is moving the country away from its once secular, pro-Western path. Pressure on the Kurds will increase in Turkey and in Syria as Turkey tries to contain Kurdish nationalist aspirations through military means. Kurdish militants may continue to respond with bomb attacks in urban areas calculated to force Turkey back to the negotiating table.

United States

[Julian Pecquet](#)

US lawmakers will only add to the pressure as Middle East tensions reach new highs in 2017. With Obama out of office, Congress will have free rein to punish Iranian belligerence with new sanctions, with unknown repercussions for the nuclear deal. Lawmakers also seem intent on punishing anti-Israel animus real and perceived, even as the incoming Trump administration has shown no inclination to try to rein in Israeli settlement growth that

could trigger another Palestinian uprising. After the trauma of the Arab Spring, both branches of government seem keen to return the United States to its alliance of convenience with the region's authoritarian regimes, robbing political Islamist movements of any chance to demonstrate their commitment to democracy.

[Laura Rozen](#)

Making predictions a month after the US presidential election is humbling. Uncertainty looms.

The US intelligence assessment that Russia hacked the US election to harm Hillary Clinton's candidacy will mar Trump's legitimacy as he takes office. Investigations into Russia's role as well as Trump's reluctance to divest from his business empire are likely to be continuing sources of tension and national division. I predict Trump will not formally withdraw the United States from the Iran nuclear deal in his first year, if ever. He will try to come to an accord with Russia on countering IS and reduce US support for the Syrian rebels.

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