

Preface

Most of the research published in this working paper, *Avoiding a Nuclear Wild, Wild West in the Middle East*, is the result of a Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC) project to implement Title V of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Act of 1978. Title V called on the executive to routinely produce assessments of how developing countries might meet their energy and environmental requirements more economically without additional nuclear power. As part of this project, NPEC commissioned a series of studies focused on Iran and Saudi Arabia. These energy assessments are part of this volume.

The Saudi analyses became all the more relevant when the White House announced in December 2017 that the United States would strike a civil nuclear cooperative agreement with Riyadh. This announcement immediately raised the question how much economic sense it made for Saudi Arabia to invest in nuclear power.

It also raised a number of security questions. Should the United States allow Riyadh to reprocess and enrich even though these activities could bring Saudi Arabia within weeks of acquiring nuclear weapons? If Washington acceded to this demand by Riyadh what would be the implications for the terms of nuclear cooperation with the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, and Morocco? How would such an agreement impact efforts to tighten the terms of our nuclear understanding with Iran? Would such a permissive deal with Riyadh make it more difficult to say no to Seoul's demand that we allow them to enrich uranium?

All of these questions and more are discussed in this volume's four sections. This working paper is being published in the hope that it will inform not only the debate over what the terms for nuclear cooperation should be for Saudi Arabia but also what Washington's civil nuclear cooperative policy should be in the Middle East and globally after the Saudi deal is struck.

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