

BRIEFLY NOTED

ALI AL SHIHABI. *The Saudi Kingdom: Between the Jihadi Hammer and the Iranian Anvil.* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2016). Pp. 155. \$22.95 paper. ISBN 9781558766136.

In this work, Ali Al Shihabi lays out the various threats to the Al Saud regime and argues that the fall of the ruling family would be disastrous for both the region and the world economy. Shihabi begins with a brief history of the state structure of Saudi Arabia, and discusses the internal and external developments that could jeopardize the state system. Shihabi takes the commonly-held position that the Al Saud regime is in a deeply precarious position and faces existential challenges to its power in the near term. He then diagnoses what he sees as the two biggest threats to the regime, which are radical anti-Saudism in the younger ranks of the ulema and Iranian power projections in al-Hasa, Yemen, and Bahrain. Tying these developments into the domestic factors like the country's youth bulge, high unemployment, and latent sectarianism, the case is made that the outlook for the nation as a regional hegemon is growing more and more uncertain, especially given the reluctance of the United States to engage in further conflicts in the Middle East. Shihabi concludes by advising the crown prince to institute reforms in order to protect the House of Saud. These include reducing the size of the royal family, integrating the Shiite population into the state, and winding down the vastly unpopular war in Yemen, with the ultimate goal of admitting its war-beaten population into the GCC labor market. ✂

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