

Obama hoping to soothe tensions

President Obama is to visit Saudi Arabia, aiming to mend ties with a key ally currently dissatisfied with Washington's policies in the Middle East

1 SYRIA: King Abdullah expected to question Obama on why he decided against airstrikes in Syria last August, which Saudis believe strengthened **Bashar al-Assad**

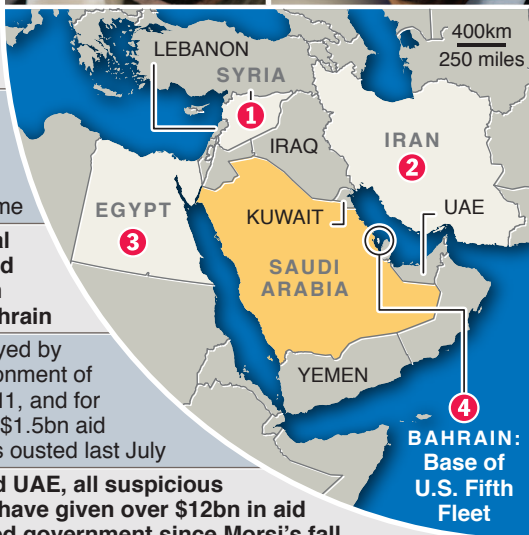
Saudi Arabia is also frustrated by U.S. caution over arming rebel groups battling Assad

2 IRAN: Saudis angry at deal reached in November between Iran and world powers to curb Tehran's nuclear programme

Riyadh fears nuclear deal leaves Iran free to expand its sphere of influence in Lebanon, Yemen and Bahrain

3 EGYPT: Saudis dismayed by Obama's rapid abandonment of **President Mubarak** in 2011, and for withholding part of annual \$1.5bn aid after **President Morsi** was ousted last July

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and UAE, all suspicious of Muslim Brotherhood, have given over \$12bn in aid to Egypt's military-backed government since Morsi's fall



4 **BAHRAIN:** Base of U.S. Fifth Fleet

*Saudi intelligence chief **Prince Bandar bin Sultan** has threatened rift with U.S. over its inaction in Syria*

4 **BAHRAIN:** Riyadh angered by U.S. failure to back Saudi support for Bahrain when it crushed 2011 pro-democracy revolt by Shia majority

Saudis insist they will never tolerate Shia-dominated Islamic republic in Bahrain

