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U.S. Arms Transfers to the UAE and the War In Yemen

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Summary

- The central role of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the war in Yemen has yet to receive the attention it deserves. The role of Saudi Arabia in the Arab military coalition's air campaign, which has killed thousands of civilians, has rightly drawn criticism from the United Nations, human rights and humanitarian groups, and key members of Congress. But the UAE, another key member of the Arab military coalition, has also harmed substantial numbers of civilians, from its role in the air and ground wars, to its alleged involvement in torture, to its role in the naval blockade that has impeded supplies of urgently needed food and medical supplies. As the primary source of arms, refueling, logistics and training for the UAE military, the United States bears some responsibility for that country's actions in Yemen.
- More than one-quarter of major U.S. arms offers to the UAE since 2009 – valued at \$7.2 billion – were for bombs such as the Paveway and the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) and tactical missiles such as the Hellfire that have been used in the war against ISIS and in the Saudi/Emirati-led intervention in Yemen.
- The United States has made offers of over \$27 billion worth of weaponry to the UAE under the Pentagon's Foreign Military Sales (FMS) since 2009, in 31 separate deals. The offers have included 97 Apache attack helicopters, over 30,000 bombs, 4,569 Mine Resistant Armor Protected (MRAP) vehicles, 16 Chinook transport helicopters, and a Theater High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system.

- The United States has also been a major supplier of military training to the UAE military, training over 5,000 students from 2009 to 2016. U.S. training has been provided to personnel from the UAE Navy, Army, Air Force and Special Forces. Before he was appointed secretary of defense, Gen. James Mattis served as an unpaid advisor to the UAE military, starting this arrangement while the Saudi/UAE intervention in Yemen was already under way. In addition, a private contractor, Knowledge International, has provided 125 ex-U.S. Army officers to help train UAE land forces.
- UAE troops, working with militias it trains, arms, and commands, have been fighting on two fronts in Yemen, against an alliance between Houthi rebels and forces loyal to former president Saleh, and against Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).
- According to press accounts and reports by independent human rights organizations the UAE and its allies have engaged in extreme acts of torture in a network of secret prisons in southern Yemen. The Department of Defense is investigating what U.S. troops knew about these activities, and whether they are directly or indirectly complicit in them.
- The war in Yemen has already resulted in the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with at least 19 million people in need of aid and more than 7 million at risk of immediate famine. A ceasefire and return to inclusive peace talks focused on end state solutions to the civil war are urgently needed.
- The United States has taken the lead in new arms sales agreements with the UAE. According to a December 2016 report by the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. was responsible for over 70% of arms transfer agreements entered into by the UAE from 2008 to 2015.
- The UAE is one of the closest U.S. military allies in the Middle East and has participated in a long series of U.S. interventions, including those in Somalia, Iraq (1991), Kosovo, Libya, and Syria. U.S. forces have used the UAE's Al Dhafra air base to launch U.S. missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.

Introduction

Despite the fact that it involves billions of dollars worth of weaponry, the U.S./UAE arms transfer relationship receives relatively little attention among the public, in the media, or in Congress. In part this is because the UAE connection is overshadowed by the U.S. role as the primary arms supplier to Saudi Arabia, and Saudi Arabia's use of U.S. arms in its brutal bombing campaign in Yemen.¹ But the UAE's growing military role in Yemen and the greater Middle East deserves closer scrutiny.

The UAE's Role in Yemen

The UAE has played a central role in the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.² The UAE maintains an estimated 1,500 Special Forces in Yemen, troops that have been central to the prosecution of the war both through their role in direct combat and in their role in training and directing local militias. It directly commands at least five brigades of Yemeni security forces outside the chain of command and supervision of the Yemeni government. The UAE's tactics in Yemen have sought to secure its own interests in Yemen, which primarily focus on basing rights on the Gulf of Aden and in the Red Sea.

The UAE's role in Yemen follows over two decades during which that nation has consciously set out to hone its military capabilities so that it can play a significant military role in the Persian Gulf and beyond. As part of this strategy, UAE forces have participated in a series of military interventions, including Somalia, the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, and Yemen.³ The UAE also provided troops to the GCC Peninsula Shield

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For more details, see William D. Hartung, "U.S. Arms Transfers to Saudi Arabia and the War in Yemen," Center for International Policy, September 2016, available at <https://www.ciponline.org/research/entry/u.s.-arms-transfers-to-saudi-arabia-and-the-war-in-yemen>

² For a detailed account of the dynamics of the Yemen war and the players involved, see Peter Salisbury, "Yemen: Stemming the Rise of a Chaos State," Chatham House Research Paper, May 25, 2016, available at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/yemen-stemming-rise-chaos-state>

³ Ibid.

forces led by Saudi Arabia, which intervened in Bahrain to help the regime put down the democracy movement there in 2011.⁴

There have been credible reports that UAE-back militias in Yemen have been involved in systematic human rights abuses, including enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, and torture. For example, Nadwa Al-Dawsari, Senior Nonresident Fellow with the Project on Middle East Democracy, has cited the following abuses:

“I believe the documented cases of enforced disappearance and ill-treatment by the [Emirati-trained] Hadrami Elite Forces are part of a much wider problem . . . there seems to be a pattern of violations, rather than a problem resulting from lack of training and supervision. The Emirates have built a detention center at Mukalla Airport . . . where the detainees are taken, and where they are subject to inhumane treatment, including torture.”

The UAE role in Yemen has drawn additional criticism recently after a June 2017 investigation by the Associated Press indicated that UAE forces and UAE-trained militias are running a network of secret prisons in southern Yemen where individuals suspected of ties to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) have been subjected to extreme torture. These torture methods have included the use of “the grill,” which has been described in the Associated Press report as a technique in which “the victim is tied to a spit like a roast and spun in a circle of fire.”⁵

The Associated Press report also notes that U.S. personnel have been involved in interrogating suspects in Yemen, and Senate Armed Services Committee chair Sen. John McCain and ranking Democrat Sen. Jack Reed

⁴ Ethan Bronner and Michael Slackman, “Saudi Troops Enter Bahrain to Help Put Down Unrest,” *New York Times*, March 14, 2011, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/15/world/middleeast/15bahrain.html> As of 2014, police from the UAE were still based in Bahrain. See Amy Austin Holmes, “The Military Intervention that the World Forgot,” *Al Jazeera America*, March 29, 2014, available at <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/3/bahrain-uprisinginterventionsaudiArabiaemirates.html>

⁵ Maggie Michael, “In Yemen’s Secret Prisons, UAE Tortures and U.S. Interrogates,” Associated Press, June 22, 2017, available at <https://www.apnews.com/4925f7f0fa654853bd6f2f57174179fe/In-Yemen%27s-secret-prisons,-UAE-tortures-and-US-interrogates>

(D-RI) have called on Secretary of Defense James Mattis to investigate the potential role of U.S. personnel, and whether they were aware that the torture was being carried out. In their letter to Mattis, McCain and Reed asserted that “Even the suggestion that the United States tolerates torture by our foreign partners compromises our national security mission by undermining the moral principle that distinguishes us from our enemies— our belief that all people possess basic human rights.”⁶

A coalition of human rights organizations that includes the American Civil Liberties Union, the Center for Victims of Torture, Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, Physicians for Human Rights, the Constitution Project, and Win Without War has called on the Trump administration to undertake a thorough investigation of the allegations of torture by the UAE and its allies in Yemen and to make the results public. The groups note that “the United States doubtless recognizes that continued cooperation with forces engaged in serious abuses places U.S. personnel at risk of being complicit in violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.”⁷

Perhaps the most important role played by the UAE in Yemen is its training and coordination of local militias. Peter Salisbury, Senior Research Fellow at Chatham House described the UAE’s role in Yemen as follows: “The Special Forces unit within the Emirati Presidential Guard has taken the lead in Yemen in coordinating the Yemeni militias for the UAE ... and have very close relations with US Special Forces present in Yemen.”⁸ UAE military officers have said that the UAE has trained, paid and equipped more than 25,000 Yemeni soldiers operating in the southern part of the

⁶ Desmond Butler and Maggie Michael, “Senators Ask Military to Clarify U.S. Role in Yemen,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 23, 2017 (from an Associated Press report), available at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-senate-yemen-torture-reports-20170623-story.html>

⁷ Human Rights Watch et. al., “Joint Letter About U.S. Cooperation With Abusive Allied Forces in Yemen,” August 3, 2017, available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/03/joint-letter-about-us-cooperation-abusive-allied-forces-yemen>

⁸ The Peter Salisbury quote was contained in an email to authors at Just Security. See Ryan Goodman and Alex Moorehead, “UAE, a Key U.S. Partner in Yemen, Implicated in Detainee Abuse,” *Just Security*, May 15, 2017, available at <https://www.justsecurity.org/40978/uae-key-partner-yemen-implicated-detainee-abuse/>

country, both in Hadramout province and near Aden.⁹ The UAE-trained Yemeni security forces operate outside the Yemeni military's chain of command.

The UAE has also facilitated the involvement of other countries and mercenary groups in the war, by, for example, providing funding and logistical support for the deployment of over 1,000 troops from Sudan to Yemen.¹⁰ Reportedly, these Sudanese forces included members of the *Janjaweed* militias, under US and international sanctions for gross violations of human rights and war crimes. There have also been reports of the UAE working with a private military contractor to recruit and train mercenaries from Colombia, Chile, and other Latin American countries for deployment to Yemen as part of the Saudi-led coalition.¹¹

The UAE has contributed ships to the naval blockade of Yemen. The blockade has impeded the delivery of civilian aid into the country. As a result, the naval blockade has been a major contributor to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, in which shortages of food, medical supplies, and clean water have contributed to widespread malnutrition and preventable deaths.¹² As a January 2016 report by the United Nations Security Council noted, "the systematic and widespread blockade of commercial goods has directly

⁹ Aziz El Yaakoubi, "UAE Builds Up Yemen Regional Army But Country Fragments," *Reuters*, May 3, 2107, available at

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-yemen-security-emirates-idUKKBN17Z0N2>

¹⁰ The Emirati role in ferrying Sudanese troops to Yemen is cited in Alex Mello and Michael Knights, "West of Suez for the United Arab Emirates," *War on the Rocks*, September 2, 2016, available at

<http://warontherocks.com/2016/09/west-of-suez-for-the-united-arab-emirates/>

¹¹ Emily B. Hager and Mark Mazzetti, "Emirates Secretly Sends Colombian Mercenaries to Yemen Fight," *New York Times*, November 25, 2015, available at

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/26/world/middleeast/emirates-secretly-sends-colombian-mercenaries-to-fight-in-yemen.html?_r=0

¹² On the impacts of the blockade, see Ben Norton, "'A Forgotten Crisis': Mass Starvation in Yemen as U.S.-backed Saudi War and Blockade Push Millions to Brink of Famine," *Salon*, January 29, 2016, available at

http://www.salon.com/2016/01/29/a_forgotten_crisis_mass_starvation_in_yemen_as_u_s_backed_saudi_war_blockade_push_millions_to_brink_of_famine/ ; Nadav Pollak and

Michael Knights, "Gulf Coalition Operations in Yemen (Part 3): Maritime and Aerial Blockade," Washington Institute on Near East Policy, March 25, 2016, available at

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/gulf-coalition-operations-in-yemen-part-3-maritime-and-aerial-blockade> ;

contributed to the obstruction of deliveries of aid and humanitarian assistance.”¹³

The UAE’s role in the blockade has included the deployment of Bayunah class corvettes.¹⁴ The Bayunah class corvettes are built by Abu Dhabi Shipbuilding (ADSB) with assistance from Constructions Mecaniques de Normandie (CMN) of Cherbourg, France. Raytheon has provided missiles and missile launchers that are deployed on the ships.¹⁵

The UAE is also building up a capability for power projection in the region by establishing a military facility in Eritrea that has been used as a launching point for the deployment of Sudanese troops to Yemen and a base of operations for UAE combat ships that are involved in ferrying troops and enforcing the naval blockade on Yemen.¹⁶ The UAE recently signed a controversial agreement with the government of Somaliland to open a base there. These deals came following the Djibouti government’s decision to close a UAE base in that country and cut diplomatic ties.

The UAE as “Little Sparta”

The UAE is considered to have one of the most capable militaries in the Middle East. As Gen. James Mattis, the Trump administration’s secretary of defense, has put it, “They’re not just willing to fight — they’re great warriors.” Mattis has also noted that the UAE is well regarded by the U.S. military: “there’s a mutual respect, an admiration, for what they’ve done — and what they can do.”¹⁷ Research by the Project on Government Oversight has revealed that before he was

¹³ The UN report is cited in Pollak and Knights, op. cit.

¹⁴ Pollak and Knights, op. cit.

¹⁵ “Bayunah Class Corvettes, United Arab Emirates,” [naval-technology.com](http://www.naval-technology.com/projects/baynunah/), available at <http://www.naval-technology.com/projects/baynunah/>

¹⁶ Alex Mello and Michael Knights, “West of Suez for the United Arab Emirates,” op. cit.

¹⁷ Rajiv Chandresekaran, “In the UAE, the U.S. Has a Quiet, Potent Ally Nicknamed Little Sparta,” *Washington Post*, November 9, 2014, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/in-the-uae-the-united-states-has-a-quiet-potent-ally-nicknamed-little-sparta/2014/11/08/3fc6a50c-643a-11e4-836c-83bc4f26eb67_story.html

appointed secretary of defense, Mattis sought and received approval to serve as an unpaid advisor to the UAE military, commencing in August of 2015.¹⁸

The UAE's growing military activism and ambitions have led Mattis and other U.S. generals to refer to it as "Little Sparta," with the implication that it is playing a disproportionately large military role in the region relative to its size.

As a result of its military activism, the UAE now has one of the most effective fighting forces in the region. The wisdom of each of these military ventures is another matter. This is particularly true in the case of its intervention as part of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, in which it has helped foment a humanitarian emergency while opening space for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) to make political gains.

The UAE's role in Afghanistan provides a good example of how it has used its military in coalition operations. UAE ground troops were in Afghanistan for 11 years, conducting raids and training elite Afghan troops in cooperation with U.S. Special Forces. And the UAE deployed F-16s to engage in bombing and close-air support from 2012 to 2014, at the same time that many European allies were reducing their presence in Afghanistan. UAE aircraft flew hundreds of air support operations in support of U.S. troops in southern Afghanistan, bombing Taliban positions to interfere with their ability to continue attacking U.S. forces.¹⁹

After a long period in which the UAE only allowed the U.S. to station refueling aircraft at its Al Dhafra air base, the facility is now being used as a launching point for U.S. missions to Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. It is also one of the most active bases in the world for U.S. surveillance aircraft, including everything from U-2s to Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). In all, the United States has over 3,500 military personnel and 60 aircraft stationed at Al Dhafra. The base hosts a squadron of F-15s, as well as four current generation F-22 combat aircraft.²⁰

¹⁸ Jeremy Herb, "Mattis Advised UAE Military Before Joining Trump Administration," CNN.com, August 2, 2017, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/02/politics/mattis-advised-uae-military/index.html>

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Tara Copp, "Air Force Part of the "More" for Islamic State Fight, Carter Says," *Stars and Stripes*, April 17, 2016, available at

The UAE has sharply increased its military spending over the past decade, more than doubling its military budget from \$9.7 billion in 2005 to over \$22 billion in 2014, the most recent year for which full statistics are available. On a per capita basis, the UAE's budget is higher than that of the United States.²¹ It should be noted, however, that the per capita figures may be less relevant given that U.S. military spending is over 27 times what the UAE spends on its military on an annual basis.²²

Among the most important U.S. systems the UAE has acquired are 70 F-16 combat aircraft. The UAE's version of the plane is more advanced than the F-16s possessed by the U.S. Air Force.²³ Superior features of the UAE's F-16 included increased range and fuel capacity, and more advanced radar systems. An analysis by *Inside Defense* describes the UAE's F-16s as being "a half a generation ahead" of U.S. Air Force models.²⁴

The primary stated rationale for the UAE's cultivation of greater military capabilities is as a counterbalance to Iran. Yet some of its actions don't clearly align with that goal, and may even undermine it. For example, while the intervention in Yemen is often described as a response to Iranian interference, most experts on the region point out that the Houthi forces that are the primary target of the intervention have longstanding grievances that have nothing to do with Iran. As Thomas Juneau, an expert on Iranian foreign policy, has noted, "Tehran's support for the Houthis is limited, and its influence in Yemen is marginal. It is simply inaccurate to claim that the Houthis are Iranian proxies."²⁵ If sustained, the Saudi/UAE coalition

<http://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/air-force-part-of-the-more-for-islamic-state-fight-carter-says-1.404911>

²¹ Figures on UAE military spending are from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's military expenditure database, available at <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex> The figures cited are in constant 2014 U.S. dollars.

²² Ibid.

²³ "Top Falcons: The UAE's Block 60/61 Fighters," *Inside Defense*, January 26, 2014, available at <http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/the-uaes-f-16-block-60-desert-falcon-fleet-04538/>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Thomas Juneau, "No, Yemen's Houthis Actually Aren't Iranian Puppets," *Washington Post*, May 16, 2016, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/05/16/contrary-to-popular-belief-houthis-arent-iranian-proxies/?utm_term=.db1a60bfd168

intervention in Yemen is likely to serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy, ultimately increasing Iran's influence in Yemen by pushing the Houthi forces to seek outside support.

U.S. Supplies of Arms and Training to the UAE

According to statistics compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the United States has been far and away the largest arms supplier to the UAE, providing 62% of all major weaponry delivered to that nation since 2009. Next on the list was Russia, at 9% of total deliveries to the UAE.²⁶

The most recent U.S. arms offer to the UAE – announced to Congress on May 11th of this year – is a \$2 billion sale of PAC-2 and related anti-missile and anti-aircraft missiles.

The United States has taken the lead in new arms sales agreements with the UAE. According to a December 2016 report by the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. was responsible for over 70% of arms transfer agreements entered into by the UAE from 2008 to 2015.²⁷

The U.S. is poised to be a major supplier to the UAE for years to come. The U.S. has offered the UAE over \$27 billion in weaponry under the Pentagon's Foreign Military Sales program since 2009. These figures represent only offers made under the Pentagon's Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, which is by far the largest channel for the transfer of major defense equipment like combat aircraft, tanks, helicopters, combat ships, and bombs and missiles. It is important to note that not all FMS offers result in final sales; but they are a good gauge of the U.S. intent to arm a given nation.

There is also a deal pending to provide 30 F-16 E/F Block 61 aircraft to the UAE via a commercial sale outside of the Pentagon's FMS program. But

²⁶ Figure compiled by the author from the SIPRI arm transfer data base, available at <http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php>

²⁷ Calculation of percentage by the author based on figures supplied in Catherine A. Theohary, *Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2008 to 2015*," Congressional Research Service, December 19, 2016, available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/R44716.pdf>

the deal was first announced in 2014 and it is not clear whether it will move forward in its current form.²⁸

The largest offers to the UAE under the FMS program since 2009 include a \$5 billion deal for 60 Apache attack helicopters; a \$4 billion deal for “various munitions and support” (including 1,600 bombs); a second, \$3.5 billion deal for 37 Apache attack helicopters; a \$2.5 billion deal for 4,569 Mine Resistant Armor Protected (MRAP) vehicles; a \$2 billion deal for 16 Chinook transport helicopters; and a \$1.1 billion deal for a Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system.

It should be noted that virtually all of the FMS offers to the UAE involved substantial amounts of support equipment, so that it would not be correct to calculate the unit cost of each item by simply dividing the value of the deal by the number of major systems included in that deal. Total values fluctuate widely depending upon the amount and types of support equipment and military services included in a given deal.

More than one-quarter of the items offered to the UAE under the FMS program since 2009 – \$7.2 billion worth – involved bombs and missiles of the type being used in the war in Yemen and in the campaign against ISIS. The munitions included over 4,800 Hellfire air-to-surface missiles and over 30,000 bombs such as the Paveway and the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM). The JDAM is a tail kit that can be used to make existing general-purpose bombs more accurate. These substantial offers of bombs and missiles are consistent with the scale of the UAE’s operations in Yemen and in the fight against ISIS. A May 2015 offer of guided bombs notes that they can be used “to provide the UAE with additional precision guided munitions capability to meet the current threat represented by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and Houthi

²⁸ Dave Majumdar, “Slow Sales Could Kill America’s Deadly F-16 and F/A-18 Jets,” *National Interest*, March 30, 2016, available at <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/slow-sales-could-kill-americas-deadly-f-16-f-18-jets-15639>

aggression in Yemen.”²⁹ These rationales no doubt apply to all of the offers of bombs from the U.S. to the UAE.

The UAE is also investing heavily in transport aircraft, from the Chinook and Black Hawk helicopters to the C-17 and C-130J transport planes. According to the descriptions of the offers provided to Congress by the Pentagon’s Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the aircraft “will provide the UAE the capability to transport equipment and troops in the region, as well as to support U.S. and NATO airlift requirements in Afghanistan.” In addition to Afghanistan, the only area “in the region” where the UAE has deployed large numbers of ground troops is Yemen. The Black Hawk helicopters are described as being for “intra-country transportation of UAE officials to militarily critical training and operations sites.”³⁰ Although the Pentagon’s description of the deal focuses on use of the aircraft within the UAE, they are also capable of transporting troops within Yemen should the UAE leadership choose to utilize them in that fashion.

Other U.S.-supplied systems that can be utilized in Yemen are the Apache attack helicopters, which can provide close-air support to troops on the ground; and the 4,659 Mine Resistant Armor Protected (MRAP) vehicles, which are specially designed to deal with the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

The United States has also been a major supplier of military training to the UAE military, training over 5,000 students from 2009 to 2016. U.S. training has been provided to personnel from the UAE Navy, Army, Air Force and Special Forces.³¹ In addition, a private contractor, Knowledge

²⁹ The quote is from the DSCA’s May 29, 2015 notification to Congress regarding the offer of bombs to the UAE, available here:

<http://www.dsca.mil/major-arms-sales/united-arab-emirates-uae-guided-bomb-units-gbu-31s-and-gbu-12s>

³⁰ Quotes regarding U.S. transport planes and Black Hawk helicopters offered to the UAE are from official Pentagon notifications to Congress involving support equipment for these sales, available at

<http://www.dsca.mil/major-arms-sales/united-arab-emirates-logistics-support-c-17-globemaster-aircraft-0> and <http://www.dsca.mil/major-arms-sales/united-arab-emirates-uh-60m-blackhawk-helicopters>

³¹ Training data is from the Security Assistance Monitor, available at

<http://securityassistance.org/data/country/trainee>

International, has provided 125 former U.S. Army officers to help train the UAE land forces.³²

U.S.-Supplied Weaponry Already in the UAE's Arsenal

The UAE Air Force is the prime beneficiary of U.S. weapons transfers to that nation. Of its 138 fighter planes, 78 are U.S.-supplied F-16s and 60 are French Mirage-2000s. In keeping with its reliance on U.S. combat aircraft, the UAE uses the Sidewinder, AMRAAM, and Maverick tactical missiles. The UAE relies heavily on U.S. equipment for airlift, with 6 C-17s and 4 C-130H's.

The UAE land forces possess no U.S.-supplied tanks or armored personnel carriers. This is apparently part of an effort by the UAE to diversify its sources of supply, but the U.S. remains its largest source of new armaments nonetheless. The main fighting vehicles in the UAE Army are 340 French Leclerc tanks, 370 French Panhard armored personnel carriers, and 390 Russian BMP-3 armored infantry fighting vehicles. The only major U.S.-supplied ground equipment consists of 85 M-109 howitzers and 20 HIMARs multiple-launch rocket systems. But the role of U.S. ground equipment in the UAE's arsenal should increase dramatically as the deliveries of 4,569 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles proceed.

The Corporate Connection

The biggest beneficiaries of U.S. arms sales to the UAE are Lockheed Martin (F-16 combat planes, C-130J transport aircraft, Black Hawk transport helicopters and Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense systems); Boeing (C-17 transport aircraft, Apache helicopters, and Joint Direct Attack Munitions); and Raytheon (THAAD, as well as missiles deployed on the UAE's Bayunah Class corvettes).³³ The weapons mentioned above are part of

³² Awad Mustafa, "U.S. Firm Aids in UAE Military's Transformation," *Defense News*, November 25, 2013.

³³ Information on major contractors involved in U.S. arms offers to the UAE is from the official notifications to Congress (see appendix). Information on the Raytheon missiles deployed on the UAE's Bayunah class corvettes is from naval-technology.com, op. cit. For additional detail on contractors see "Program Acquisition Costs by Weapon System FY2017," available at http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/documents/defbudget/FY2017/FY2017_Weapons.pdf

deals worth over \$15 billion. It is impossible to break down the costs of each system precisely as they are generally announced as part of packages that include multiple systems and related services – but they are clearly a major source of revenue to the companies like Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and Boeing (see Appendix A). These are just the prime contractors for the largest arms deals between the U.S. and the UAE. Including contractors on smaller systems and subcontractors would extend the list substantially.

In addition to selling weapons systems, a number of U.S. firms have also been involved in helping to build up the UAE's arms and aerospace industries. Lockheed Martin has been the most active. According to Lockheed Martin CEO Marillyn Hewson, her firm has formed a joint venture with a Swedish firm and UAE-based Injaz National to make “an advanced robot machining tool” that “has applications in many industries, including aerospace, defense, and automobiles.” Hewson says the goal of the project is to “establish the UAE as the leading supplier of this cutting-edge, automated manufacturing technology.”³⁴ Lockheed Martin also runs a Center for Innovation and Security Solutions at Masdar City in the UAE. The center has trained UAE personnel in computer simulation, cybersecurity, and space technologies.³⁵ Textron and Raytheon have also established offices or entered into joint ventures with UAE firms in the past few years.³⁶ Many of these investments are provided to partially offset the cost to the UAE of buying billions of dollars worth of U.S. weaponry.

One unusual application of the offset concept comes in the form of cash payments by U.S. contractors into a fund that is purportedly meant to fund economic development projects in the UAE. But an investigation by the Intercept found that \$20 million from the fund was used for a grant to the Middle East Institute, a DC-based think tank that has largely espoused the Saudi/UAE position

³⁴ Quotes are from Remarks of Marillyn A. Hewson, Global Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, December 13, 2016, available at <http://www.lockheedmartin.com/us/news/speeches/1213-hewson-global-summit-women-speakers-parliament-uae.html>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Marcus Weisgerber, “Defense Firms Put Down Roots in the UAE,” Defense One, February 24, 2015, available at <http://www.defenseone.com/business/2015/02/defense-firms-put-down-roots-uae/106002/>

on the Yemen war. One critic has termed the offset money a “slush fund.”³⁷ UAE offset funds have also been used to purchase weaponry for the Jordanian military.³⁸

U.S. Policy Toward the UAE Going Forward

The role of the UAE in the war in Yemen, a war that has resulted in widespread hunger and the largest cholera outbreak in the world due to greatly diminished access to clean water and basic health care, is troubling. In all, nearly three-quarters of Yemenis are in need of humanitarian aid.³⁹ The naval blockade is a major reason for that dire situation, as are coalition air attacks on vital civilian infrastructure.⁴⁰ An attack on Yemen’s vital Hodeidah port, which has been advocated and would be led by the UAE, would make a bad situation far worse. For the moment an attack has been held in abeyance while the parties to the conflict consider a UN proposal to create an arrangement to put the port under third party supervision to ameliorate Saudi and UAE fears that the Houthis are importing arms through the port and to increase the import of desperately needed humanitarian aid to Yemeni civilians.⁴¹

Of all the conflicts now underway in the Middle East, the Yemen war is the one where a shift in U.S. policy could make the greatest difference. While Saudi Arabia is publicly the most influential member of the coalition that has intervened in Yemen, the UAE is a key player as well. Since October 2016, an investigation by *The Intercept* found that the majority of US refueling support

³⁷ Alex Emmons, “Funds Intended for Economic Development Being Secretly Diverted to Lobbying,” *The Intercept*, August 17, 2017, available at <https://theintercept.com/2017/08/17/weapons-money-intended-for-economic-development-being-secretly-diverted-to-lobbying/>

³⁸ Shana Marshall, “Jordan’s Military-Industrial Complex and the Middle East’s New Model Army,” *Middle East Report* No. 267, Summer 2013, pp. 42-45.

³⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), “Yemen Crisis Overview,” available at <http://www.unocha.org/yemen/crisis-overview>

⁴⁰ For an account of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, see Mohammed Huwais, “When the Heart Bleeds,” AFP, December 2, 2016, available at <https://correspondent.afp.com/when-heart-bleeds>

⁴¹ United Nations Security Council, “Statement by the President of the Security Council,” June 15, 2017, available at http://securityassistance.org/data/country/traineehttp://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PRST_2017_7.pdf

to the Saudi-led coalition goes to UAE jets, indicating an increased UAE role in the Arab military coalition’s bombing campaign since last year.⁴² The United

⁴² Samuel Oakford, “U.S. Doubled Fuel Support for Saudi Bombing Campaign After Deadly Strike on Funeral,” *The Intercept*, July 7, 2017, available at <https://theintercept.com/2017/07/13/u-s-doubled-fuel-support-for-saudi-bombing-campaign-in-yemen-after-deadly-strike-on-funeral/>

Appendix A: U.S. Arms Offers to the UAE, 2009 to Present

<u>Date</u>	<u>Initial estimated cost</u>	<u>Transfer details with link</u>
1) May 11, 2017	\$2,000,000,000	<u>PAC and GEM-T missiles</u>
2) Dec. 8, 2016	\$3,500,000,000	<u>Apache A-64E helicopters</u>
3) Oct. 24, 2016	\$75,000,000	<u>Exercise Participation Support</u>
4) July 19, 2016	\$785,000,000	<u>Munitions, Sustainment, and Support</u>
5) May 13, 2016	\$476,000,000	<u>AGM-114 R/K Hellfire Category III Missiles</u>
6) Feb. 24, 2016	\$225,000,000	<u>Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM)</u>
7) Nov. 5, 2016	\$380,000,000	<u>Joint Direct Attack Munitions.</u>
8) July 29, 2015	\$335,000,000	<u>AN/AAQ 24(V) Directional Infrared Countermeasures (DIRCM) Systems</u>
9) May 29, 2015	\$130,000,000	<u>Guided Bomb Units (GBU-31s and GBU-12s)</u>
10) Sept. 29, 2014	\$900,000,000	<u>High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) Launchers</u>
11) Sept. 26, 2014	\$2,500,000,000	<u>Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicles</u>
12) Jan. 24, 2014	\$270,000,000	<u>Equipment in Support of a Direct Commercial Sale of F-16 Block 61 Aircraft</u>
13) Jan. 8, 2014	\$150,000,000	<u>Blanket Order Training</u>
14) Oct. 15, 2013	\$4,000,000,000	<u>Various Munitions and Support</u>
15) Nov. 5, 2012	\$1,135,000,000	<u>Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System Missiles (THAAD)</u>
16) August 1, 2012	\$35,000,000	<u>F117-PW-100 Engines</u>
17) Dec. 16, 2011	\$60,000,000	<u>JAVELIN Anti-Tank Missiles</u>

18) Nov. 30, 2011	\$304,000,000	<u>Joint Direct Attack Munitions</u>
19) Sept. 22, 2011	\$401,000,000	<u>MIDS/LVT LINK 16 Terminals</u>
20) Sept. 22, 2011	\$65,000,000	<u>AGM-114R3 HELLFIRE Missiles</u>
21) June 24, 2011	\$217,000,000	<u>UH-60M BLACKHAWK Helicopters</u>
22) May 25, 2011	\$100,000,000	<u>F-16 Program Support</u>
23) April 19, 2011	\$251,000,000	<u>AIM-9X-2 SIDEWINDER Missiles</u>
24) Nov. 4, 2010	\$140,000,000	<u>Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) T2K Unitary Missiles/</u>
		<u>Low Cost Reduced-Range Practice Rockets</u>
25) Nov. 4, 2010	\$5,000,000,000	<u>AH-64D Block III APACHE Helicopters</u>
26) May 26, 2010	\$250,000,000	<u>Logistics Support for C-17 Globemaster Aircraft</u>
27) Dec. 28, 2009	\$119,000,000.00	<u>Logistics Support and Training for 12 C-130J-30 Aircraft</u>
28) Dec. 28, 2009	\$290,000,000	<u>Enhanced Guided Bomb Units</u>
29) Dec. 18, 2009	\$501,000,000	<u>Logistics Support for C-17 Globemaster Aircraft</u>
30) Dec. 3, 2009	\$2,000,000,000	<u>CH-47F CHINOOK Helicopters</u>
31) August 4, 2009	\$526,000,000	<u>HELLFIRE Missiles, Aircraft Survivability Equipment</u>
TOTAL COST	\$27,120,000,000	

Appendix B: U.S. Arms Deliveries to the UAE. 2009 to Present

Year of Delivery Delivery Description

1. 2016
(10) ISB4 Diesel Engines
2. 2016
(2) RQ-1 Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
3. 2016
(4) Maxxpro Armored Personnel Carriers
4. 2016
(44) M-ATV Armored Patrol Vehicles
5. 2016
(500) Caiman Armored Personnel Carriers

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6. 2015-2016
(3600) JDAM Guided Bombs
 7. 2015-2016
(1500) GBU-39 SDB Guided Bombs
 8. 2015-2016
(16) Archangel-BPA Ground Attack Aircrafts
 9. 2015-2016
(1000) Talon Air to Surface Missiles
 10. 2015-2016
(96) THAAD Missiles
 11. 2015-2016
(2) THAAD ABM Systems
 12. 2015
2 C-17A Globemaster-3 Heavy Transport Aircrafts
 13. 2014-2016
(30) Bell-407 Light Helicopters
 14. 2013
750 M-ATV Armored Patrol Vehicles
 15. 2013
(100) MGM-140B ATACMS Surface to Surface Missiles
 16. 2013
(6) DB-110 Aircraft Recce Systems
 17. 2013-2014
224 AIM-120C Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile
 18. 2012-2015
(12) CH-47F Chinook Transport Helicopters
 19. 2012-2014
(9) Patriot PAC-3 Surface to Air Missile System
 20. 2012-2014
(292) MIM-104F PAC-3 Anti-Ballistic Missiles
 21. 2012-2014
(216) MIM-104C PAC-2 Surface to Air Missiles
 22. 2012-2013
(14) S-70/UH-60L Helicopters
 23. 2012-2013
(390) AGM-114: Hellfire Anti-Tank Missiles
 24. 2012
1 F-16E FGA Aircraft
 25. 2011-2016
(237) RIM-162 Evolved SeaSparrow Missile
 26. 2011-2016
(200) RIM-116A Rolling Airframe Missiles
 27. 2011-2013
(500) AGM-65 Maverick Air to Surface Missiles

28. 2011-2012
(26) S-70/UH-60L Helicopters

29. 2011-2012
(250) CBU-97 SFW Guided Bombs

30. 2011-2012
(6) C-17A Globemaster-3s

31. 2011-2012
(300) JDAM Guided Bombs

32. 2011-2012
(1560) GMLRS Guided Rockets

33. 2011
(50) M-ATV Armored Patrol Vehicles

34. 2011
(20) M-142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems

35. 2010-2014
24 AT-802U Ground Attack Aircrafts

36. 2010-2013
(938) Paveway Guided Bombs

37. 2010
4 CH-47F Chinook Transport Helicopters

38. 2009-2010
(10) S-70/UH-60L Helicopters

39. 2009-2010
(1000) FGM-148 Javelin Anti-tank Missiles

40. 2008-2009
(100) CBU-97 SFW Guided Bombs

41. 2008-2009
(30) APG-78 Longbow Combat Heli Radars

42. 2008-2009
(30) AH-64D Apache Combat Helicopters

43. 2006-2010
(16) T55-L Turboshafths

44. No date
JDAM Guided Bombs

45. No date
MGM-140B ATACMS Surface to Surface Missiles

46. No date
M-142 HIMARS Self-propelled Multiple Rocket Launchers

47. No date
GMLRS Guided Rockets

48. No date
AGM-84H SLAM-ER Air to Surface Missiles

49. No date
RDR-1700 MP Aircraft Radars

States should attempt to use the leverage it possesses as a major arms supplier to the UAE to get its ally to actively support a durable ceasefire and a negotiated, inclusive political settlement to the war. The UAE's central role in the Yemen war demands that it play a central role in efforts to bring the war to an end.

SOURCE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) arms transfer data base.

* Quantities in parentheses indicate a lesser level of certainty

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