Negative Brief: Saudi Arabia

By Kirstin Erickson

***Resolved: The United States federal government should considerably decrease its military commitments.***

Saudi Arabia is a key ally. In an imperfect world, we help allies even when they have bad stuff going on, because the net benefits of doing so is to our advantage. That’s why we gave substantial military aid to evil dictator/mass murderer Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union during World War 2 – because fighting Hitler took priority over fixing Stalin’s problems. When the war ended, so did the alliance and the military aid, and we opposed Stalin and everything he stood for. Likewise, Saudi Arabia is a strategic ally whose cooperation we need, both for economic and national security reasons. Canceling US military support for Saudi Arabia won’t fix their problems, but it will create lots of new ones for us and the world at large.

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Negative: Saudi Arabia

INHERENCY

1. Reducing military support for Saudis in Status Quo

Patriot missiles and fighter aircraft were reduced in May 2020

Associated Press 2020 (journalist Lolita Baldor) 8 May 2020 US Pulls Anti-Missile Systems from Saudi Arabia amid Dispute <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/05/08/us-pulls-anti-missile-systems-saudi-arabia-amid-dispute.html>

The U.S. is pulling two Patriot missile batteries and some fighter aircraft out of Saudi Arabia, an American official said Thursday, amid tensions between the kingdom and the Trump administration over oil production. The official said the decision removes two batteries that were guarding oil facilities in Saudi Arabia but leaves two Patriot batteries at Prince Sultan Air Base in the Saudi desert, along with other air defense systems and jet fighters.

US military presence in Saudi Arabia is being scaled back

Associated Press 2020 (journalist Lolita Baldor) 8 May 2020 US Pulls Anti-Missile Systems from Saudi Arabia amid Dispute <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/05/08/us-pulls-anti-missile-systems-saudi-arabia-amid-dispute.html>

The decision scales back the American presence in Saudi Arabia just months after the Pentagon began a military buildup there to counter threats from Iran. About 300 troops that staff the two batteries would also leave Saudi Arabia, according to the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military operations. The move comes as the U.S. has sent Patriot systems into Iraq to protect American and allied troops there, who came under an Iranian missile attack earlier this year. The [Army](http://www.military.com/army) has a limited number of the systems, and they routinely must be brought home for upgrades.

SIGNIFICANCE

Khashoggi’s death in the Saudi embassy doesn’t justify change in US/Saudi alliance

Rebeccah L. Heinrichs 2018 (senior fellow at Hudson Institute where she specializes in nuclear deterrence and missile defense; adjunct professor at the Institute of World Politics where she teaches nuclear deterrence theory) “Why Breaking With Saudi Arabia Over Khashoggi Would Hurt America.” October 23, 2018.) <https://www.hudson.org/research/14636-why-breaking-with-saudi-arabia-over-khashoggi-would-hurt-america>

The death of Saudi national and Washington Post opinion writer Jamal Khashoggi should not result in a change in the U.S.-Saudi alliance. The United States shouldn’t even formally inflict a severe punishment on the Saudi government. Devising a calibrated, proportional response that preserves the strength of the U.S.-Saudi alliance is both wise and moral. After changing its story a few times, the Saudi government has finally admitted that Khashoggi died at the hands of Saudi officials in a Saudi consulate in Turkey. The Saudis also said 18 individuals, including senior ranking officials, will be held accountable for what they say was an operation that was not ordered by the young crown prince Mohammed bin Salman but went awry and resulted in Khashoggi’s death. The media, led by The Washington Post, has provided significant coverage of the matter. The picture media reports paint of the Saudis is cruel and sociopathic. The truth is, Saudi Arabia is often cruel and does not tolerate dissent. The young crown prince has ordered extrajudicial killings and rounded up and jailed or killed many of his enemies. Saudi citizens who convert to faiths outside of Islam are guilty of capital crimes, women are abused without anywhere near the legal protections of men, and I could go on. But, despite the Saudi government’s lack of some of the principles of justice Americans hold dear, the Turkish government has provided no proof to contradict Saudi claims that the death of the Saudi national was an accident. And the flurry of media reporting has largely been sourced by anonymous Turkish individuals.

Insignificant quantity: Switzerland buys more weapons from US than Saudi Arabia

Ben Holland, 2018. (Editor for Bloomberg News)“For All Trump's Talk, the Saudis Don't Buy That Much U.S. Stuff” October 18, 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-10-18/for-all-trump-s-talk-the-saudis-don-t-buy-that-much-u-s-stuff>

But that’s the case for all exports of everything to everywhere. And in the aggregate, planes and tanks included, the Saudis just don’t buy that much stuff from America. It’s clear from a comparison with the closest economy in size to Saudi Arabia’s -- which happens to be Switzerland, about as different from the desert kingdom as could be: snowy, hyper-democratic, and famous for staying above the geopolitical fray. The Swiss consistently buy more U.S. goods than the Saudis, and the gap has been widening in the past two years as exports to Saudi Arabia declined.

No arms deal, just empty promises

Bruce Riedel, 2017. (senior fellow and director of the Brookings Intelligence Project, part of the Brookings Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, and senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy; 30 years of service at the Central Intelligence Agency; was deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Near East and South Asia at the Pentagon and a senior advisor at NATO.) “The $110 billion arms deal to Saudi Arabia is fake news” June 5, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/06/05/the-110-billion-arms-deal-to-saudi-arabia-is-fake-news/>

Last month, President Trump visited Saudi Arabia and his administration announced that he had concluded a $110 billion arms deal with the kingdom. Only problem is that there is no deal. It’s fake news. I’ve spoken to contacts in the defense business and on the Hill, and all of them say the same thing: There is no $110 billion deal. Instead, there are a bunch of letters of interest or intent, but not contracts. Many are offers that the defense industry thinks the Saudis will be interested in someday. So far nothing has been notified to the Senate for review. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the arms sales wing of the Pentagon, calls them “intended sales.” None of the deals identified so far are new, all began in the Obama administration.

“No deal” Example: Frigates, THAAD, helicopters. It’s all a big wish list, not real deals

Bruce Riedel, 2017. (senior fellow and director of the Brookings Intelligence Project, part of the Brookings Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, and senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy; 30 years of service at the Central Intelligence Agency; was deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Near East and South Asia at the Pentagon and a senior advisor at NATO.) “The $110 billion arms deal to Saudi Arabia is fake news” June 5, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/06/05/the-110-billion-arms-deal-to-saudi-arabia-is-fake-news/>

An example is a proposal for sale of four frigates (called multi-mission surface combatant vessels) to the Royal Saudi navy. This proposal was first reported by the State Department in 2015. No contract has followed. The type of frigate is a derivative of a vessel that the U.S. Navy uses but the derivative doesn’t actually exist yet. Another piece is the Terminal High Altitude Air Defense system (THAAD) which was recently deployed in South Korea. The Saudis have expressed interest in the system for several years but no contracts have been finalized. Obama approved the sale in principle at a summit at Camp David in 2015. Also on the wish list are 150 Black Hawk helicopters. Again, this is old news repackaged. What the Saudis and the administration did is put together a notional package of the Saudi wish list of possible deals and portray that as a deal. Even then the numbers don’t add up. It’s fake news.

Saudis can’t afford deal

Bruce Riedel, 2017. (senior fellow and director of the Brookings Intelligence Project, part of the Brookings Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, and senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy; 30 years of service at the Central Intelligence Agency; was deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Near East and South Asia at the Pentagon and a senior advisor at NATO.) “The $110 billion arms deal to Saudi Arabia is fake news” June 5, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/06/05/the-110-billion-arms-deal-to-saudi-arabia-is-fake-news/>

Moreover, it’s unlikely that the Saudis could pay for a $110 billion deal any longer, due to low oil prices and the two-plus years old war in Yemen. President Obama sold the kingdom $112 billion in weapons over eight years, most of which was a single, huge deal in 2012 negotiated by then-Secretary of Defense Bob Gates. To get that deal through Congressional approval, Gates also negotiated a deal with Israel to compensate the Israelis and preserve their qualitative edge over their Arab neighbors. With the fall in oil prices, the Saudis have struggled to meet their payments since.

A/T “$110 billion deal” -- only $20 billion

Prof. Jonathan D. Caverley, 2018. (associate professor at the US Naval War College and a research scientist at M.I.T.) “Want to Punish Saudi Arabia? Cut Off Its Weapons Supply” Oct. 12, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/opinion/saudi-arabia-arms-sales.html>

President Trump, however, is skeptical. “I don’t like stopping massive amounts of money that’s being poured into our country,” he said on Thursday. “They are spending $110 billion on military equipment and on things that create jobs for this country.” This figure is vastly inflated, but there’s a reason Mr. Trump is inclined to believe it. While the amount of new deals approved under President Trump is closer to $20 billion, the Saudi government has visibly linked itself as the foremost client of the administration’s export push.

Saudis not spending much on weapons

Alexia Fernández Campbell, 2018. (Politics & Policy Reporter for Vox News) “Trump says selling weapons to Saudi Arabia will create a lot of jobs. That’s not true.” Nov 20, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/10/17/17967510/trump-saudi-arabia-arms-sales-khashoggi>

Beyond this, Hartung points out, Saudi Arabia isn’t actually even spending a massive amount of money on American weapons. The kingdom buys the ammunition and bombs it needs to keep waging a bloody war in Yemen, but nothing even close the $110 billion deal Trump touted.

A/T “Threatens/destabilizes Israel” - Saudi weapons unlikely to pose a serious threat to Israel

Dr. Loren B. Thompson 2010 (Chief Operating Officer of the non-profit Lexington Institute and Chief Executive Officer of Source Associates; former Deputy Director of the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University) quoted by Deborah Jerome. “Is Big Saudi Arms Sale a Good Idea?” September 24, 2010. Council on Foreign Relations <https://www.cfr.org/expert-roundup/big-saudi-arms-sale-good-idea>

Congress will closely scrutinize the proposed arms deal with Saudi Arabia to make sure it does not threaten Israel or otherwise destabilize the region. The package appears to be a careful reconciliation of Saudi requirements with Israeli fears, while also offering a strategic balance against Iran. [END QUOTE] The biggest component of the transaction involves new and refurbished F-15 fighters, which are designed for both air dominance and attack of ground targets. The fighter sale could have been a serious problem for Israel if Saudi Arabia had been offered stealthy F-22s or F-35s, because those aircraft would have been suitable for executing a surprise attack. [**SHE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE**:] The F-15 is not stealthy, and although its movements can be masked through the skillful application of tactics and electronic-warfare technology, Israeli defenders should have no difficulty detecting any threatening moves. The helicopters included in the package are among the most capable in the world, but they could be easily repulsed by Israeli tactical aircraft if ever dispatched against the Jewish state. Thus, I see little danger to Israel in the proposed transaction.

SOLVENCY

1. Saudis won’t change

A Saudi Arabia arms embargo is unlikely to work to coerce policy change

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

Finally, the United States should not look to use an arms embargo to coerce Saudi policy change, not for economic reasons, but simply because it is unlikely to work.

While an arms embargo is emotionally compelling, it is not strategically beneficial

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

Thus, while a U.S. embargo might be morally compelling and emotionally satisfying, it is unlikely to create meaningful change for those most at risk or be strategically beneficial to the United States. In the absence of a compelling, evidence-based case that an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia might produce desired changes in behavior, policymakers should look elsewhere for solutions to their Saudi problems.

“Moral benefits” not enough to justify sanctions on Saudi Arabia

Rebeccah L. Heinrichs 2018 (senior fellow at Hudson Institute where she specializes in nuclear deterrence and missile defense; adjunct professor at the Institute of World Politics where she teaches nuclear deterrence theory) “Why Breaking With Saudi Arabia Over Khashoggi Would Hurt America.” October 23, 2018.) <https://www.hudson.org/research/14636-why-breaking-with-saudi-arabia-over-khashoggi-would-hurt-america>

Damaging the U.S.-Saudi alliance will not decrease human suffering, and will not increase justice or peace and stability for Americans or for our allies. Heavy sanctions on the Saudi government, ending arms sales and military cooperation with Saudi, or demanding the House of Saud remove bin Salman would play right into the hands of America’s enemies. Doing the moral thing does not require the United States to advantage those who seek to harm us.

2. Arms embargos are ineffective

Withholding arms as an instrument of coercion doesn’t produce desired benefits

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

Whether it is delayed approval, as in the recent Kuwaiti F-18 purchase, an outright embargo, like Egyptian F-16s in 2013, or denial of technology transfer, as in the 2016 Turkish Patriot missile request, using the withholding of arms sales as a blunt force instrument of coercion is unlikely to produce desired strategic benefits and often backfires.

Arms sales have useful benefits and are not meant as a tool of coercion

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

Arms sales are useful tools for maintaining communication, strengthening relationships, and keeping potential adversary states at bay. Conversely, as a blunt instrument of coercion (i.e. if you do not do X, we will suspend Y), they are likely losers.

Government officials and previous research agree: arms transfers aren’t effective as leverage

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

Senior U.S. government officials involved in the arms transfer process that I interviewed over the past year during the course of my research have echoed similar sentiments. This is also borne out by previous research providing evidence that using arms transfers as situationally coercive tools is rarely successful.

Arms embargoes are least effective against an autocratic regime like Saudi Arabia

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

Interestingly, coercion attempts using arms transfers are least likely to be successful when used as a punishment or threat against an autocratic regime, such as Saudi Arabia.

3. Won’t solve war in Yemen

Cutting off U.S. support for Saudi Arabia will not end the war in Yemen

Michael Knights, Kenneth M. Pollack, and Barbara F. Walter 2019. (Knights is the Lafer Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Pollack is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute; Walter is Professor of Political Science at the University of California–San Diego’s School of Global Policy and Strategy) “A Real Plan to End the War in Yemen.” May 2, 2019. Foreign Affairs (published by the Council on Foreign Relations, a non-profit and nonpartisan membership) <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/yemen/2019-05-02/real-plan-end-war-yemen>

True peace in Yemen will remain elusive unless both sides accept that they have nothing to gain from more fighting. We are not there yet. To get there will require not cutting off U.S. support for Saudi Arabia but threatening to double down on it unless the Houthis honor their commitments to the UN and are ready to disgorge most of their initial conquests. If Washington is serious about ending the war, it must come to terms with this uncomfortable fact.

Withdrawing U.S. support will not increase the likelihood of a peace agreement

Michael Knights, Kenneth M. Pollack, and Barbara F. Walter 2019. (Knights is the Lafer Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Pollack is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute; Walter is Professor of Political Science at the University of California–San Diego’s School of Global Policy and Strategy) “A Real Plan to End the War in Yemen.” May 2, 2019. Foreign Affairs (published by the Council on Foreign Relations, a non-profit and nonpartisan membership) <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/yemen/2019-05-02/real-plan-end-war-yemen>

Historically, civil wars like Yemen’s end either when one side wins a decisive military victory or a third party negotiates a settlement among the warring factions. In the Middle East, the former option—letting the fighting run its course—often means accepting horrific bloodshed and ethnic cleansing.[**END QUOTE**] Examples abound: the leveling of Hama, Syria’s onetime opposition stronghold, in 1982, or Saddam Hussein’s systematic mass murder of Iraqi Kurds in the late 1980s, or his violent suppression of a nationwide rebellion in 1991. Those “victories” ended the conflicts swiftly and surely, but at the cost of tens or hundreds of thousands of lives. **[THEY GO ON TO SAY QUOTE:]**A negotiated settlement can end a war earlier and thus with less bloodshed. But combatants generally don’t agree to such settlements until they have reached a military stalemate such that all sides are convinced they cannot win a military victory. Even then, the warring parties need to know that they can disarm without being slaughtered—a condition that can sometimes be met only with an outside peacekeeping commitment for a decade or more. And once the parties have come to the table, any successful negotiated settlement will have to include a power-sharing arrangement that grants all factions political power and economic benefits roughly commensurate with their demographic weight (adjusted for military realities). In the case of Yemen, withdrawing U.S. support—which has largely consisted of intelligence and logistical assistance—from the Saudis will hinder the coalition’s war effort and embolden the Houthis and their Iranian supporters, making them much less likely to accept a nationwide cease-fire and a power-sharing agreement.

4. Alternate suppliers

Arms embargoes often motivate the target state to diversify to other suppliers

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019 <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

Arms exports are best used for maintaining or strengthening relationships while limiting adversary access to client states; a tool of nuanced influence, not outright coercion. In fact, threatening to withhold arms sales to coerce a state into changing its behavior often has the opposite effect, leading clients to diversify their arms sourcing instead of shifting course.

Saudi Arabia can easily diversify its arms suppliers, even in the short-term

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

In the near-term, Saudi Arabia can substitute other weapons, such as the Eurofighter and Tornado, and “dumb bombs” instead of U.S.-built “smart weapons.” The Saudis can also rely more heavily on their Emirati and Egyptian partners using non-U.S. produced arms. In the medium to long term, such an embargo is likely to push the Kingdom to greater arms diversification. If history is any guide, the United States will eventually lift any potential arms embargo with little change in Saudi behavior, but only after having provided an opportunity for adversary states such as Russia and China to gain a strategic foothold in Riyadh.[**END QUOTE**] Some might counter that it would be extremely difficult and costly, in both time and money, for the Saudis to significantly diversify their arms acquisitions away from the United States. This is absolutely the case. However, costly does not mean impossible. Less wealthy states have already done it. Egypt is one example above; but others such as Venezuela and even tiny Kuwait — frustrated at years of U.S. approval delays — have significantly diversified their arms acquisitions. [**HE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE:]** In other words, with the money and options available to Saudi Arabia, and few other producers showing a stomach for a full embargo, it is not unreasonable to believe that the Saudis might significantly diversify their arms acquisitions over time in response to a U.S. embargo.

A U.S. arms embargo would cause Saudi Arabia to begin importing from Russia

*Dr. Oleg Svet 2016. (PhD; doctoral dissertation on security assistance to Iraq and has analyzed U.S. security cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Formerly a consultant for the U.S. Defense Department)*“Why Congress Supports Saudi Arms Sales.” Sept 26, 2016. The National Interest. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-congress-supports-saudi-arms-sales-17840>

If Senators Paul and Murphy would have succeeded in their measure, Riyadh would almost certainly have gone to another large military supplier, possibly Russia.

Saudi looking to other countries for weapons

Stratfor, 2018. (American geopolitical intelligence platform and publisher.) “Saudi Arabia Lays the Foundation for a Defense Industry of Its Own” Nov 9, 2018. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/saudi-arabia-defense-industry-weapons-imports-vision2030>

Beyond the long-term strategy of making its own equipment, Saudi Arabia has also weighed the option of diversifying weapons purchases away from U.S. and European states, which currently satisfy the bulk of Saudi demand. Such an approach not only would allow Saudi Arabia to reduce its dependence on the United States and the European Union, but could also give Riyadh access to countries more willing to overlook its track record on human rights and to offer generous technology transfer rights as part of contracts. The kingdom, for instance, has opened negotiations with Russia over the purchase of the S-400 surface-to-air missile system in hopes that Moscow would offer a deal better than the U.S. offers on its Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system. And Saudi Arabia has purchased large numbers of armed drones from China as the United States continues to refuse to sell such technology to countries in the region.

Using arms embargos as a form of coercion could lead to decreased trust in the U.S.’s weapons sales

Derek Bisaccio 2018. (Military Markets Analyst for Forecast International, a veteran-owned business whose experienced analysts compile, evaluate, and present accurate data for decision makers in the world’s aerospace and defense markets) “Examining U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia. October 23, 2018. Forecast International’s Defense & Security Monitor blog. <https://dsm.forecastinternational.com/wordpress/2018/10/23/examining-u-s-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia/>

Moreover, regularly resorting to playing hardball with arms equipment can convince importers that a degree of diversification is in order if the supplier is unreliable, hurting the supplier’s sales position and defense sector – more so if the supplier is seen as making arms sales only to use them years or decades later to coerce the importer over domestic policy.

A/T “Too difficult for Saudi Arabia” - Less wealthy states have already done it

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

Some might counter that it would be extremely difficult and costly, in both time and money, for the Saudis to significantly diversify their arms acquisitions away from the United States. This is absolutely the case. However, costly does not mean impossible. Less wealthy states have already done it. Egypt is one example above; but others such as Venezuela and even tiny Kuwait — frustrated at years of U.S. approval delays — have significantly diversified their arms acquisitions. In other words, with the money and options available to Saudi Arabia, and few other producers showing a stomach for a full embargo, it is not unreasonable to believe that the Saudis might significantly diversify their arms acquisitions over time in response to a U.S. embargo.

Past precedent: Egypt

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019. War on the Rocks. (a platform for analysis, commentary, debate and multimedia content on foreign policy and national security issues) <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

Consider Indonesia and Egypt. In 2015, Egypt agreed to purchase nearly 50 Russian MiG-29M/M2s and more than two-dozen French Rafales. This represented a shocking turn of events after more than three decades of purchasing only American-made fighter jets. It was also driven largely by the U.S. embargo put in place in 2013, after the Egyptian army’s removal of then-President Mohamed Morsi, who had won the presidency in a 2012 election. The embargo caused significant tension between the two states driven by “an Egyptian sense that they were at a point of mortal peril” while the United States was moralizing about democratic reforms. Remarkably, the United States lifted the embargo in 2015 with virtually no change in Egyptian policies, no official U.S. “democracy certification”, and Egyptian military support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. The U.S. arms embargo as a tool of coercive change was an abject failure.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Yemen

Link: Ending support for Saudi Arabia would embolden the terrorist organizations that are fueling the Yemen war

Dr. James Jay Carafano 2018. (expert in national security and foreign policy challenges; vice president of Heritage's Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy and a former senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments; PhD from Georgetown Univ, and master's degree in strategy from the U.S. Army War College) “Chaos Will Erupt in the Middle East If U.S. Leaves Yemen.” March 7, 2018. The Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/chaos-will-erupt-the-middle-east-if-us-leaves-yemen>

The greatest threats to Middle East stability and security are Iran and transnational Islamist terrorists groups, principally ISIS and al-Qaida. And it is precisely these forces that are fueling the Yemen war.

If Congress forces the administration to abandon our allies, Tehran, ISIS, and al-Qaida would feel emboldened and likely double-down on expanding the war. Meanwhile, Washington would lose its ability to influence how Saudi Arabia and the UAE conduct coalition operations. Without our mitigating presence, the carnage of this vicious war would only increase.[**END QUOTE]** And Russia would be tempted to further complicate the situation. Moscow has already vetoed a draft U.N. Security Council resolution to hold Iran accountable for providing Yemen's rebels with the long-range missiles recently fired at the Saudi capital. Putin would interpret an American withdrawal as a green light for additional Russian meddling – the type that Moscow has brought to the Syrian civil war. [**HE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE**:] Instead of turning our back on Yemen, the U.S. should focus on ending the war. The longer the conflict persists, the more the chaos benefits terrorist groups in the region and the more the main rebel group, the Houthis, becomes dependent on Iran.

Link: Past U.S. criticism of the Saudis has exacerbated the conflict

Michael Knights, Kenneth M. Pollack, and Barbara F. Walter 2019. (Knights is the Lafer Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Pollack is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute; Walter is Professor of Political Science at the University of California–San Diego’s School of Global Policy and Strategy) “A Real Plan to End the War in Yemen.” May 2, 2019. Foreign Affairs (published by the Council on Foreign Relations, a non-profit and nonpartisan membership) <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/yemen/2019-05-02/real-plan-end-war-yemen>

In fact, U.S. congressional criticism of the Saudis has already encouraged the Houthis who, far from giving up, appear determined to fight on.

The best solution to stop the conflict is to continue support for Saudi Arabia

Michael Knights, Kenneth M. Pollack, and Barbara F. Walter 2019. (Knights is the Lafer Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Pollack is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute; Walter is Professor of Political Science at the University of California–San Diego’s School of Global Policy and Strategy) “A Real Plan to End the War in Yemen.” May 2, 2019. Foreign Affairs (published by the Council on Foreign Relations, a non-profit and nonpartisan membership) <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/yemen/2019-05-02/real-plan-end-war-yemen>

So what can the United States do to stop the fighting? The history of civil war, in Yemen and elsewhere, suggests a counterintuitive approach: increase U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition, enable it to capture Hodeidah, and then use the resulting leverage to force both sides to end the fighting and sign a power-sharing agreement. Not only is this scenario plausible but it is probably the only near-term solution that could end the civil war, stop the killing, and remove both the Saudi and Iranian presence.

Brink: U.S. support for Saudi Arabia is beneficial to Yemen. May be only way to get a peaceful settlement

Dr. James Jay Carafano 2018. (expert in national security and foreign policy challenges; vice president of Heritage's Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy and a former senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments; PhD from Georgetown Univ. as well as a master's degree in strategy from the U.S. Army War College) “Chaos Will Erupt in the Middle East If U.S. Leaves Yemen.” March 7, 2018. The Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/chaos-will-erupt-the-middle-east-if-us-leaves-yemen>

Rather than pull out, the U.S. should continue to use its presence and influence to establish the conditions that will allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid and the start of real peace negotiations that put the people of Yemen first.[**END QUOTE**] U.S. military activities contribute to both those goals, particularly by supporting counterterrorism operations against ISIS and a-Qaida. In addition to continuing that support, the U.S. should work to diminish Iranian meddling – not just by disrupting its aid to the Houthis, but by broadly attacking Tehran's foreign escapades throughout the region. Pressing the regime overall will strain its capacity to support the rebels in Yemen – and that may lead to all sides in the conflict coming to the peace table sooner rather than later. [**HE GOES ON TO CONCLUDE QUOTE:]** If Congress wants to see an end to the humanitarian suffering in Yemen, then writing off the current U.S. role there ought to be the last thing lawmakers think about. The U.S. cannot be a bystander. In fact, it may be the only actor with sufficient influence to drive the other players toward a peaceful political settlement in Yemen.

Impact: War & carnage prolonged

Dr. James Jay Carafano 2018. (expert in national security and foreign policy challenges; vice president of Heritage's Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy and a former senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments; PhD from Georgetown Univ. as well as a master's degree in strategy from the U.S. Army War College) “Chaos Will Erupt in the Middle East If U.S. Leaves Yemen.” March 7, 2018. The Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/chaos-will-erupt-the-middle-east-if-us-leaves-yemen>

If Congress forces the administration to abandon our allies, Tehran, ISIS, and al-Qaida would feel emboldened and likely double-down on expanding the war. Meanwhile, Washington would lose its ability to influence how Saudi Arabia and the UAE conduct coalition operations. Without our mitigating presence, the carnage of this vicious war would only increase.

2. Regional arms race

Link: US pullout triggers a costly regional arms race with Iran because Saudis will no longer trust the US

James M. Dorsey 2020 (award-winning journalist and commentator on foreign affairs who has covered ethnic and religious conflict and terrorism across the globe for more than three decades) 13 May 2020 “US military drawdown in Saudi Arabia threatens to fuel arms race” <https://www.wionews.com/opinions-blogs/us-military-drawdown-in-saudi-arabia-threatens-to-fuel-arms-race-298402>

One thing is certain, the recent US military pullback from Saudi Arabia will fuel a brewing arms race in the Middle East at a time when the region, struggling with the public health and devastating economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, can least afford it. It’s a financially costly race that neither Saudi Arabia nor Iran can really afford in an era of economic meltdown. Saudi Arabia is likely to see the withdrawal, despite a seemingly reassuring phone call between Saudi King Salman and President Donald Trump, as further evidence that it cannot fully rely, for its defence, on the United States.

Saudis and Iran cannot afford the high cost of the arms race…

James M. Dorsey 2020 (award-winning journalist and commentator on foreign affairs who has covered ethnic and religious conflict and terrorism across the globe for more than three decades) 13 May 2020 “US military drawdown in Saudi Arabia threatens to fuel arms race” <https://www.wionews.com/opinions-blogs/us-military-drawdown-in-saudi-arabia-threatens-to-fuel-arms-race-298402>

The reality on the ground, however, is neither of these countries can presently afford the extraordinary financial and technological cost of such militaristic endeavours when their economies are battered by a far-reaching global depression, a collapse of oil prices, and a health pandemic. Iran, moreover, is struggling to grope with US sanctions while Saudi Arabia faces painful fiscal problems and structural reforms.

… but it will happen because Saudis fear Iran

James M. Dorsey 2020 (award-winning journalist and commentator on foreign affairs who has covered ethnic and religious conflict and terrorism across the globe for more than three decades) 13 May 2020 “US military drawdown in Saudi Arabia threatens to fuel arms race” <https://www.wionews.com/opinions-blogs/us-military-drawdown-in-saudi-arabia-threatens-to-fuel-arms-race-298402>

The risk of an arms race was explicit in Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s warning at the time that Trump was gearing up to withdraw from the nuclear agreement that “Without a doubt, if Iran developed a nuclear bomb, we will follow suit as soon as possible.”

Brink: Arms race is especially dangerous right now because risk of Middle East war is accelerating sharply

[Anthony H. Cordesman](https://www.csis.org/people/anthony-h-cordesman) and Nicholas Harrington 2018. (Cordesman - Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS); *served as a consultant on Afghanistan to the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of State*. Harrington – CSIS Program Manager and Research Associate, Transnational Threats Project) 12 Dec 2018 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/arab-gulf-states-and-iran-military-spending-modernization-and-shifting-military-balance>

The military balance between Iran, its Arab neighbors, and the United States has been a critical military issue in the Middle East since at least the rise of Nasser in the 1950s. The risks this arms race presents in terms of a future conflict have not diminished with time, and many elements of the regional arms race have accelerated sharply in recent years. Clashes with Iran in the Gulf, struggles for influence in Iraq and Syria, and the war in Yemen all act as warnings that new rounds of conflict are possible. The Iranian reactions to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA nuclear agreement, the growing tensions between the Arab Gulf states, the boycott of Qatar, and the unstable outcome of the fight against ISIS, and the Syrian civil war all contribute to an increasingly fragile and dangerous security environment.

Link: Arms race creates high risk of war

[Anthony H. Cordesman](https://www.csis.org/people/anthony-h-cordesman) and Nicholas Harrington 2018. (Cordesman - Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS); *served as a consultant on Afghanistan to the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of State*. Harrington – CSIS Program Manager and Research Associate, Transnational Threats Project) 12 Dec 2018 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/arab-gulf-states-and-iran-military-spending-modernization-and-shifting-military-balance>

No one can safely dismiss such rhetoric as political posturing due to the fact the U.S. is imposing steadily more serious economic sanctions on Iran. The history of war is as much the history on unintended conflicts and escalation as of deliberate attacks. There have already been far too many such wars in the Middle East, and the current arms race has far too long and dangerous a history to ignore.

Impact: Global economic collapse

Al Jazeera news 2019. Saudi Arabia’s MBS: War with Iran would collapse global economy 30 Sept 2019 <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2019/9/30/saudi-arabias-mbs-war-with-iran-would-collapse-global-economy>

[Saudi Arabia](https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/saudi-arabia.html)‘s crown prince warned in an interview aired on Sunday that a military confrontation with [Iran](https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/iran.html)would collapse the global economy, adding that he would prefer a political and peaceful solution to a military one. Crown Prince [Mohammed bin Salman](https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/people/mohammed-bin-salman.html)told the US-based CBS programme [60 Minutes](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mohammad-bin-salman-denies-ordering-khashoggi-murder-but-says-he-takes-responsibility-for-it-60-minutes-2019-09-29/) that crude prices could spike to “unimaginably high numbers” in case of an armed conflict.

3. Strained Relations / Lose Saudi Alliance

Link: Saudi arms embargo would damage relations

Ray Rounds 2019. (a U.S. Air Force F-15E pilot and a Ph.D. candidate at Georgetown University in International Relations.) “The Case Against Arms Embargos, Even for Saudi Arabia.” April 16, 2019 <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-case-against-arms-embargos-even-for-saudi-arabia/>

It is natural to see the horror wrought in Yemen and want to take any actions necessary to stop it. However, I ultimately argue against a Saudi embargo.[**END QUOTE]** This is not because, as the president has argued, it might cost a few billion dollars and some hundreds of defense industry jobs. As others have pointed out, the economic impact of Saudi arms purchases on the U.S. defense industry is relatively small. **[HE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE:]** Rather, embargoing Saudi Arabia is unlikely to fundamentally alter Saudi policies, but likely to further damage U.S. ties with Riyadh.

Link: US arms sales assist with diplomacy and ensure military assistance

Thomas Frohlich 2019. (Assistant Managing Editor of 24/7 Wall St., a Delaware corporation which runs a financial news and opinion company) “Saudi Arabia buys the most weapons from the US government. See what other countries top list.” March 26, 2019. USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/03/26/us-arms-sales-these-countries-buy-most-weapons-government/39208809/> (brackets added)

The United States selects its clients based on well-established partnerships, as well as for strategic reasons related to the leverage it could gain during conflicts. Of the 25 countries buying the most weapons from the U.S., 10 are either NATO member nations or part of other alliances formed with the United States since the Cold War.

“The US transfers to these countries are meant to ensure allies security, as arms transfers from the US brings with it security guarantees, which basically entail diplomatic and military assistance in case of troubles,” said [Aude] Fleurant [director of the arms and military expenditure program with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute].

Impact: Terrorism. US alliance with Saudi Arabia is key to fighting terrorism

Deborah Amos 2018 (International Correspondent for National Public Radio (NPR). She covers the Middle East for NPR News; degree in broadcasting from the Univ. of Florida) 19 Mar 2018 “Saudi Arabia: The White House Loves It. Most Americans? Not So Much,” <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/03/19/595018861/trump-may-love-saudi-arabia-but-many-americans-do-not> [brackets added]

Backers of a close U.S.-Saudi relationship note that Riyadh has been a strong strategic partner for decades thanks to oil and regional politics. Saudi Arabia serves as counter-balance to Iran and the Saudis have helped the U.S. battle extremism. The U.S. needs Saudi assistance in a battle of ideas against al-Qaida and ISIS, says [professor of international affairs at Texas A&M, F. Gregory] Gause: "Liberal democracies are not going to talk them out of what they are doing. The Saudis can rebut them with their own language." "If the Saudis don't succeed, what does it mean for the region?" asks [retired intelligence officer who served with the CIA in the Middle East, Norman] Roule. He believes Saudi Arabia is too big to fail. "To me the answer is clear. We have to do everything we can to support him."

Impact: Reduced US national security. The Saudis greatly enhance America’s security

Thomas J. Barrack Jr. 2016 (International private equity investor and the founder and executive chairman of Colony Capital. He is also foreign policy and economic advisor to GOP U.S. President Donald Trump), 22 Oct 2016, “What the Middle East Needs Now from America,” <http://fortune.com/2016/10/22/middle-east-isis-syria/>

Through the safeguarding of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, which remain open to tens of millions of foreign visitors and differing Islamic beliefs, the Kingdom has a unique window into the actions and motivations of radical fundamentalists who pass in and out of those always accessible cities. By sharing that intelligence, the Saudis greatly enhance America’s security.

Impact: American lives. Good relationship with Saudi Arabia saves American lives by stopping terrorist attacks

Frank G. Wisner 2016 (Former ambassador to Zambia, Egypt, the Philippines and India. He served as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and as Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs. He is chairman of the board of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington) 5 May 2016 “America Still Needs Saudi Arabia,” <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america-still-needs-saudi-arabia-16074>

As the world’s largest swing producer of crude oil, Saudi Arabia fuels the economies of our key trading partners in East and South Asia. It is an essential partner in our global counterterrorism effort; on more than one occasion, Saudi intelligence has enabled us to thwart terrorist attacks designed to kill American citizens in large numbers. It wields enormous influence across the Muslim world and can help determine the outcome of conflicts in places like Syria and Iraq—and ensure that key countries like Egypt remain stable. The relationship we maintain with Saudi Arabia provides us an opportunity we simply wouldn’t have otherwise to shape this influence.

Backup Link: The U.S. relies on Saudi Arabia’s help in going after al Qaeda and Islamic State

Dion Nissenbaum 2018 (national security reporter based in Washington for The Wall Street Journal. He covers the defense industry and the Pentagon. Previously based in Kabul, Afghanistan as a senior correspondent for The Wall Street Journal; graduated from the Univ of California, Berkeley) 18 Mar 2018, “In a Saudi War Room, Generals Grapple With Ways to Protect Civilians in Yemen,” <https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-a-saudi-war-room-generals-grapple-with-ways-to-protect-civilians-in-yemen-1521370801>

The U.S. relies on Saudi Arabia’s help in going after al Qaeda fighters in Yemen and Islamic State forces across the region. Prince Mohammed is working closely with White House adviser Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump’s son-in-law, on a new Middle East peace plan. And Riyadh has emerged as Washington’s most reliable ally in containing Iran’s influence across the Middle East.

Backup Brink: Impossible to fight Islamic terrorism anywhere in the world without Saudi Arabia’s help

Thomas J. Barrack Jr. 2016 (International private equity investor and the founder and executive chairman of Colony Capital. He is also foreign policy and economic advisor to GOP U.S. President Donald Trump), 22 Oct 2016, “What the Middle East Needs Now from America,” <http://fortune.com/2016/10/22/middle-east-isis-syria/>

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been our longest and strongest ally and, to many Westerners’ amazement, it is impossible for the US to move against any hostile Islamic group anywhere in the world without Saudi support. Almost two billion Muslims look to Mecca and Medina as their spiritual heartland and challenging any faction of Islam without the support of its guardian, Saudi Arabia, would be foolhardy.

4. Oil Weapon Backlash

Link: Arms cutoff hurts US/Saudi relations. Cross-apply links in DA-3

Link: Arms cutoff endangers critical oil imports from Saudi Arabia

Derek Bisaccio 2018. (Military Markets Analyst for Forecast International, a veteran-owned business whose experienced analysts compile, evaluate, and present accurate data for decision makers in the world’s aerospace and defense markets) “Examining U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia. October 23, 2018. Forecast International’s Defense & Security Monitor blog. <https://dsm.forecastinternational.com/wordpress/2018/10/23/examining-u-s-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia/>

These are strong points, but it is worth pointing out that a significant or total shutdown of U.S. arms cooperation with Saudi Arabia would come with its own set of risks. The most immediate consequence would be jeopardizing American ties with Riyadh, a country that remains influential in the world especially because of its ability to act as a swing oil producer.

Link: Saudis would retaliate Impact: Consumers and US economy harmed by higher oil prices

Rob Davies 2018. (reporter on the business deck for the Guardian) “How much damage can Saudi Arabia do to the global economy?” October 15, 2018. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/15/how-much-damage-can-saudi-arabia-do-to-the-global-economy>

Saudi Arabia enjoys a privileged position both in geopolitical and economic terms. It will have a powerful hand to play if tensions with the US and the west escalate and it follows through with Sunday’s warning of retaliation. **[END QUOTE**] Its vast oil reserves – it claims to have about 260bn barrels still to extract – afford the most obvious advantage. The kingdom is the world’s largest oil exporter, pumping or shipping about 7m barrels a day, and giving Riyadh huge clout in the global economy because it wields power to push up prices. An editorial in Arab News by Turki Aldhakhil, the general manager of the official Saudi news channel, Al Arabiya, offers a hint of what could be in the offing. He said Riyadh was weighing up 30 measures designed to put pressure on the US if it were to impose sanctions over the disappearance and presumed murder of Jamal Khashoggi inside the country’s Istanbul consulate. [**HE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE**:] These would include an oil production cut that could drive prices from around $80 (£60) a barrel to more than $400, more than double the [all-time high of](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2008/jul/12/oil.commodities) $147.27 reached in 2008. This would have profound consequences globally, not just because motorists would pay more at the petrol pump, but because it would force up the cost of all goods that travel by road.

Impact: Consumers harmed. Higher oil prices = higher gasoline prices, which leaves less money for the rest of the things you want or need

Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco 2007. “What are the possible causes and consequences of higher oil prices on the overall economy?” Nov 2007 <https://www.frbsf.org/education/publications/doctor-econ/2007/november/oil-prices-impact-economy/>

As a consumer, you may already understand the microeconomic implications of higher oil prices. When observing higher oil prices, most of us are likely to think about the price of gasoline as well, since gasoline purchases are necessary for most households. When gasoline prices increase, a larger share of households’ budgets is likely to be spent on it, which leaves less to spend on other goods and services. The same goes for businesses whose goods must be shipped from place to place or that use fuel as a major input (such as the airline industry). Higher oil prices tend to make production more expensive for businesses, just as they make it more expensive for households to do the things they normally do.

Impact: Global economic damage.

Adam Vaughan 2018. (journalist) 25 Sept 2018 THE GUARDIAN (British newspaper) “Rising oil prices fuel fears of damage to global economy” <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/sep/25/rising-oil-prices-fuel-fears-damage-global-economy> (PetroMatrix is an oil industry research group)

The global economy could be damaged if oil prices return to $100 (£76) a barrel, experts have warned, after crude prices hit a four-year high of $82.16. Some market watchers have predicted prices between $90 and $100 by the year’s end after [Opec](https://www.theguardian.com/business/opec) last weekend rebuffed Donald Trump’s demands for the oil cartel to rein in prices by expanding production. Now after Tuesday’s high a leading analyst has said that if prices climbed to $100 – a level not seen since September 2014 – growth in oil demand would be “annihilated” and demand would fall sharply. Moreover, PetroMatrix said, emerging economies’ growth could suffer because of steep crude prices causing inflationary pressures that lead to interest rate rises. Those countries could also be forced to cut oil taxes, widening budget deficits. Any slowing in emerging markets would add to the recent economic challenges [facing countries including Turkey and Argentina](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/sep/08/emerging-economies-crisis-looms-shadow-america-boom-interest-rates).

5. Iran Threat to Saudi Arabia Increases

Link: Saudi Arabia is critical to defending against Iran and al-Qaeda

Anthony H. Cordesman 2010 (Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at Center for Strategic and International Studies. He is the author of a wide range of studies on U.S. security policy, energy policy, and Middle East policy and has served as a consultant to the Departments of State and Defense during the Afghan and Iraq wars) quoted by Deborah Jerome. “Is Big Saudi Arms Sale a Good Idea?” September 24, 2010. Council on Foreign Relations <https://www.cfr.org/expert-roundup/big-saudi-arms-sale-good-idea>

Second, U.S. military power is finite, and both the United States and Saudi Arabia face rapidly changing threats. The United States needs allies that have interoperable forces that can both fight effectively alongside the United States and ease the U.S. burden by defending themselves. Iran already poses a massive asymmetric naval-air-assault force threat to the Gulf states. The U.S. invasion of Iraq has left Iraqi forces a decade away from being a counterbalance to Iran; Saudi Arabia is the only meaningful regional power to work with. Additionally, al-Qaeda in the peninsula is based in Yemen, and the threat of terrorism and outside infiltration means highly mobile Saudi forces are critical to the security of Saudi energy and civil facilities. Helping Saudi Arabia create a combination of effective air and naval power also helps ensure the security of tanker and other shipping in the Gulf of Oman and a steadily more unstable Red Sea.

Link: Arms sales to Saudi Arabia present a powerful deterrent to Iran

Dr. Loren B. Thompson 2010 (Chief Operating Officer of the non-profit Lexington Institute and Chief Executive Officer of Source Associates; former Deputy Director of the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University) quoted by Deborah Jerome. “Is Big Saudi Arms Sale a Good Idea?” September 24, 2010. Council on Foreign Relations <https://www.cfr.org/expert-roundup/big-saudi-arms-sale-good-idea>

For Iran, though, the transaction presents a powerful deterrent since there is nothing in Tehran’s current arsenal that can cope with the latest versions of the F-15 fighter or the AH-64 attack helicopter. The radical Shiite regime in Iran constitutes the most serious military threat to Saudi Arabia, so I expect that the pending arms sale will be followed by additional agreements to modernize the Saudi Eastern Fleet in the Gulf and upgrade missile defenses.

Brink: Saudi Arabia is our most important strategic partner blocking Iran

Rebeccah L. Heinrichs 2018 (senior fellow at Hudson Institute where she specializes in nuclear deterrence and missile defense. Rebeccah serves as an adjunct professor at the Institute of World Politics where she teaches nuclear deterrence theory) “Why Breaking With Saudi Arabia Over Khashoggi Would Hurt America.” October 23, 2018. <https://www.hudson.org/research/14636-why-breaking-with-saudi-arabia-over-khashoggi-would-hurt-america>

Saudi Arabia is famously the largest customer of American foreign military sales. Unfortunately, this relationship is frequently disparaged as based on greed and nothing more. No doubt American companies and therefore plenty of Americans benefit directly from selling expensive military equipment and weapons to other nations. But the primary reason that the United States invests so heavily in Saudi Arabia is because of its strategic importance. Saudi Arabia is a crucial counterweight to the Islamic Republic of Iran. [**END QUOTE**] Iran is a sworn enemy of the United States and Israel. It is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American soldiers in Iraq, and for maiming countless other American warfighters in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Iran regime oppresses its own people and fails to invest in its own economy, because it has prioritized funding Bashar al Assad’s brutal civil war in Syria, enabling him to repeatedly use chemical weapons on his own people. Iran is a constant destabilizing force, seeking to undermine the governments of sovereign nations like Iraq and Yemen. Although Saudi rightly receives flak for its atrocious (and in many cases, avoidable) civilian casualties in Yemen, that war only exists because Iran is funding and arming the Houthi rebels. It is a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia, in which Iran is the aggressor and Saudi is the defender. Last, and certainly not least, Iran continues to fund and export terrorism in the Middle East and Europe. **[SHE GOES ON TO CONCLUDE QUOTE:**] It is not too strong to say Saudi Arabia is our most important strategic partner in mitigating and rolling back Iran’s power and malign activities.

Impact: Empowering Iran = terrorism, death & destruction

Rebeccah L. Heinrichs 2018 (senior fellow at Hudson Institute where she specializes in nuclear deterrence and missile defense. Rebeccah serves as an adjunct professor at the Institute of World Politics where she teaches nuclear deterrence theory) “Why Breaking With Saudi Arabia Over Khashoggi Would Hurt America.” October 23, 2018. <https://www.hudson.org/research/14636-why-breaking-with-saudi-arabia-over-khashoggi-would-hurt-america>

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Link: Iran = existential threat to Saudi Arabia

Armida van Rij and Dr. Benedict Wilkinson 2018 (Rij - Research Assistant at the Policy Institute, King's College London. Wilinson – PhD; Senior Research Fellow in the Policy Institute at King’s College, London.) Sept 2018 “Security cooperation with Saudi Arabia: Is it worth it for the UK? “ <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute/assets/uk-saudi-arabia-report.pdf> (brackets added)

Saudi Arabia’s foreign policy under MBS [Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman] is predominantly focused on the threat posed by Iran, itself seeking to expand its influence in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia views this as an existential threat, one that must be curbed by consolidating its position as a regional power, including in countries with Shia populations such as Lebanon, Iraq and, crucially, Yemen.

Impact: Saudi Oil Collapse = Massive economic damage

[James Phillips](https://www.heritage.org/staff/james-phillips) , Michaela Dodge, Dr. Ariel Cohen and Dr. Kreutzer 2012. (Phillips - senior research fellow for Middle Eastern affairs at The Heritage Foundation. Dodge - Senior Policy Analyst, Center for National Defense, Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy. Cohen - Ph.D., is Senior Research Fellow in Russian and Eurasian Studies and International Energy Policy in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, a division of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies, at The Heritage Foundation. . Kreutzer - Ph.D., is Research Fellow in Energy Economics and Climate Change in the Center for Data Analysis at The Heritage Foundation. ) 9 Apr 2012 Thinking the Unthinkable: Modeling a Collapse of Saudi Oil Production <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/report/thinking-the-unthinkable-modeling-collapse-saudi-oil-production> (brackets added)

Saudi Revolution: The Economic Impacts   
The Saudi Kingdom is the largest oil producer in the world—occasionally surpassed by Russia—and essentially dominates the oil market due to its large excess production capacity, which it can ramp up to 12 mbd [million barrels per day]. A prolonged and massive disruption of Saudi oil production would significantly affect global energy markets and economic activity. [**END QUOTE]** However, for this economic analysis we look only at the effects on the United States. The impact in Asia, a principal customer of Saudi oil, would likely be much worse. It is difficult to calculate the magnitude of the panic in the global capital market that such a scenario would cause.We modeled total cessation of Saudi oil production, an 8.4 million-barrels-per-day reduction, for one year followed by a two-year recovery. For the purpose of this exercise, we optimistically assumed that repairing destroyed and damaged facilities and gradually restoring oil exports to the previous level would take approximately two years. In reality, the repairs and production recovery could take much longer. Even though withdrawals from strategic petroleum reserves (SPRs)—emergency oil stores in the U.S. and Europe and to a lesser degree in China and Japan—start immediately, SPRs cannot compensate for such a massive disruption. **[HE GOES ON TO CONCLUDE QUOTE:]** We would expect to see the following impacts over the three-year course of production loss and recovery:  
Gasoline prices jump to more than $6.50 per gallon,   
Petroleum prices jump from $100 per barrel to more than $220 per barrel,   
Employment losses exceed 1.5 million jobs, and   
Gross domestic product (GDP) drops by nearly $450 billion.

6. Oil Shipping Lanes

Link: Saudi military capabilities critically weakened without US support

Cross apply DA-5 evidence

Link & Brink: Saudis are key to safeguarding oil shipping lanes. Iran and others can threaten shipping

Rebeccah L. Heinrichs 2018 (senior fellow at Hudson Institute where she specializes in nuclear deterrence and missile defense. Rebeccah serves as an adjunct professor at the Institute of World Politics where she teaches nuclear deterrence theory) “Why Breaking With Saudi Arabia Over Khashoggi Would Hurt America.” October 23, 2018. <https://www.hudson.org/research/14636-why-breaking-with-saudi-arabia-over-khashoggi-would-hurt-america>

While true that the United States is becoming energy independent, it is still inextricably tied to the global market and our Asian allies remain reliant on Golf petroleum. The stability and diversification of the energy market is a critical factor in matters of war and peace. Iran has repeatedly brandished its ability to affect the energy market by, for example, threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi Arabia leads the Gulf coalition in maritime security to keep critical shipping lanes open. And should the United States and allies like Saudi Arabia lose control of the security of those shipping lanes, countries like Iran and its increasingly bold partners — large nuclear powers China and Russia — would be greatly empowered to more effectively blackmail and coerce the United States and our allies.

Link: Disruptions of oil shipping raise oil prices

Robin Mills 2016. (nonresident fellow for Energy at the Brookings Institution Doha Center ) April 2016 “Risky Routes: Energy Transit in the Middle East” <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/en-energy-transit-security-mills-2.pdf>

The economic impacts of a disruption vary from trivial to severe and from regional to global. The impacts would depend on the nature of the disruption, its extent and duration, the energy source affected, how quickly normal transit could be restored, and on counter-measures and mitigation actions (for example the use of strategic stocks). The costs of a disruption are divided between the energy exporters, whose shipments are reduced or halted, and the energy importers, whose energy supplies are either reduced or become more expensive. Given the global nature of the oil business in particular, and the gas industry to an extent, these losses affect consumers everywhere.

Impacts: Cross-apply impacts from DA-4

7. US Defense industry jobs

Arms exports are necessary for the U.S. defense industry

*Dr. Oleg Svet 2016. (doctoral dissertation on security assistance to Iraq and has analyzed U.S. security cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iraq, and Afghanistan. From 2015 to 2016 he analyzed security assistance as a consultant supporting the U.S. Defense Dept.)*“Why Congress Supports Saudi Arms Sales.” Sept 26, 2016. The National Interest <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-congress-supports-saudi-arms-sales-17840>

When considering this particular sale it is important to keep in mind the big picture of U.S. defense exports and their contribution to America's defense industry. Over the past six years, as U.S. defense spending has faced considerable budgetary pressures, American defense companies have struggled to maintain employees and keep production lines open. With tightening defense budgets, highly-skilled manufacturing jobs on the line, and the prospect of production lines for advanced U.S. weapons being phased out, American exports of defense articles and services have become and will continue to be ever more important.

Saudi purchases protect thousands of American jobs

*Dr. Oleg Svet 2016. (PhD; doctoral dissertation on security assistance to Iraq and has analyzed U.S. security cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Formerly a consultant for the U.S. Defense Department.)*“Why Congress Supports Saudi Arms Sales.” Sept 26, 2016. The National Interest. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-congress-supports-saudi-arms-sales-17840>

Saudi Arabia has emerged as the dominant purchaser of American arms. In 2010 Riyadh signed a record $60 billion deal to buy defense articles made by American companies. Under the deal, it agreed to spend $30 billion up front on fighter jets, helicopters, and other systems. That purchase is equivalent to a large chunk of the U.S. defense budget. In fact, the contribution is much larger, relatively speaking, when one looks at how it benefits the smaller defense companies that service American and foreign defense customers. The 2010 deal with Saudi Arabia entailed purchasing American jet fighters that will help manufacturers in forty-four states and aid in protecting seventy-seven thousand jobs.[**END QUOTE**] Importantly, the 2010 Saudi deal included the purchase of eighty-four new F-15 fighters. The prime contractor was Boeing, a hundred--year-old American multinational company that consistently ranks as one of the world's most admired companies. Until recently, Boeing produced only one F-15 per month, and the production line for F-15s was on the verge of being closed, that is, until the deal with Saudi Arabia. [**HE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE:]** Riyadh's purchase helped save thousands of jobs for Americans working on Boeing's F-15 production line on the outskirts of Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. Boeing also makes Apache helicopters, and the Saudi deal included the purchase of seventy Apaches. As Fortune reported, "Production lines for Boeing's F-15, Harpoon missile, and Apache helicopter are sustained by exports, which support thousands of high-paying, highly skilled manufacturing jobs." Saudi purchases help keep highly-skilled manufacturing jobs in the United States.

Other Gulf States would follow Saudi Arabia in turning to other arms suppliers

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Saudi Arabia does not have an indigenous military industry to support the war; it has to find military suppliers to sustain its war effort. Had the sale been blocked and Saudi Arabia shifted to Russia, China, or other suppliers for military purchases, other Gulf States would have followed suit, putting in jeopardy an additional tens of billions of dollars in sales by American multinational companies and thousands of highly-skilled manufacturing jobs.

Blocking arms sales to Saudi Arabia would have an even wider negative impact for America

*Dr. Oleg Svet 2016. (PhD; doctoral dissertation on security assistance to Iraq and has analyzed U.S. security cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Formerly a consultant for the U.S. Defense Department.)*“Why Congress Supports Saudi Arms Sales.” Sept 26, 2016. The National Interest. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-congress-supports-saudi-arms-sales-17840>

Going forward, when considering whether to block arms sales to Saudi Arabia, therefore, Congress should not only worry about the particular sale in question. It should also consider the wider negative implications that a suspension would have on tens of thousands of high-skilled manufacturing jobs all across America, tens of billions of dollars in revenues for U.S. companies, and the wider defense industry.

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