# TOC – Saudi

## Iran

### 1NC – Flashpoints

#### Multiple flashpoints for conflict and escalation. Dreyfuss 3/11

Bob Dreyfuss, 3-11-2019, "The Trump Administration Wants a War with Iran," Nation, <https://www.thenation.com/article/iran-america-potential-war-trump-administration/> Bob Dreyfuss, a Nation contributing editor, is an independent investigative journalist who specializes in politics and national security.

Here’s the foreign-policy question of questions in 2019: Are President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, all severely weakened at home and with few allies abroad, reckless enough to set off a war with Iran? Could military actions designed to be limited—say, a heightening of the Israeli bombing of Iranian forces inside Syria, or possible US cross-border attacks from Iraq, or a clash between American and Iranian naval ships in the Persian Gulf—trigger a wider war? Worryingly, the answers are: Yes and yes. Even though Western Europe has lined up in opposition to any future conflict with Iran, even though Russia and China would rail against it, even though most Washington foreign-policy experts would be horrified by the outbreak of such a war, it could happen. Despite growing Trump administration tensions with Venezuela and even with North Korea, Iran is the likeliest spot for Washington’s next shooting war. Years of politically charged anti-Iranian vituperation might blow up in the faces of President Trump and his two most hawkish aides, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton, setting off a conflict with potentially catastrophic implications. Such a war could quickly spread across much of the Middle East, not just to Saudi Arabia and Israel, the region’s two major anti-Iranian powers, but Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and the various Persian Gulf states. It might indeed be, as Iranian President Hassan Rouhani [suggested](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-usa-rouhani/irans-rouhani-warns-trump-about-mother-of-all-wars-idUSKBN1KC07Z?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews) last year (unconsciously [echoing](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1949-3606.2009.tb00118.x) Iran’s former enemy, Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein) the “mother of all wars.” With Bolton and Pompeo, both well-known Iranophobes, in the driver’s seat, few restraints remain on President Trump when it comes to that country. White House Chief of Staff John Kelly, National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, President Trump’s former favorite generals who had urged caution, are [no longer around](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/02/07/trump-is-moving-us-closer-war-with-iran/?utm_term=.c2d8b7e38237). And though the Democratic National Committee passed a [resolution](https://www.niacaction.org/dnc-adopts-jcpoa-resolution/) last month calling for the United States to return to the nuclear agreement that President Obama signed, there are still a significant number of congressional Democrats who believe that Iran is a major threat to US interests in the region. During the Obama years, it was de rigueur for Democrats to support the president’s conclusion that Iran was a prime state sponsor of terrorism and should be treated accordingly. And the congressional Democrats now leading the party on foreign policy—Eliot Engel, who currently chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Bob Menendez and Ben Cardin, the two ranking Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—were opponents of the 2015 nuclear accord (though all three now claim to have [changed their minds](https://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-democrats-who-opposed-iran-nuke-deal-urge-trump-to-keep-pact/)). DEADLY FLASHPOINTS FOR A FUTURE WAR On the roller-coaster ride that is Donald Trump’s foreign policy, it’s hard to discern what’s real and what isn’t, what’s rhetoric and what’s not. When it comes to Iran, it’s reasonable to assume that Trump, Bolton, and Pompeo aren’t planning an updated version of the unilateral invasion of Iraq that President George W. Bush launched in the spring of 2003. Yet by openly [calling](https://www.newsweek.com/bolton-iran-ayatollah-many-years-trump-anniversary-1327159) for the toppling of the government in Tehran, by withdrawing from the Iran nuclear agreement and reimposing onerous sanctions to cripple that country’s economy, by [encouraging](https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-trump-administration-calls-on-iranians-to-make-a-choice-about-their-leadership)Iranians to rise up in revolt, by overtly [supporting](https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/07/20/why-trumps-hawks-back-the-mek-terrorist-cult/)various exile groups (and perhaps covertly even [terrorists](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/report-at-least-20-guard-personnel-killed-in-iran-bombing/2019/02/13/947b8336-2fa8-11e9-8781-763619f12cb4_story.html?utm_term=.843d2dad73b8)), and by joining with Israel and Saudi Arabia in an informal [anti-Iranian alliance](https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-warsaw-summit-will-test-u-s-gamble-on-israeli-arab-pact-against-iran-1.6932889), the three of them are clearly attempting to force the collapse of the Iranian regime, which just celebrated the 40th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic revolution. There are three potential flashpoints where limited skirmishes, were they to break out, could quickly escalate into a major shooting war. The first is in Syria and Lebanon. Iran is deeply involved in defending Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (who only recently returned from a [visit](https://www.wsj.com/articles/syrias-assad-visits-tehran-looking-to-cement-ties-11551136498) to Tehran) and closely allied with Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite political party with a potent paramilitary arm. Weeks ago, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu openly [boasted](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/20/world/middleeast/israel-attack-syria-iran.html) that his country’s air force had successfully taken out Iranian targets in Syria. In fact, little noticed here, dozens of such strikes have taken place for [more than a year](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/10/world/middleeast/israel-iran-syria.html?module=inline), with mounting Iranian casualties. Until now, the Iranian leadership has avoided a direct response that would heighten the confrontation with Israel, just as it has avoided unleashing Hezbollah, a well-armed, battle-tested proxy force. That could, however, change if the hard-liners in Iran decided to retaliate. Should this simmering conflict explode, does anyone doubt that President Trump would soon join the fray on Israel’s side or that congressional Democrats would quickly succumb to the administration’s calls to back the Jewish state? Next, consider Iraq as a possible flashpoint for conflict. In February, a blustery Trump [told](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transcript-president-trump-on-face-the-nation-february-3-2019/)CBS’s Face the Nation that he intends to keep US forces in Iraq “because I want to be looking a little bit at Iran because Iran is the real problem.” His comments did not exactly go over well [with the Iraqi](https://www.npr.org/2019/02/15/694897468/trump-wants-to-use-iraqi-base-to-watch-iran-now-iraqi-parties-want-u-s-forces-ou) political class, since many of that country’s parties and militias are backed by Iran. Trump’s declaration followed a Wall Street Journal [report](https://www.wsj.com/articles/white-house-sought-options-to-strike-iran-11547375404) late last year that Bolton had asked the Pentagon—over the [opposition](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/13/us/politics/bolton-iran-pentagon.html) of various generals and then–Secretary of Defense Mattis—to prepare options for “retaliatory strikes” against Iran. This roughly coincided with a couple of small rocket attacks [against](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-attack/three-mortars-land-inside-baghdads-green-zone-idUSKCN1LM3BO) Baghdad’s fortified Green Zone and [the airport](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-protests-airport/basra-airport-targeted-by-three-rockets-no-casualties-sources-idUSKCN1LO09L) in Basra, Iraq’s Persian Gulf port city, neither of which caused any casualties. [Writing in Foreign Affairs](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2018-10-15/michael-pompeo-secretary-of-state-on-confronting-iran), however, Pompeo blamed Iran for the attacks, which he called “life-threatening,” adding, “Iran did not stop these attacks, which were carried out by proxies it has supported with funding, training, and weapons.” No “retaliatory strikes” were launched, but plans do undoubtedly now exist for them, and it’s not hard to imagine Bolton and Pompeo persuading Trump to go ahead and use them—with incalculable consequences. Finally, there’s the Persian Gulf itself. Ever since the George W. Bush years, the US Navy has worried about possible clashes with Iran’s naval forces in those waters and there have been a [number](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_U.S.%E2%80%93Iranian_naval_dispute) of [high-profile incidents](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2016_U.S.%E2%80%93Iran_naval_incident). The Obama administration [tried (but failed)](https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970203791904576609093178338996) to establish a hotline of sorts that would have linked US and Iranian naval commanders and so made it easier to defuse any such incident, an initiative championed by then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Mike Mullen, a longtime [opponent](https://www.commondreams.org/views/2010/03/07/mullen-wary-israeli-attack-iran) of war with Iran. Under Trump, however, all bets are off. Last year, he [requested](https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/trump-asked-mattis-for-plan-to-blow-up-iranian-fast-boats-report-says-1.6834093) that Mattis prepare plans to blow up Iran’s “fast boats,” small gunboats in the Gulf, reportedly asking, “Why don’t we sink them?” He’s already [reinforced](https://www.rferl.org/a/u-s-aircraft-carrier-arrives-in-persian-gulf-shadowed-by-iranian-boats/29669954.html) the US naval presence there, [getting Iran’s attention](https://thehill.com/policy/international/422703-iran-presence-of-us-carrier-in-gulf-insignificant). Not surprisingly, the Iranian leadership has responded in kind. Earlier this year, President Hassan Rouhani [announced](https://www.upi.com/Defense-News/2019/02/19/Iran-unveils-submarine-that-can-launch-cruise-missiles/9491550588008/?nll=1) that his country had developed submarines capable of launching cruise missiles against naval targets. The Iranians also began a series of Persian Gulf [war games](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2019/02/21/Iranian-navy-starts-war-games-to-demonstrate-strength-at-sea/9321550769531/?sl=11) and, in late February, [test-fired](https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2019/02/24/iran-launches-cruise-missile-from-submarine-during-drill/) one of those sub-launched missiles. Add in one more thing: In an eerie replay of a key argument George Bush and Dick Cheney used for going to war with Iraq in 2003, in mid-February the right-wing media outlet Washington Times ran an “exclusive” report with this [headline](https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/feb/18/iran-al-qaeda-alliance-may-provide-legal-rationale/): “Iran-Al Qaeda Alliance may provide legal rationale for US military strikes.” Back in 2002, the [Office of Special Plans](https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2004/01/lie-factory/) at Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s Pentagon, under the supervision of neoconservatives Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, spent months trying to prove that Al Qaeda and Iraq were in league. The Washington Times piece, citing Trump administration sources, made a similar claim—that Iran is now aiding and abetting Al Qaeda with a “clandestine sanctuary to funnel fighters, money, and weapons across the Middle East.” It added that the administration is seeking to use this information to establish “a potential legal justification for military strikes against Iran or its proxies.” Needless to say, few are the terrorism experts or Iran specialists who would agree that Iran has anything like an active relationship with Al Qaeda. WILL THE HARD-LINERS TRIUMPH IN IRAN AS IN WASHINGTON? The Trump administration is, in fact, experiencing increasing difficulty finding allies ready to join a new “[coalition of the willing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coalition_of_the_willing)” to confront Iran. The only two charter members so far, Israel and Saudi Arabia, are, however, enthusiastic indeed. Last month, Prime Minister Netanyahu was heard remarking that Israel and its Arab allies want war with Iran. At a less-than-successful mid-February summit meeting Washington organized in Warsaw, Poland, to recruit world leaders for a future crusade against Iran, Netanyahu was [heard to say](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/netanyahu-appears-say-war-iran-common-goal-n971266) in Hebrew: “This is an open meeting with representatives of leading Arab countries that are sitting down together with Israel in order to advance the common interest of war with Iran.” (He later insisted that the correct translation should have been “combating Iran,” but the damage had already been done.) That [Warsaw summit](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/world/middleeast/warsaw-summit-pompeo.html) was explicitly designed to build an anti-Iranian coalition, but many of America’s allies, staunchly opposing Trump’s decision to pull out of the Iran nuclear accord, would have nothing to do with it. In an effort to mollify the Europeans, in particular, the United States and Poland awkwardly [renamed](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/the-warsaw-summit-not-so-anti-iranian-but-still-a-success) it: “The Ministerial to Promote a Future of Peace and Security in the Middle East.” The name change, however, fooled no one. As a result, Vice President Pence and Secretary of State Pompeo were [embarrassed](https://www.vox.com/world/2019/2/15/18225218/warsaw-summit-2019-iran-meeting-conference) by a series of no-shows: The French, the Germans, and the European Union, among others, flatly declined to send ministerial-level representatives, letting their ambassadors in Warsaw stand in for them. The many Arab nations not in thrall to Saudi Arabia similarly sent only low-level delegations. Turkey and Russia boycotted altogether, convening a [summit of their own](https://www.euronews.com/2019/02/14/russia-turkey-and-iran-hold-rival-conference-to-us-backed-warsaw-summit) in which Presidents Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with Iran’s Rouhani. Never the smoothest diplomat, Pence condemned, insulted, and vilified the Europeans for refusing to go along with Washington’s wrecking-ball approach. He began [his speech](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-warsaw-ministerial-working-luncheon-warsaw-poland/) to the conference by saying: “The time has come for our European partners to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal.” He then launched a direct attack on Europe’s efforts to preserve that accord by seeking a way around the sanctions Washington had re-imposed: “Sadly, some of our leading European partners…have led the effort to create mechanisms to break up our sanctions. We call it an effort to break American sanctions against Iran’s murderous revolutionary regime.” That blast at the European allies should certainly have brought to mind Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld’s [disparaging comments](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jan/24/germany.france) in early 2003 about Germany and France, in particular, being leaders of the “old Europe.” Few allies then backed Washington’s invasion plans, which, of course, didn’t prevent war. Europe’s reluctance now isn’t likely to prove much of a deterrent either. But Pence is right that the Europeans have taken steps to salvage the Iran nuclear deal, otherwise known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In particular, they’ve created a “special purpose vehicle” known as the Instrument for Supporting Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) designed “to support legitimate trade with Iran,” according to a [statement](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/iran/events/article/joint-statement-on-the-creation-of-instex-the-special-purpose-vehicle-aimed-at) from the foreign ministers of Germany, France, and Great Britain. It’s potentially a big deal and, as Pence noted, [explicitly designed](https://www.dw.com/en/instex-europe-sets-up-transactions-channel-with-iran/a-47303580) to circumvent the sanctions Washington imposed on Iran after Trump’s break with the JCPOA. INSTEX has a political purpose, too. The American withdrawal from the JCPOA was a body blow to President Rouhani, Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, and other centrists in Tehran who had taken credit for, and pride in, the deal between Iran and the six world powers (the United States, France, Germany, Britain, Russia, and China) that signed the agreement. That deal had been welcomed in Iran in part because it seemed to ensure that country’s ability to expand its trade to the rest of the world, including its oil exports, free of sanctions. Even before Trump abandoned the deal, however, Iran was already finding US pressure overwhelming and, for the average Iranian, things hadn’t improved in any significant way. Worse yet, in the past year the economy had taken a [nosedive](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/26/world/middleeast/iran-middle-class-currency-inflation.html), the currency had [plunged](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/05/world/middleeast/iran-currency-rial.html), [inflation](https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevehanke/2018/07/29/irans-rial-is-in-a-death-spiral-again/#e28950b3e597) was running rampant, and strikes and [street demonstrations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017%E2%80%9318_Iranian_protests) had broken out, challenging the government and its clerical leadership. Chants of “Death to the Dictator!”—not heard since the Green Movement’s revolt against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s reelection in 2009—once again resounded in street demonstrations. At the end of February, it seemed as if Trump, Bolton, and Pompeo had scored a dangerous victory when Zarif, Iran’s well-known, Western-oriented foreign minister, announced his resignation. Moderates who supported the JCPOA, including Rouhani and Zarif, have been under attack from the country’s hard-liners since Trump’s pullout. As a result, Zarif’s decision was widely assumed to be a worrisome sign that those hard-liners had claimed their first victim. There was even unfounded speculation that, without Zarif, who had worked tirelessly with the Europeans to preserve what was left of the nuclear pact, Iran itself might abandon the accord and resume its nuclear program. And there’s no question that the actions and statements of Bolton, Pompeo, and crew have undermined Iran’s moderates, while emboldening its hard-liners, who are making I-told-you-so arguments to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country’s supreme leader. Despite the internal pressure on Zarif, however, his resignation proved short-lived indeed: Rouhani [rejected it](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-zarif-resignation/iran-president-rejects-resignation-of-moderate-ally-zarif-idUSKCN1QG0LY), and there was an upsurge of support for him in Iran’s parliament. Even General Qassem Soleimani, a major figure in that country’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the commander of the Quds Force, [backed](https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/433490/General-Soleimani-Zarif-is-in-charge-of-Iran-s-foreign-policy) him. As it happens, the Quds Force, an arm of the IRGC, is responsible for Iran’s paramilitary and foreign intelligence operations throughout the region, but especially in Iraq and Syria. That role has allowed Soleimani to assume responsibility for much of Iran’s foreign policy in the region, making him a formidable rival to Zarif—a tension that undoubtedly contributed to his brief resignation and it isn’t likely to dissipate anytime soon. According to [analysts](https://lobelog.com/zarif-resigns-then-returns-with-stronger-hand/) and [commentators](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/27/iran-foreign-minister-mohammad-javad-zarif-resignation), it appears to have been a ploy by Zarif (and perhaps Rouhani, too) to win a vote of political confidence and it appears to have strengthened their hand for the time being. Still, the Zarif resignation crisis threw into stark relief the deep tensions within Iranian politics and raised a key question: As the Trump administration accelerates its efforts to seek a confrontation, will they find an echo among Iranian hard-liners who’d like nothing more than a face-off with the United States? Maybe that’s exactly what Bolton and Pompeo want. If so, prepare yourself: Another American war unlikely to work out the way anyone in Washington dreams is on the horizon.

### Ext – Dreyfuss

### 5th Fleet

#### Ending arms sales causes a policy shift that results in the 5th fleet being relocated. Guyer 3/18

Jonathan Guyer, 3-18-2019, "Needed: A U.S. Policy on Saudi Arabia," American Prospect, <https://prospect.org/article/needed-us-policy-on-saudi-arabia> Jonathan Guyer is managing editor of The American Prospect. He has written for Foreign Policy, The New Yorker, Harper's, Le Monde diplomatique, and Rolling Stone. A former fellow of Harvard's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, he is completing a book about political cartoons and comics in the Middle East.

If Saudi Arabia is unwilling to reform on these three points, then perhaps it is time to raise first-order questions about why the U.S. military is so deeply ensconced in the Middle East and the long-term benefits of such inertia. Washington could begin by considering a path toward a constructive relationship with Iran. Containment of Tehran hasn’t worked, and a move toward rapprochement would theoretically provide the U.S. with more options. Over time, the U.S. might downgrade the Saudi relationship and pursue a new regional strategy, reducing the American military profile in the Persian Gulf, sharing the security burden with European and Asian allies, and perhaps even relocating the U.S. Fifth Fleet currently based in Bahrain. Threatening or carrying out a military pullback is risky, but so is supporting an autocrat increasingly at odds with his own people and bent on destabilizing the region.

#### 5th fleet doesn’t deter aggression and is only focused on the Strait of Hormuz, not Syria or Iraq. Our aircraft carriers are being redirected. Larter 18

David Larter, 5-2-2018, "What if the US stopped sending aircraft carriers to the Arabian Gulf?," Defense News, <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2018/05/02/what-if-the-us-stopped-sending-aircraft-carriers-to-the-arabian-gulf/?fbclid=IwAR0_s0teDk9Ma7DJK5hhRHZ6CoBjC7lHATwgX9rlseglKNncWK9udKoAh08>. Writer, Defense News.

[Gaps in carrier presence have been](https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/surface-navy-association/2016/12/28/middle-east-now-without-a-us-carrier/) increasingly frequent in recent years. Both 2015 and 2017 saw monthlong gaps in U.S. Navy [carrier presence](https://www.defensenews.com/news/your-navy/2017/03/22/first-u-s-aircraft-carrier-of-trump-presidency-enters-the-persian-gulf/) with little evidence of a major shift in power dynamics there. Indeed, the Navy is currently without an aircraft carrier in the Gulf, with the Theodore Roosevelt leaving the region in March without a replacement. With a new [National Defense Strategy](https://www.defensenews.com/breaking-news/2018/01/19/national-defense-strategy-released-with-clear-priority-stay-ahead-of-russia-and-china/) from Defense Secretary Jim Mattis that deemphasizes the war on terrorism and places emphasis on competition with China and Russia, the U.S. is rethinking how it uses its most recognizable and fearsome force-projection instrument: the aircraft carrier. The issue, of course, is oil and maintaining the free-flow tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial choke point that serves as a gateway to more than half the world’s known petroleum reserves. Withholding carriers from the Arabian Gulf, also known as the Persian Gulf, upends nearly 30 years of Navy policy that created a standing requirement to have at least one carrier there, as well as a carrier in the western Pacific. That requirement dates back to 1990’s Operation Desert Shield that evolved into Operation Desert Storm in 1991, which saw five aircraft carriers deployed to the region. Since then, various commitments have kept carriers in the region: Operation Northern Watch and Southern Watch, which created protected airspace over northern and southern Iraq; 1998’s bombing campaign against Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction facilities, Operation Desert Fox; 2003’s Iraq invasion and subsequent occupation; in 2011 when Iran threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz and then-U.S. Central Command head Gen. Jim Mattis ordered a standing two-carrier presence requirement in the Gulf; in 2014 when the Obama administration, in the middle of punishing budget cuts, ordered strikes on the Islamic State group in Iraq and then Syria after the public execution of journalist James Foley ― the high watermark for the militant organization that overran much of northeastern Syria and northwestern Iraq. Now that the campaign against ISIS has rolled back the group’s presence to just another warring faction in Syria’s ongoing bloodbath of a civil war, leaving little for the Navy’s F/A-18s to strike, the military thinks the carriers might be more useful elsewhere. But what will happen to the balance of power if U.S. carrier patrols become the exception rather than the rule? Experts who spoke to Defense News say that even if the U.S. significantly reduces its aircraft carrier presence in the Gulf, it would have little overall impact to the strategic balance of power there. They also cast doubt on whether Iran would even want to attempt to shut down traffic through Hormuz, given the overwhelming international response that would be likely to come down on its head. There are even indications that keeping a carrier in the Gulf might even play into Iran’s hands, said Bryan Clark, a retired submarine officer and former senior aide to then-Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert. During his tenure with the former CNO, Clark, now an analyst with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, said a study on the effectiveness of carrier presence in the region conducted by CNA with the Navy showed that Iran favored keeping U.S. carriers in the Gulf. “The Iranians we had come talk to us, mostly defectors, all said, uniformly, that the Iranians consider the carriers in the Arabian Gulf a hostage that they can choose to attack at any point,” Clark said. “And they don’t even need to have any real success beyond that they can claim it in their media or show something hitting the carrier.” For all its strategic importance, the Gulf is a relatively small body of water that never exceeds a width of 210 miles and drops to 35 miles across at the Strait of Hormuz. The Gulf is shallow, cramped and incredibly busy with commercial shipping, and overall just about the worst environment imaginable for picking a fight with an adversary more capable than a defanged Iraq. On a clear day, a pilot taking off in a helicopter from the flight deck of a destroyer at any number of points in the Gulf can see shores on either side of the aircraft once airborne. Such a body could, in the event a regional war broke out, rapidly turn into a hellish shooting gallery with a large aircraft carrier being the prime target for Iranian shore batteries. Counterintuitively, the patrol craft and mine countermeasure ships the Navy has deployed in Bahrain, home to the U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet, serve as a better deterrent, Clark said, because those capabilities start to cast doubt on whether Iran could be successful in closing down the Strait of Hormuz with mines. And the other destabilizing activities that has angered successive U.S. administrations are not deterred at all by aircraft carriers. “The carrier is mostly now about deterring Iranian efforts to close the Strait of Hormuz, it’s not going to stop Iran from sending Quds force to Syria or Iraq to interfere with our policy,” Clark said, referring to Iran’s Revolutionary Guard known for high-risk interventions designed to spread the country’s influence in the region. Overall, less carrier presence in the Gulf does make strategic sense, Clark said. “Going away from the 1.0 presence requirement in the Gulf is a useful way to free up carriers to do things that are more dynamic, to use the Pentagon’s word, and meet the challenges from Russia in the eastern Mediterranean or even in the north Atlantic.”

#### Iran’s navy is already aggressive and supplying the Houthis – proves 5th fleet doesn’t deter. Mizokami 17

Kyle Mizokami, 10-14-2017, "Is Iran's Navy a Threat to America?," National Interest, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/irans-navy-threat-america-22722> Kyle Mizokami is a defense and national-security writer based in San Francisco who has appeared in the Diplomat, Foreign Policy, War is Boring and the Daily Beast. In 2009 he cofounded the defense and security blog Japan Security Watch.

Over the last ten years IRIN has apparently enjoyed slightly better funding, adding eleven more missile ships armed with C-704 and C-802 missiles. The Navy has also commissioned two new [Jamaran-class frigates](http://www.naval-technology.com/projects/jamaranmowjclassmult/), copies of the Vosper frigates that are armed with a seventy-six-millimeter gun, three twenty-millimeter and forty-millimeter cannon, Standard antiair missiles, torpedoes, and C-704 or C-802 missiles. Four more Jamarans are under construction, and seven [Sina fast-attack craft](https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/kaman.htm) are under construction to replace the Combattantes. Iran’s long coastline, astride some of the most important waterways in the world, makes land-based antiship missiles a useful weapon. The country has batteries of C-802 missiles, as well as local variants Ghadir and Ghader, with ranges of 120, two hundred and three hundred kilometers, respectively. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Aerospace Forces, which control most of the country’s ballistic missiles, [tested antiship ballistic missiles](http://www.janes.com/article/68625/iran-successfully-tests-radar-guided-anti-ship-ballistic-missile) capable of striking enemy warships at sea in March of this year. These missiles are believed to have a range of thirty kilometers and the ability to home in on enemy radars. The IRIN and the IRGC have separate responsibilities. The IRGC is responsible for defending Iran and controlling naval operations west of the Strait of Hormuz, while the IRIN is responsible for operation east of the strait and beyond. A zone of shared responsibility exists directly at the strait, within the vicinity of the coastal city of Bandar Abbas. Most countries would maintain a single naval force to patrol all of Iran’s southern waterways, and maintaining two separate naval forces is unnecessarily bureaucratic. That said, the IRGC is a deeply influential arm of the modern Iranian government and cannot simply be wished away. Iran’s naval forces constitute a key part of the country’s defense. They are also likely active in Iran’s support of Yemen’s Houthi rebels, but the extent of such support is unknown. While it might be easy to discount such a lightweight force, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Naval Forces and the Islamic Republic of Iran Naval Forces have numbers on their side and the ability to mount complex, multidirectional attacks with antiship missiles against much larger foreign naval vessels. They are a small, but potent, threat to any foreign navy that might stand in their way.

#### 5th fleet puts us on the brink of conflict but doesn’t deter. Saidi and Carl 4/9

Mike Saidi and Nicholas Carl, 4/9/19, "Iran File: Iran's Nearing Dire Straits," <https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/iran-file/iran-file-irans-nearing-dire-straits> Mike Saidi is an analyst and the Iran Team Lead for the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute. His work focuses on Iranian military and security issues. Mike graduated from the University of Texas at Dallas with a B.S. in International Political Economy. Nicholas Carl is an analyst for the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute where he specializes in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nicholas graduated from St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York with a B.A. in Political Science.

**Iran may seek to use its perceived leverage over commercial traffic through the Strait of Hormuz to exact economic concessions and sanctions relief to cool a domestic crisis.** Senior regime military and political officials have threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz since the U.S. withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018 (and, periodically, long before that). IRGC Sarallah (Greater Tehran) Operational Base Deputy Commander Brig. Gen. Esmaeil Kowsari \*[declared](https://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/6587080/%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%87-%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AC-%D9%86%D9%81%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B7%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%82-%D8%AA%D9%86%DA%AF%D9%87-%D9%87%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%B2-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%AF%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%A7-%D8%B1%D8%A7-%D9%86%D9%85%DB%8C%E2%80%8C%D8%AF%D9%87%DB%8C%D9%85) on July 4 that if the U.S. blocks Iranian oil exports then Iran “will not allow the [flow] of oil to other points in the world via the Strait of Hormuz.” President Hassan Rouhani \*[reissued](https://www.farsnews.com/printnews/13970913000545) a similar threat more recently in December 2018, days after Iran [test fired](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/pompeo-says-iran-tested-ballistic-missile-in-violation-of-un-resolution) a ballistic missile. Rouhani implied that Iran would close the Strait of Hormuz, stating that “if [the U.S.] wants to one day block Iran’s oil, then no oil will be exported from the Persian Gulf.” Such statements are not unusual—Iranian officials, especially those in or close to the IRGC, regularly threaten to close the Strait. But these threats have coincided with an increase in military exercises near the Strait of Hormuz and official visitations to key strategic islands near the Strait, particularly after the reimposition of oil sanctions on Iran in November 2018. The U.S. has already sensed an increase in provocative Iranian military actions in recent months **and has moved naval assets to counter a potential Iranian attempt to close the Strait.** The USS John Stennis Carrier Strike Group (CSG) [arrived](https://t.me/khabaronline_ir/200045) in the Persian Gulf on December 22, 2018. The Stennis CSG arrived in the Gulf during a joint IRGC-Artesh Ground Forces exercise in the Persian Gulf and was reportedly [pursued](https://t.me/khabaronline_ir/200165) by 30 IRGC fast boats upon its arrival. More recently, in late March 2019, U.S. and Oman [signed](https://www.wsj.com/articles/omani-ports-give-u-s-navy-greater-control-over-strategic-waterway-near-iran-11553448471) a naval agreement permitting the U.S. access to Arabian Sea ports in Oman, that are located outside of the Persian Gulf but near the Strait of Hormuz. The locations allow the U.S. Navy freedom of navigation and greater flexibility in the event Iran tries to close the Strait of Hormuz. It is unclear if Iran will ever make good on its threats to close the Strait. Increased regime military activity near the Strait, rhetorical threats from senior IRGC and political figures to block commercial traffic, and mounting economic pressure on Iran are setting the conditions for a potential military confrontation between the U.S. and Iran, possibly in the coming weeks. The Trump administration’s [designation](https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-designates-irans-islamic-revolutionary-guard-corps-a-foreign-terrorist-organization-11554733155?mod=breakingnews) of the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) on April 8 increases this potentiality. IRGC Commander Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari \*[warned](https://www.farsnews.com/news/13980118001072) that U.S. armed forces personnel in western Asia “will not have calm,” if the U.S. decides to designate the IRGC as a FTO. The designation will bring additional economic pressure against Iran as Iranian oil exports continue to drop. Iran **cannot actually close the Strait if the U.S. chooses to fight to re-open it but** can disrupt shipping through it for weeks or longer**.** The American military, along with its allies, is capable of keeping the Strait open, even in the face of Iran’s acquisition of the Russian S-300 air defense system. Iran could mine the Strait, conduct small-boat attacks on ships, and fire missiles at naval targets—of which the mining would be the most serious challenge largely due to the paucity of minesweepers among American and allied militaries. The military effort to re-open the Strait could be large, however, requiring the significant reinforcement of U.S. air, sea, and missile-defense assets in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. The risks of further escalation of such a conflict, including attacks by Iranian proxies on American forces and personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan, are high. The likelihood of Iran actually trying to close the Strait fully remains low but is rising. The likelihood of increased tensions in the Strait is much higher. The dangers inherent in either scenario warrant this warning despite the long-established pattern of Iranian threats to close the Strait and exercises aimed at demonstrating the ability to do so.

### Iran Funds Houthis

#### Iran conclusively funds the Houthis – prefer this evidence on recency and citing UN experts; Saudi coalition is working but needs continued support. Lederer 1/19

Edith M. Lederer, 1-19-2019, "UN experts: Fuel from Iran is financing Yemen rebels' war," AP NEWS, <https://www.apnews.com/b406265e1c6642fd9a614416270263b6>, Correspondent - AP

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Fuel is being shipped illegally from Iran to Houthi Shiite rebels in Yemen to finance their war against the government, and both sides are violating international law with their military campaigns and arbitrary detention of rivals, U.N. experts said in a new report. The experts painted a grim picture of a “deeply fractured” country sliding toward “humanitarian and economic catastrophe” with no sign of victory by either side in a conflict that many view as a proxy war between regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran. In the 85-page report to the Security Council seen Friday by The Associated Press, the experts said the government and its coalition partners led by Saudi Arabia made “significant progress” on the ground against the Houthis in 2018 — but their aim of restoring the government’s authority throughout the country “is far from being realized.” At the same time, the panel of experts monitoring U.N. sanctions against Yemen said “the Houthi leadership has continued to consolidate its hold over government and non-government institutions.” In the report’s only upbeat note, the experts said talks in Sweden between the government and the Houthis that led to an agreement in December on a cease-fire and withdrawal of rival forces from the key port of Hodeida “have raised hopes that a political process may quell the primary conflict in Yemen.” The conflict in Yemen began with the 2014 takeover of the capital Sanaa by the Iranian-backed Houthis, who toppled the government of Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. A Saudi-led coalition allied with Hadi’s internationally recognized government has been fighting the Houthis since 2015. Saudi-led airstrikes have hit schools, hospitals and wedding parties and killed thousands of Yemeni civilians. The Houthis have fired long-range missiles into Saudi Arabia and targeted vessels in the Red Sea. The fighting in the Arab world’s poorest country has taken a terrible toll on civilians, with thousands killed and a catastrophic humanitarian crisis underway. Millions suffer from food and medical care shortages and the country has been pushed to the brink of famine. In its report last year, the experts said Iran violated a U.N. arms embargo by directly or indirectly providing missiles and drones to the Houthis. The latest report said the experts identified a small number of companies inside and outside Yemen operating as front companies using false documentation “to conceal a donation of fuel” to an unnamed individual on the U.N. sanctions blacklist. The panel said it found that the fuel was loaded from Iranian ports under false documentation to avoid required U.N. inspections, and “the revenue from the sale of this fuel was used to finance the Houthi war effort.” Iran has repeatedly rejected allegations that it is providing military support to the Houthis. In 2018, the experts said “the threat to commercial shipping increased as Houthi forces developed and deployed sophisticated weapons such as anti-ship cruise missiles and waterborne improvised explosive devices against commercial vessels in the Red Sea.” In one case, they said, the Houthis targeted a vessel carrying wheat, which endangered the delivery of humanitarian aid and raised shipping costs to Yemen. The Houthis also attacked and damaged two Saudi oil tankers, each carrying 2 million barrels of crude oil, which “could have created an environmental disaster in the Red Sea,” the experts said. Since about last August, the panel said it noted the Houthis’ deployment of extended range drones that would allow rebel forces to strike deep in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, a key coalition partner.

### Yes – Threat

#### Iran threat is real and growing – US admirals agree that Iran is deliberate to stay course right now but “could always be pushed over the red line”

Starr and Browne 02/13(Barbara Starr and Ryan Browne, CNN reporters, 02/13/19, “Top US admiral in Middle East warns of growing Iranian threat”, <https://www.abc-7.com/story/39961015/top-us-admiral-in-middle-east-warns-of-growing-iranian-threat> | SP)

Iran is in possession of improved and dangerous weapons systems that give Tehran the ability to threaten some of the world's most important waterways, according to the top American admiral in the Middle East. "They have a growing capability in cruise missiles, they have a growing capability in ballistic missiles, they have a growing capability in unmanned surfaced systems, all these things that we watch that are offensive, and destabilizing in nature," Vice Adm. James Malloy, the commander of US Naval Forces Central Command, told a small group of reporters in Bahrain on Wednesday. Unmanned surface systems, which can include explosive boats designed to target enemy vessels, have concerned US officials for some time, particularly after Iranian-backed Houthi rebels based in Yemen used such a boat to attack a vessel that belonged to Saudi Arabia. Follow this story to get email or text alerts from ABC7 when there is a future article following this storyline. The US has accused Tehran of supplying the Houthis with these boats. Iran's military also possesses advanced sea mines, including acoustic and magnetic variants, a US defense official tells CNN, weapons that could pose major risks to maritime traffic. Additionally, Russia's sale of advanced air defense systems to Iran, including the S-300 missile system, has sparked growing concern that within five years the US will have to fundamentally change how it operates in the region's critical waterways, according to a senior US military official. The official said the new air defenses are just one aspect of a changing security environment that could result in traditional ports being not readily accessible due to Iranian missiles and mines. The US assesses that Iran is in the early stages of deploying the S-300 system. Iran's increased ability to threaten ships in the region comes as some military officials have expressed concerns about some of the more strident anti-Iran posturing being undertaken by hardline members of President Donald Trump's National Security Council. In a White House video message on Monday, national security adviser John Bolton warned Iran over its threats. "So Ayatollah Khamenei, for all your boasts, for all your threats to the life of the American President, you are responsible for terrorizing your own people and terrorizing the world as a whole. I don't think you will have many more anniversaries to enjoy," he said. The senior military official said the military is seeking to avoid open conflict with Iran and rely instead on economic and diplomatic pressure. However, military commanders believe Bolton is more strident and has a "proclivity" for action in the Gulf, the official said. The official said that while Iran may possess threatening capabilities, Tehran has been "deliberate" in its actions to date, seeking to avoid open conflict with the US. However, the official cautions that Iran "could always be pushed over a red line." US intelligence officials offered a similar analysis, telling CNN that Qasem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's expeditionary Islamic Revolutionary Guards Quds Force, which has been linked to operations in Syria and Yemen, "knows just how far he can go" without upsetting the civilian and clerical leadership in Tehran. "He too is being careful right now," the officials added. Malloy said Iran has been using the region's waterways for exporting "materials, weapons, arms, missiles to surrogates around the region to be able to promulgate their version of this region with them as the predominant force." He accused Iran of "smuggling arms, weapons, missiles," adding that "we have seen their hand in the Red Sea with unmanned systems -- air systems and surface systems -- so we've seen them utilize the maritime as a transport for them exporting their version of the region with them in charge. Destabilizing the countries that may be pushing against that vision." The maritime area where Iran operates includes the Strait of Hormuz, linking the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea, which has been labeled "the world's most important oil transit chokepoint," according to the US Energy Information Administration, with 20% of the oil traded worldwide moving through the waterway. At its narrowest point, the strait is only about 30 miles wide. But despite Tehran's increasing capabilities, Malloy said he was confident in the US Navy's ability to counter any Iranian threat. "I look at our capabilities -- both US capabilities here and the capabilities that the coalition brings to the fight -- and I compare and contrast with what our capabilities are to theirs, and I don't worry. I prepare and I'm prudent and I'm cautious. But I think worrying would be a strong word -- I'm pretty confident with our capabilities," he said, noting that the US has 21 ships permanently assigned to the region, including patrol craft, minesweepers and Coast Guard ships as well as locally based ships from allied countries such as the UK.

### No – Negotiations

#### Iran won’t negotiate even if US backs down – empirics prove the regime always find reasons to be anti-American. Pollack 3/8

Kenneth M Pollack, 3-8-2019, "America’s torch song for Tehran," Brookings, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/03/08/americas-torch-song-for-tehran/> *Editorial Board Member, The Washington Quarterly, 2016–present Contributing Editor, The National Interest, 2010–present Consultant, Gerson Lehrman Group, 2010–present Adviser, Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, 2009–present Senior Adviser, Albright Stonebridge Group, 2006–present Senior Fellow, 2002–15; Director, The Saban Center for Middle East Policy, 2009–12; Director of Research, The Saban Center for Middle East Policy, 2002–09, The Brookings Institution Adjunct Professor*, Georgetown University, 2004–present Senior Fellow and Director of National Security Studies, The Council on Foreign Relations, 2001–02 Senior Research Professor, Institute for National Security Studies, National Defense University, US Department of Defense, 2001; 1998–99 Director for Persian Gulf Affairs, National Security Council, 1999–2001 Research Fellow, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996–98 Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs, National Security Council, 1995–96 Persian Gulf Military Analyst, Central Intelligence Agency, 1988–95 *Education Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology B.A., Yale University*

**THEIR LAST, BEST HOPE** Barack Obama came to the presidency with an eye toward making peace with Iran. From the very first, his administration broadcast on all frequencies, public and private, that it wanted to consummate the elusive rapprochement. In 2009, in the wake of Iran’s stolen presidential elections, the Obama administration tried as hard as it could for as long as it could to say nothing, believing that any statement of American support for the millions of Iranians demanding the end of the Islamic regime might kill their bid for reconciliation. When the howls of American domestic and international outrage at Washington’s silence became too much, the administration’s criticisms were still bland and perfunctory to the point of being counterproductive. Nevertheless, Tehran seized on them to blame the would-be second Iranian revolution on American machinations. Yet Obama would not be put off. In his second term, he redoubled his efforts, this time aided by an equally ardent Secretary of State, John Kerry. Then the Iranians seemed to signal some reciprocation by electing Hassan Rouhani as their new president. Rouhani explicitly ran on a platform of saving Iran’s economy by cutting a deal on Iran’s nuclear program with the United States and the international community. Thus began the negotiations that would ultimately culminate in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), colloquially known as the Iranian nuclear deal. Both Obama and Kerry hoped that the nuclear deal would pave the way toward a wider reconciliation between the two countries. Indeed, it’s hard to understand their willingness to agree to the terms of the JCPOA—which only maintained the tightest constraints on the Iranian nuclear program for 10 to 15 years—except in light of their expectation that the agreement would lead to a comprehensive settlement of the Iranian-American conflict that would eventually render the agreement unnecessary. Rouhani wanted that rapprochement too. And so did his foreign minister, Mohammed Javad Zarif, who forged a close relationship with Kerry and also hoped to use the JCPOA as a wedge to open the door to normalized ties. They were all disappointed. In the words of [Karim Sadjadpour](https://carnegieendowment.org/experts/340), senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, while Obama and Kerry—and Rouhani and Zarif—all hoped the JCPOA would prove to be transformative, Khamenei and Iran’s hardliners were determined that it remain [merely transactional](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/25/opinion/thomas-friedman-look-before-leaping.html). A simple deal, curbs on the Iranian nuclear program in return for a lifting of American and international sanctions. No more. Long before Trump came to office and killed the deal, Khamenei had made clear that it would never be anything more than it was. He would never allow it to be the end to Iranian-American conflict. The United States has never had a president more desirous of turning Iran from foe to friend, and we may never have another one. Obama openly disdained America’s Middle East allies and even took Iran’s side against them in regional disputes, going so far as to declare that the Saudis needed to learn to [“share” the Middle East](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/) with Iran. He agreed to the JCPOA in the face of tremendous political criticism. Both he and many of his key advisors hoped that a nuclear deal with Iran could be the gateway toward a wider rapprochement, and Secretary Kerry tried every door before, during, and after the nuclear negotiations to try to make that happen. The Iranians never had an American president more willing to accommodate their needs and fears, and once again they spurned him. Yet Ayatollah Khamenei and the rest of Iran’s leadership were not interested in the better relationship that Obama and Kerry craved. If Iran could not accept what Obama and Kerry proffered, it is hard to conclude anything other than that those who matter in Tehran, those who actually make Iran’s foreign policy, are determined to treat the United States as their enemy, regardless of what we do or why. **COPING WITH HATE** The history of Iranian-American relations in the 40 years since the 1979 revolution is replete with mistakes, missed opportunities, and misunderstandings. Both sides have done terrible things to each other. Both can claim justification for their every savage act against the other. For every U.S. policy meant to hurt Iran, Americans can cite a prior Iranian action meant to hurt the United States. And for every Iranian action deliberately intended to hurt America, Iranians can cite a prior U.S. policy meant to hurt Iran. Yet the one vital difference is this: Of the seven American presidents to serve since the Iranian revolution, at least four and arguably five wanted an end to the hostilities with Iran and made real efforts to bring that about. In most cases, they paid a considerable political price to do so. And while there certainly have been many Iranians, many Iranian officials, and at least three Iranian presidents who seemed to want the same, the Iranian regime as a whole and its two supreme leaders—Iran’s equivalent to the American president—have never shown the least interest. Instead, they have systematically shut down every effort toward meaningful peace between the two countries. Both Khomeini and Khamenei cherished their anti-Americanism. For both, it was never a tool toward a wider goal but a core element of their rule and their philosophies. It certainly has served certain specific aims, but even when American administrations have offered what could have been compelling incentives to embrace warmer ties and reduced tensions, they never would. Perhaps someday, America’s cherished desire for better ties with Iran will be reciprocated by the leaders of Iran. But the history of the past 40 years seems to suggest that that will never be more than a tantalizing dream until new leaders take the helm in Tehran. Until then, the only intelligent course for the United States is to steer clear of the Iranians as best we can and treat them like enemies when we must, not because we want them to be, but because their leaders insist on it, no matter what we may do.

#### Trump’s designation of the IRGC as terrorists ensures that Iran refuses to negotiate even after the plan.

Jonathan Cristol, 4-9-2019, "Trump's latest Iran decision sets a dangerous precedent," CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/08/opinions/trump-irgc-terrorist-organization-dangerous-precedent-cristol/index.html> Jonathan Cristol is Research Fellow in the Levermore Global Scholars Program at Adelphi University, USA, and Senior Fellow at the Center for Civic Engagement at Bard College, USA.

On Monday, President Donald Trump [formally designated](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-designation-islamic-revolutionary-guard-corps-foreign-terrorist-organization/) Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO). This designation will do nothing to limit the IRGC's malign activities, but it may criminalize the activities of millions of Iranians and foreign tourists -- and set a precedent that Washington may come to regret. According to the White House statement, this is the [first time](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-designation-islamic-revolutionary-guard-corps-foreign-terrorist-organization/) that the US has designated a unit of a foreign government as a "terrorist organization." In response, Tehran has [already designated](http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13980119001247) US Central Command as a terrorist organization. And it's not hard to imagine other adversarial governments designating American individuals or military units as "terrorists" for political reasons. For background, shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Ayatollah Khomeini [established the IRGC](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/04/08/who-are-revolutionary-guards-look-iranian-military-unit-trump-has-deemed-terrorists/?utm_term=.1fd839f985a8) as a parallel military to Iran's "regular" military. The existing military could not be dismantled, both because putting [over 400,000 armed Iranians](https://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/13/archives/irans-elite-army-guard-was-routed-by-civilians-vast-funds-spent-on.html) out of work was clearly a bad idea, and because the old guard knew how to operate advanced American and European military equipment. So, Khomeini created a new military, with its own army, navy and air force -- and a distinct set of responsibilities. This parallel military would be loyal to the Islamic Government, rather than to the Iranian people. Over time, according to a Congressional Research Service report, the IRGC [permeated](https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/IN10597.pdf) Iran's economy. It now owns businesses ranging from construction firms to shipping companies to shopping malls and bazaars, some of which are already subject to US sanctions. In 2017, then-CIA director Mike Pompeo estimated that the IRGC might control 20% of Iran's GDP, but the [actual number is unknown](https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R44017.pdf).

### Yes – Conflict

#### They’ll take any opportunity that it gets to exert influence over Saudi Arabia – religious control and regional hegemony – US aid is necessary for containment to prevent destabilization of the Middle East.

Marcus 17, [Jonathan Marcus Defense and diplomatic correspondent] “Why Saudi Arabia and Iran are bitter rivals” 18 November 2017 BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42008809>

Saudi Arabia and Iran - two powerful neighbours - are locked in a fierce struggle for regional dominance. The decades-old feud between them is exacerbated by religious differences. They each follow one of the two main sects in Islam - Iran is largely Shia Muslim, while Saudi Arabia sees itself as the leading Sunni Muslim power. This religious schism is reflected in the wider map of the Middle East, where other countries have Sunni or Shia majorities, some of whom look towards Iran or Saudi Arabia for support or guidance. Historically Saudi Arabia, a monarchy and home to the birthplace of Islam, saw itself as the leader of the Muslim world. However this was challenged in 1979 by the Islamic revolution in Iran which created a new type of state in the region - a kind of theocracy - that had an explicit goal of exporting this model beyond its own borders. In the past 15 years in particular, the differences between Saudi Arabia and Iran have been sharpened by a series of events. The 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq overthrew Saddam Hussein, a Sunni Arab who had been a major Iranian adversary. This removed a crucial military counter-weight to Iranian influence in Iraq, which has been rising since then. Fast-forward to 2011 and uprisings across the Arab world caused political instability throughout the region. Iran and Saudi Arabia exploited these upheavals to expand their influence, notably in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen, further heightening mutual suspicions. Iran's critics say it is intent on establishing itself or its proxies across the region, and achieve control of a land corridor stretching from Iran to the Mediterranean. Saudi Arabia country profile Iran country profile How have things suddenly got worse? The strategic rivalry is heating up because Iran is in many ways winning the regional struggle. In Syria, Iranian (and Russian) support for President Bashar al-Assad has largely routed rebel group groups backed by Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is trying desperately to contain rising Iranian influence and the militaristic adventurism of the kingdom's young and impulsive Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman - the country's de facto ruler - is exacerbating regional tensions. He is waging a war against rebels in Saudi Arabia's southern neighbour, Yemen, in part to stem perceived Iranian influence there, but after nearly three years this is proving a costly gamble. Meanwhile in Lebanon, many observers believe the Saudis put pressure on the prime minister to resign in order to destabilise a country where Iran's ally, Shia militia group Hezbollah, leads a politically powerful bloc and controls a huge, heavily armed fighting force. Lebanon in the crosshairs Who are Hezbollah? There are also external forces at play. Saudi Arabia has been emboldened by support from the Trump administration while Israel, which sees Iran as a mortal threat, is in a sense "backing" the Saudi effort to contain Iran. The Jewish state is fearful of the encroachment of pro-Iranian fighters in Syria ever closer to its border. Israel and Saudi Arabia were the two countries most resolutely opposed to the 2015 international agreement limiting Iran's nuclear programme, insisting that it did not go far enough to roll back any chance of Iran obtaining the bomb. The power behind the throne Crown prince's ruthless streak Who are their regional allies? Broadly speaking the strategic map of the Middle East reflects the Shia-Sunni divide. In the pro-Saudi camp are the other major Sunni actors in the Gulf - the UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain, as well as Egypt and Jordan. In the Iranian camp is Syria's government, which has been strongly backed by Iran, and where pro-Iranian Shia militia groups, including the Lebanon-based Hezbollah, have played a prominent role in fighting predominantly Sunni rebel groups. The Shia-dominated Iraqi government is also a close ally of Iran, though paradoxically it also retains a close relationship with Washington on whom it has depended for help in the struggle against so-called Islamic State. Iran and Saudi Arabia: Their friends and foes How is the Saudi-Iranian rivalry being played out? This is in many ways a regional equivalent of the Cold War, which pitted the US against the Soviet Union in a tense military standoff for many years. Iran and Saudi Arabia are not directly fighting but they are engaged in a variety of proxy wars around the region. Syria is an obvious example while in Yemen Saudi Arabia has accused Iran of supplying ballistic missiles fired at Saudi territory by the Shia Houthi rebel movement - an incident which heightened the war of words between the two countries. But having become bogged down in Yemen and essentially defeated in Syria, Saudi Arabia seems to have its eye on Lebanon as the next proxy battlefield. Lebanon risks being tipped into Syria-like chaos but few analysts see Saudi interests prevailing there. Conflict in Lebanon could so easily draw in Israel in opposition to Hezbollah and this could lead to a third Israel-Lebanon war far more devastating than any of the previous encounters. Some cynics wonder if the Saudi crown prince's game plan is to trigger a war between Israel and Hezbollah and deliver a heavy blow to the group this way! A night of long knives and missiles Are we heading towards a direct war between Saudi Arabia and Iran? So far Tehran and Riyadh have fought via proxies. Neither is really geared up for a direct war with the other but one successful rocket attack on the Saudi capital from Yemen could upset the apple cart. One obvious area where they could come into direct conflict is in the waters of the Gulf, where they face each other across a maritime border. But here too fighting could risk a much broader conflict. For the US and other Western powers, freedom of navigation in the Gulf is essential and any conflict that sought to block the waterway - vital for international shipping and oil transportation - could easily draw in US naval and air forces. For a long time the US and its allies have seen Iran as a destabilising force in the Middle East. The Saudi leadership increasingly sees Iran as an existential threat and the crown prince seems willing to take whatever action he sees necessary, wherever he deems it necessary, to confront Tehran's rising influence. The danger is that Saudi Arabia's new activism is fast making it a further source of volatility in the region.

### Iraq

#### Iran is fixing its economic problems through Iraq – the US can’t risk retrenchment. Abdo 3/20

Geneive Abdo, 3-20-2019, "Iraq Prepares to Evict U.S. Troops," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/20/iraq-prepares-to-evict-u-s-troops/> Geneive Abdo is a resident scholar at the Arabia Foundation, a D.C.-based think tank founded by a defender of the Saudi government. She is the author of four books on the Middle East, most recently, The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi’a-Sunni Divide.

Momentum is building among deputies in the Iraqi parliament to oust U.S. troops entirely from the country—an outcome that would leave Iraq’s political future in the hands of neighboring Iran and leave its citizens more vulnerable to the Islamic State. Today, the United States fields an estimated 5,200 troops in Iraq. They are there as part of a security agreement with the Iraqi government to advise, assist, and support that country’s troops in the fight against the Islamic State. But the Iraqi parliament is expected to vote soon on draft laws calling for a full withdrawal. For now, things don’t look good for the troops. For one, there’s a strong union of Iranian and Iranian-backed military and political powers that is actively trying to push the United States out. Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Commander Qassem Suleimani, who is close to the Fatah Iraqi political faction, is determined to do so. The party of the Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who is usually at odds with Suleimani but is in agreement on this issue, has said [all foreign troops must go](https://www.memri.org/reports/legislative-efforts-expel-us-troops-iraq-alongside-shiite-militias-threats-force-them-out), not just the Americans. The purported reason? More sovereignty. [Fadhil Jabr Shnein](https://www.iraqakhbar.com/1745255), a deputy in the Iraqi parliament and a member of a leading pro-Iranian parliamentary group—[Asaib Ahl al-Haq](https://baghdadtoday.news/ar/news/45122/%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%A6), the paramilitary arm of which fought in Syria to keep President Bashar al-Assad in power—said in an early March interview with the Arabic publication [Al-Etejah Press](https://www.iraqakhbar.com/1745255), “There is a broad consensus among the various political blocs and national forces to eject foreign presence in all forms.” However, Shnein’s reference to “foreign” forces likely does not include Iranian forces, as his coalition is loyal to Iran. The Shiite commanders of the Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, known as the Popular Mobilization Forces, are likewise pushing for a U.S. withdrawal. Qais al-Khazali, a virulently anti-American Shiite commander who is close to Suleimani, even [threatened](https://twitter.com/Qais_alkhazali/status/1078034844729442304) U.S. troops on his Twitter account. He claimed the U.S. presence was intended to serve [Israel](https://www.alghadpress.com/news/%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9/189988/%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%80%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF) and not Iraq, and he vowed to target U.S. troops if they do not leave the country. His threats should be taken seriously. The Popular Mobilization Forces are practically as powerful as the regular military. Although many fighters are on the Iraqi government payroll, they operate outside Bagdad’s control and possess their own weapons. Beyond the various pro-Iranian forces in Iraq, the Trump administration is also at least partly responsible for putting U.S. troop expulsion at the top of Baghdad’s agenda. In late December 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump’s meeting with U.S. troops at Al Asad military base provoked outrage among Iraqi politicians and citizens because he did not follow protocol and announce his visit ahead of time—a move that some Iraqis felt was a violation of their sovereignty. Then, in early February, he announced that he wanted U.S. troops to remain in Iraq to [watch Iran,](https://www.npr.org/2019/02/15/694897468/trump-wants-to-use-iraqi-base-to-watch-iran-now-iraqi-parties-want-u-s-forces-ou) setting off a diplomatic firestorm in Baghdad. All this has compelled even pro-U.S. politicians to denounce the presence of American troops. Iraq’s President Barham Salih, a longtime diplomat in Washington, has publicly supported a more [minimal](https://www.al-sharq.com/article/05/03/2019/%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF) U.S. presence, for example, although Iraqi security and political sources say he is actually against a U.S. withdrawal. In early March, [Salih said](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/iraqi-president-says-u-s-has-no-right-watch-iran-n966466), “We are surprised by the statements made by the U.S. president on the presence of U.S. troops in Iraq. Trump did not ask us to keep U.S. troops to watch Iran.” This was an indication of the high pressure Salih is likely under to question the United States’ presence in his country. Although popular opinion seems to be turning against the United States, there are still some factions that want it to stay. Baghdad may yet reach a compromise on the troops. **Baghdad may yet reach a compromise on the troops.** Assuming they do in fact support a continued U.S. presence, for example, the Iraqi prime minister and president could still stall for a variety of reasons, although neither have veto power over parliamentary decisions. Moreover, among Iraq’s Shiite population, popular sentiment is turning increasingly against Iran, according to a recent survey conducted by Munqith al-Dagher, who runs a polling agency in Iraq. Favorable Iraqi Shiite attitudes toward Iran fell from [88 percent](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/11/16/irans-influence-in-iraq-is-declining-heres-why/?utm_term=.fbff50b8b890) in 2015 to 47 percent in 2018, according to Dagher’s polling. This shifting sentiment should empower the Iraqi government to create distance with Iran, something Iranian loyalists have so far managed to head off. While there is broad agreement among those calling for the United States to withdraw, there is little clarity about what a troop withdrawal would mean in practical terms. The other members of the coalition fighting the Islamic State might decide to leave if the United States is forced to do so. And if other states withdraw as well, the Iraqi security forces, which need training and technical support, would be unlikely to combat the Islamic State on their own. It is also unclear whether the hypothetical legislation will allow U.S. troops to remain on the Iraqi-Syrian border to try to prevent Islamic State fighters from crossing into Iraq from Syria. If it doesn’t, the Iraqi military would have to take on the fight without U.S. air cover. And that bodes ill for the country. Over the last year, the Islamic State has made a comeback, firstly with attacks in remote areas of the country and more recently on the outskirts of urban centers, such as Baghdad. As part of the jihadi group’s resurgence, it is extorting the same Sunni Iraqi communities from which it found support in 2014 and 2015. The majority of fighters and supporters are Iraqi—a major challenge for the state going forward, because they are not foreigners who can be sent away. Stepped-up Iranian domination would be in neither Iraq’s interest nor that of the United States. In early March, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visited Iraq—the first such visit by an Iranian president in many years, a sign of Iran’s intentions to expand economic cooperation with the country. The Iranians want to use the Iraqi market to compensate for the vast economic downturn that has followed renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran. The [much-publicized trip](https://www.newsweek.com/iran-general-award-iraq-syria-1360474) demonstrates that the Iraqi government is stuck in the middle. Iraq relies on Iran for goods and electricity supplies, so cutting ties is not only politically unlikely but also impossible. While legislative deal-making continues, the Iraqi parliamentarians could perhaps agree to a compromise on troop withdrawal if an attractive offer were made by Washington or U.S.- aligned political Iraqi factions. However, the question remains as to whether Iraq is more worried about the Islamic State—and could thus countenance a continuing U.S. presence—or more interested in keeping Iran happy. Unless the more moderate forces within the parliament and the government at large are willing to take a risk, it is likely some form of legislation will be approved to limit, if not expel, the United States.

### Hezbollah

#### Hezbollah stronger than ever – they’re another internal link to our impact. Mroue 3/21

Bassem Mroue, 3-21-2019, "Pompeo heads to Lebanon, where Hezbollah is at peak strength," AP NEWS, <https://www.apnews.com/2d26ac046a9d4694b6c0b7a18ba7aa0d>, Associated Press writer

BEIRUT (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo hopes to use his first visit to Lebanon this week to step up pressure on Iran and its local ally, Hezbollah. But he could face resistance even from America’s local allies, who fear that pushing too hard could spark a backlash and endanger the tiny country’s fragile peace. Hezbollah wields more power than ever in parliament and the government. Pompeo will meet Friday with President Michel Aoun and will also hold talks with Lebanon’s parliament speaker and foreign minister — all three of whom are close Hezbollah allies. He will also meet with Prime Minister Saad Hariri, a close Western ally who has been reluctant to confront Hezbollah. “We’ll spend a lot of time talking with the Lebanese government about how we can help them disconnect from the threat that Iran and Hezbollah present to them,” Pompeo told reporters earlier this week. “Hezbollah is a terrorist organization. You ask how tough I am going to be? It is a terrorist organization. Period. Full stop,” Pompeo said in Jerusalem on Thursday. But isolating Hezbollah, whose military power dwarfs that of the Lebanese armed forces, could prove impossible. The Iran-backed group has an arsenal of tens of thousands of rockets and missiles. Its battle-hardened cadres fought Israel to a stalemate in 2006, and have fought alongside President Bashar Assad’s army since the early days of the Syrian civil war, securing a string of hard-won victories. Over the past year, the group has translated this power into major political gains unseen in the past. Hezbollah and its allies today control a majority of seats in parliament and the Cabinet, after it managed in 2016 to help Aoun, an allied Christian leader, be elected president. The group has three Cabinet seats, the largest number it has ever taken, including the Health Ministry, which has one of the largest budgets. That has angered Washington, where U.S. officials have called on Hariri’s national unity government to ensure Hezbollah does not tap into public resources. Last month, U.S. Ambassador Elizabeth Richard expressed concerns over Hezbollah’s growing role in the new Cabinet, saying it does not contribute to stability. Lebanon has long been a political battleground in the region-wide struggle between Washington and Tehran. But tensions have risen since President Donald Trump withdrew from Iran’s nuclear deal with world powers and re-imposed sanctions on Tehran. The United States backs a coalition of groups opposed to Hezbollah led by Hariri’s Sunni-led Future Movement and the right-wing Christian Lebanese Forces, but Washington’s local allies are proceeding with caution. Memories are fresh of the clashes that erupted in May 2008, when the Shiite Hezbollah rapidly defeated a group of Sunni opponents on the streets of Beirut. “Washington should be careful not to push Lebanon to the brink, as Hezbollah would retaliate if its survival is at stake,” said Joe Macaron, a resident fellow at the Arab Center in Washington. “In the current status quo, the most effective way to restrain Hezbollah remains within the intricate parameters of the Lebanese political system,” he said. The Trump administration appears to be aware of the difficulties it faces, and while it has talked tough about Hezbollah, it has done little beyond strengthening already tough sanctions on the group, which has long been blacklisted as a terrorist organization by Western countries.

### Economy

#### Economic woes don’t deter Iranian aggression. Johnson 2/13

Keith Johnson, 2-13-2019, "Iran’s Economy Is Crumbling, but Collapse Is a Long Way Off," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/02/13/irans-economy-is-crumbling-but-collapse-is-a-long-way-off-jcpoa-waivers-sanctions/> Keith Johnson is Foreign Policy’s global geoeconomics correspondent. He has been at FP since 2013, after spending 15 years covering terrorism, energy, airlines, politics, foreign affairs, and the economy for the Wall Street Journal. He has reported from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

But will Iran’s economic pain translate into a policy win for the Trump administration, which seeks at a minimum to change Iran’s foreign-policy behavior, if not topple the regime outright? Nader doesn’t think that an economic collapse by itself will imperil Iran’s leaders unless that is coupled with more organized domestic opposition. Still, he senses in the widespread popular unrest what he calls a “pre-revolutionary mood.” Many Iranians are irate at President Hassan Rouhani’s handling of the economy, as well as other issues from women’s rights to water management. “It doesn’t look good for this regime,” he said. But Iran, which this week is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, has demonstrated staying power even in adversity and usually responds to Western pressure by doubling down on objectionable behavior. “Iran is cementing its regional gains and completely defying calls from Western countries to rein in its missile program,” said Ellie Geranmayeh, the deputy director of the Middle East and North Africa program at the European Council on Foreign Relations. Since the 1979 revolution that toppled the shah and launched the Islamic Republic, Iran has been in a U.S. economic squeeze—yet the country has only ramped up its support for regional terrorist groups and sown instability throughout the region. Even now, despite renewed U.S. sanctions, Iran has pressed ahead with missile tests and satellite launches, as well as continued to support proxies in Syria and Yemen. Even though Europe has so far been unable to throw Iran a real lifeline so far to evade sanctions, Washington has been unable to translate that pressure into a more compliant Tehran. “The U.S. maximum pressure campaign is full on, but we’re not seeing the type of results that the Trump administration hoped for,” Geranmayeh said.

### Hardliners

#### Iran’s hardliners hold the power – no revolution. Sadjapour 3/7

Karim Sadjadpour, 3-7-2019, "The Return of Iranian Hard-Liners’ Favorite Moderate," Atlantic, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/03/what-does-javad-zarifs-return-mean/584305/

When Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif tried to [quit](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/zarif-resigned-assad-trip-tehran-spokesperson-190305092010994.html) last week, the move looked like another troubling defeat for his country’s beleaguered moderates. Highly intelligent, sophisticated, and U.S. educated, Zarif always made an unlikely chief diplomat for the world’s most anti-American regime. Totalitarian governments, wrote Hannah Arendt, “invariably replace all first-rate talents, regardless of their sympathies, with those crackpots and fools whose lack of intelligence and creativity is still the best guarantee of their loyalty.” Zarif defied that mold, and Western officials and analysts feared that his departure would sever Tehran’s last link to the West. In fact, he wasn’t going anywhere. Iran’s revolutionary elite, [including](https://en.radiofarda.com/a/iran-khamenei-has-told-zarif-not-to-resign/29792362.html) Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, quickly rejected Zarif’s resignation. The foreign minister was soon back on the job, raising once again the question of what role an urbane functionary really serves in an autocratic regime. To his admirers, Zarif is a skillful diplomat and fierce nationalist in constant danger of hard-line domestic adversaries. To his detractors, he is a pathologically dishonest, powerless apparatchik used by Tehran’s theocratic elite to manipulate credulous Americans and Europeans. To Khamenei, Zarif’s enormous utility derives from the fact that he is both of these things, a sympathetic figure who can soften the edges of Iranian policy without actually changing it. Just as Leonid Brezhnev had [Andrei Gromyko](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1985/01/07/gromyko-the-man-behind-the-mask/c51df0a6-b3f1-4fd8-9d90-9f88199e7fc0/?utm_term=.83ffcaaf1c07), Saddam Hussein had Tariq Aziz, and Muammar Qaddafi had Moussa Koussa, Iran’s autocrats understand that sending a moderate emissary out in the world protects their own power, rather than undermining it.

### Nuclear Weapons

#### Iran has intent to proliferate – nuclear archives prove. Zweig and Taleblu 3/3

Matthew Zweig and Behnam Ben Taleblu, 3-3-2019, "No Accountability for Iran’s Nuclear Violators," National Interest, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/no-accountability-iran%E2%80%99s-nuclear-violators-45882> Matthew Zweig, a former Senior Professional Staff Member at the House Foreign Affairs Committee, is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD). Behnam Ben Taleblu is a senior fellow focusing on Iran at FDD who has aided efforts to translate portions of the nuclear archive.

One year ago [this](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/30/world/middleeast/israel-iran-nuclear-netanyahu.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=first-column-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news) January, Israeli agents broke into an undisclosed facility near Tehran that contained damning evidence of Iranian duplicity. While professing its pacific intentions, Iran carefully preserved the documentation from its long-denied nuclear weapons program. The Israeli raid and the information its agents collected provide the Trump administration with an opportunity—so far unrealized—to utilize the archives as part of its larger pressure strategy against Tehran. The first step towards doing so requires punishing the individuals named in the archive for their illicit nuclear activities. While skeptics were [quick to dismiss](https://twitter.com/armscontrolwonk/status/991108500825686016?lang=en) the contents of the archive as “nothing new,” patient analysis of those contents has shown that Iran was [much closer](https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/11/13/iran-was-closer-to-a-nuclear-bomb-than-intelligence-agencies-thought/) to a nuclear weapons capability than previously understood. Despite this revelation, European powers—with whom Israel had [shared](https://www.timesofisrael.com/european-intelligence-officials-briefed-in-israel-on-irans-nuclear-archive/) the archives—remained relatively muted as part of their larger effort to [preserve](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/05/09/declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-following-us-president-trump-s-announcement-on-the-iran-nuclear-deal-jcpoa/) the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal. Worse, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—the organization responsible for monitoring Iran’s nuclear activities— [reiterated](https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/statement-on-iran-by-the-iaea-spokesperson) that it “had no credible indications of activities in Iran relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device after 2009.” Yet the very maintenance, concealment and possession of this material was relevant to the development of a nuclear weapon. Rather than engaging with the archival material, it was seemingly being written-off altogether. This head-in-the-sand approach has become less and less tenable as the significance of the archives has become increasingly clear. Last fall, nuclear experts David Albright and Olli Heinonen and their coauthors—all of whom had extensive access to the archive—published a steady stream of reports detailing the policy decisions and technical strides Iran had made towards a nuclear weapons capability. One critical detail was a [decision](http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/The_Plan_Iran_Archive_20Nov2018_Final.pdf) by Iran to produce “five explosive systems.” These document exploitation [efforts](http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/New_Information_Iran_Nuclear_Archive_6Jun2018_Final.pdf) must continue, as they inform the public debate and can be used by the administration to publicly [urge](https://www.axios.com/iran-atomic-archive-iaea-israel-brian-hook-netanyahu-7d7f8779-b603-4bbb-afbb-652068eddd30.html) the IAEA to aggressively look into the archive’s contents.

### No – Decline

#### Even despite economic issues, Iran is stronger and more resilient – they exploit instability. Ibish 2/20

Hussein Ibish, 2-20-2019, "Iran Has a Big Advantage in the Battle for the Middle East," Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-02-20/iran-s-big-advantage-in-the-battle-for-the-middle-east>

Hussein Ibish is a senior resident scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

The key to the strength of Iran’s Middle East coalition is its relative vertical integration and discipline. Most of its members are either beholden to or dependent on Iran. So most important decisions are made by the Republican Guards or National Security Council in Tehran. Dissent is rare, and usually contained or irrelevant. Even the outlying coalition members such as the Houthis, who do not pay much attention to Iran’s instructions, are valuable because their rebellion contributes to the chaos that Tehran strategically exploits. The relative vertical integration of decision-making on the pro-Iranian side is also buttressed by cultural and religious deference to authority among Shiite Muslims. Shiites are typically supposed to adhere to the judgment of senior clerics, and Iran’s revolutionary Islamist appeal is precisely to such religious-political authority. In sum, Iran is a revisionist, anti-status-quo power that flourishes amid regional instability. None of this is true for its opponents. The coalition of Gulf countries, other pro-U.S. Arab countries, Israel, the U.S., and most NATO states is quintessentially oriented to keeping the status quo, to preserving the global and regional order. And it is much harder to create and maintain structures than it is to blow them up. This is not made easier by the disarray in the anti-Iranian camp. The Gulf Arab countries and Israel don’t even have diplomatic relations. They remain profoundly divided over the Palestinian issue. All cooperation on security such as sharing intelligence must be limited and surreptitious. There’s no real possibility of an open alliance between them, as has become painfully clear to a disappointed Trump administration. And the Sunni-majority Arab countries are themselves bitterly divided, as the ongoing boycott of Qatar by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt demonstrates. NATO is badly divided on Iran as well. Since the Trump administration withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal, Britain, Germany and France, along with the European Union, have been trying to keep the agreement alive despite Washington’s opposition. They have created a “special purpose vehicle” for European companies to get payments for trading with Iran in currencies other than the dollar, bypassing the U.S. banking system and, therefore, American sanctions. They all sent junior delegations to Warsaw, except for Britain, whose foreign minister said he was only there to talk about Yemen. Another key NATO member, Turkey, opted out of Warsaw altogether, preferring to join Iran and Russia in a rival conference at Sochi, Russia, ostensibly to talk about Syria. Turkey is increasingly taking a neutral attitude toward Iran, which it views as a rival rather than an adversary. Finally, in contrast to the Shiite deference to clerical authority, most Sunni traditions encourage believers to judge everything for themselves and to pick and choose among various opinions for different purposes. This allows Sunni extremists such as Qaeda to reject denunciations of terrorism by senior Sunni clerics in favor of justifications by junior or marginal jurisprudents they claim to find more persuasive. It also makes it difficult, if not impossible, for Sunni Muslim powers to deploy religion as a politically unifying, integrating factor in a regional coalition that includes non-state actors and militias. The last time this was systematically attempted, by the U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia during the Afghan war in the 1980s, it helped defeat the Soviet Union, but also produced Qaeda and the Taliban.

## Solvency

### Stockpile

#### Saudi stockpile contracts have already been finished, which means the aff doesn’t end the bombing campaign anytime soon – this card ends the debate. Knights 11/5

Michael Knights, 11-5-2018, "U.S.-Saudi Security Cooperation (Part 1): Conditioning Arms Sales to Build Leverage," Washington Institute, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/u.s.-saudi-security-cooperation-part-1-conditioning-arms-sales-to-build-lev> Michael Knights is a Boston-based senior fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states.

**PRECISION-GUIDED MUNITIONS** Sales of air-delivered precision-guided munitions (PGMs) are another lightning rod issue in the bilateral security relationship. Following the 2009-2010 round of hostilities with the Houthis, the kingdom sought to refresh its stock of antipersonnel bombs with a large order of 1,300 U.S.-built CBU-105 sensor-fused weapons (a higher-reliability submunition that manufacturers say does not qualify as a cluster bomb due to its low malfunction rate). Yet by November 2015, eight months into the current war, the Saudis had used up nearly 2,600 PGMs, according to strike metrics compiled by The Washington Institute. In response, the Saudis requested a $1.29 billion package comprising around 19,000 air-delivered PGMs, an order that began delivery in July 2017. In addition to that package, the Senate narrowly approved a new $500 million commercial sale of PGMs to Riyadh in June 2017—the first installment in a mammoth $4.46 billion series of air-launched munition deals that would provide the Saudis with 104,000 U.S. PGMs in the next half decade. Riyadh may be accelerating its purchases in anticipation of a prolonged war in Yemen and the potential loss of U.S. sales down the road. According to Washington Institute data collected in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, the kingdom’s forces have used around 14,500 munitions since March 2015, almost all PGMs, with the average rate gradually declining from 333 PGMs per month in 2015 to 270 per month this year. The U.S. munitions currently arriving in Saudi Arabia were ordered in November 2015, when Riyadh recognized it might need new PGMs by 2019, but the intervening years have seen few signs of a PGM shortfall. Based on a rough sense of prewar stocks and a constant dribble of replacements, Riyadh could probably keep bombing at its current rate for several years even if all new U.S. PGM deals were rejected. Thus, while cutting off such sales may be a good way to signal U.S. displeasure or publicly distance Washington from the war, the data indicates that it would not meaningfully slow the air campaign anytime soon.

### No Follow-On

#### Europe doesn’t follow on – France and Spain fill-in, causes results in diversification. Iran empirically proves our argument. Bisaccio 10/23

Derek Bisaccio, 10-23-2018, "Examining U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia," Forecast International, <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/feature/5/196962/us-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia%3A-policy-options.html> Military Markets Analyst for Forecast International

Iran – whose contemporary policies have been slow to change even when faced with a global arms embargo – was, under the Shah, one of the U.S.’s most significant arms recipients, as seen by the fact that many of those arms remain in service. The country will not be coming back to American defense firms for new supplies any time soon, however. The circumstances that led to the decline in U.S.-Iran relations of course differ dramatically from the challenges facing U.S.-Saudi relations, but the episode demonstrates the extent to which a government might resist arms (and other) pressure from a supplier when the seller and buyer no longer see eye-to-eye on security matters. It is not a guarantee that other parties, namely the European Union, will ultimately get on board with an arms embargo, meaning that Saudi Arabia can expect to have options even within Western circles for buying arms. A number of European states have cut arms sales to Saudi Arabia over the last few years for varying reasons, stemming from the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen or concern over Saudi Arabia’s domestic human rights record, both of which have received intense criticism from rights activists. The disappearance of Khashoggi and the sensational details surrounding his alleged killing have renewed and energized European opponents of the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia.[viii] Big European suppliers have generally avoided bailing on Saudi Arabia just yet, with the apparent exception of Germany. The country’s chancellor, Angela Merkel, announced on October 21 that Berlin would be suspending arms sales to Saudi Arabia over Khashoggi’s killing. Germany had, up until this point, been continuing “limited” arms sales to Saudi Arabia, as Chancellor Merkel described them, despite a domestic political commitment not to.[ix] Last month, Spain seemingly announced the cancellation of the sale of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia, and then quickly backtracked over fears that pulling the sale would impact a much larger defense deal between the two countries.[x] Across the Atlantic, the Canadian government made no move to terminate the sale of armored vehicles to Saudi Arabia even after the kingdom rather publicly snubbed the Canadian government in August of this year. It may not follow the U.S. if it did cut off Saudi Arabia – France has been perfectly willing to fill the void of American sales to Egypt,[xi] for example – which would undermine the effectiveness of a U.S. arms embargo, too. The U.S. has at various times blocked the sale of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia,[xii] but nevertheless Spain ultimately did not follow suit. There is plenty that the American market offers that cannot be matched by European industry, but even so, the European defense industry is advanced and able to supply Saudi Arabia with a range of systems for its security forces.

### Houthis Worse

#### Turns case – Houthis worse. WP 1/1

Wp, 1-1-2019, "Al Houthis tighten grip through fear, intimidation," Gulf News, https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/yemen/al-houthis-tighten-grip-through-fear-intimidation-1.61198013

Sana’a- When Mohammad Bamuftah arrived at the post office to pick up his salary one day in 2015, he said an Al Houthi fighter stopped him to inspect his ID card. The 55-year-old lawyer was from Aden, where Yemen’s internationally recognised government was based. That was enough to get him arrested. By the time Bamuftah emerged from prison three years later, he had suffered shocks from an electric prod, he said. He had been hanged from a ceiling with his hands cuffed for three-hour stretches and beaten with rubber-coated electric cables. “I was in so much pain that I would pass out,” recalled Bamuftah, a father of three who was released last summer in a prisoner exchange. Torture, detentions and forced disappearances are widespread, according to legal documents and interviews with victims and human rights activists. The abuses are fueling an expanding atmosphere of fear and intimidation in this capital and across Al Houthi-controlled areas. The Washington Post reached out to 13 former prisoners and victims of Al Houthis. Only four agreed to speak on the record because they and their families had fled the north, where Al Houthis are strongest. Those still in Sana’a suspect they are being followed by Al Houthi intelligence agents. Some victims were afraid to speak even by phone, fearing they were tapped by the rebels. Al Houthis have targeted activists, journalists, lawyers, religious minorities, business executives - anyone deemed to be against their rule and ideology. Gunmen have raided homes at night, arresting and beating people over minor disputes or for voicing criticism of their movement. Few face trials or have access to lawyers. Courts are either nonexistent or used purely for sentencing, according to human rights activists and victims. “Al Houthis have really gone after a wide spectrum of people who they perceive to be a threat or political opponents to them,” said Kristine Beckerle, Yemen researcher for Human Rights Watch. “Now, there’s a continuing and increasing crackdown on civil society that is quite troubling.” Civil rights lawyers and activists say the abuses have gotten worse since December 2017, when Al Houthis killed former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, once their main ally. Today, the guerrilla movement has consolidated its grip over much of northern Yemen, exerting control over every aspect of society. “There is fear across the city,” said Abdul Majid Sabra, a lawyer who represents more than four dozen clients, including 10 journalists, held in rebel prisons. “Nobody would dare show what they really feel about Al Houthis in public. . . . This is the new reality.” Activist Hisham Al Omeisy describes Al Houthi commanders driving expensive cars and living in mansions in Sana’a. Rebel authorities taxed businesses and took large profits while claiming they could not pay salaries to civil servants or assist millions of starving Yemenis. “People are frustrated,” said Al Omeisy, who now lives in Egypt. “They say, ‘I am hungry, dying, there’s no salary.’ Meanwhile, Al Houthis are driving $200,000 Porsches and Range Rovers.” In August 2017, Al Omeisy sent out tweets accusing some rebels of corruption. Within hours, Al Houthi gunmen arrested him. They accused Al Omeisy of being an American spy and of “brainwashing Yemenis with American ideas.” For three weeks, he said, he was held in solitary confinement, blindfolded in a tiny cell. Then, the torture began. Al Omeisy said he was taken several times to a room dubbed by prisoners “al Warsha” - “the workshop” in Arabic - where knives and other sharp items were used “to cut you to pieces,” where they “hang you from the ceiling and beat you up.” “They used metal chains with me, hitting my back, thighs and head,” Al Omeisy said. He was allowed to go to the bathroom once or twice a day, for two minutes. Every two to three weeks, he was ordered to confess on the rebels’ television station to being a spy. Al Omeisy says he always refused. In interviews, three other former prisoners who had been held by Al Houthis described additional methods of torture, including being tied by the legs and arms to a metal rod and turned over a fire, as if being roasted like a chicken. Sometimes, a live snake would be thrown into a cell. The rebels also used psychological torture. Abdo Abdullah Al Zubaidy, a former judge who was accused of working with the coalition, said Al Houthi gunmen went to his home and threatened his wife and children. After being imprisoned, he recalled guards would sometimes blindfold and handcuff him, then place a gun to his head and tell him, “We could kill you right now.” “They used many ways to intimidate us, making me think they could kill my own family, or even shoot them dead in front of me,” recalled Al Zubaidy, 56, who spent more than a year in a cell before being released in a prisoner exchange last year. He said his back is still in bad shape because of months of electric shocks and beatings. Lawyers, too, are targets. Sabra was jailed for a day after an argument with a Al Houthi official. A colleague fared worse: He was beaten and jailed for passing a note to his client containing a name and a number. In the year since they killed Saleh, the Houthis have tightened their control over Sana’a. Rebel spies are everywhere, in hospitals, hotels and neighbourhoods, say aid workers, activists and residents. Al Houthi information ministry recently hired English-speaking “minders” to monitor the rare Western journalists who arrive. Al Houthi leaders have ordered aid agencies and other nongovernmental organisations to hire Al Houthi representatives or loyalists as part of their local staff, said aid workers and activists. The rebels have also prevented UN agencies from freely operating, several UN officials said. Against this backdrop, Al Houthis have expanded their list of targets. They have even arrested people for erasing rebel slogans on walls or for writing anti-Al Houthi graffiti, activists said. “They really want to silence any form of dissent inside Sana’a,” said Omeisy, who fled to Cairo after being released from prison last year with the help of influential tribal leaders. But few expected what happened on October 6 when a group of young women took to the streets to protest rising prices that are sending millions to the edge of famine. They also called for the resumption of government salaries. Rebel authorities dispatched loyalists to attack the women with daggers, batons and electric prods, according to activists and cellphone videos. Al Houthis also sent women to lecture the protesters about committing themselves to Allah and not attending such gatherings.

### Negotiations Fail

#### The plan emboldens the Houthis – empirics prove they won’t negotiate. Binmubarak 2/6

Ahmed Awad Binmubarak, 2-6-2019, "Congress: Please consider the consequences of your resolutions on Yemen," https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/428602-congress-please-consider-the-consequences-of-your

Years of Houthi aggression have left my nation pockmarked and weary, consumed by the world’s worst humanitarian crisis and desperate for peace. Yet, we haven’t given up hope. We believe a political solution that will protect and empower all Yemeni people is within reach. After three years of stonewalling, the Iran-backed Houthis are slowly moving toward the negotiating table. But the [congressional resolution](https://khanna.house.gov/media/press-releases/statement-rep-khanna-re-introduce-yemen-war-powers-resolution-thursday-131) introduced by Rep. [Ro Khanna](https://thehill.com/people/rohit-ro-khanna) (D-Calif.) to remove all U.S. support for the Arab Coalition in Yemen will not help our quest for peace, instead will deliver a massive victory to Iran and embolden the extremist Houthi militias to continue terrorizing our country, as they have done for the past five years. If passed, this resolution will only serve to prolong the conflict and deepen the crisis. There is so much that is misunderstood about the conflict in Yemen. First, this is not a “Saudi war.” The conflict today is between the elected government of Yemen and its people against a racist and radical militia – the Houthis – who would end democracy in Yemen and become another Hezbollah that is controlled by Iran, intent on threatening the region. [In 2015, the Iran-backed Houthis stormed the capital](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/23/world/middleeast/yemen-houthi-crisis-sana.html) and violently overthrew the government. President Hadi and his legitimate government called upon the Arab Coalition to assist in our fight against the Houthi threat. Their support has also been critical in combatting Al-Qaeda. The technical and advisory support of the United States to the Arab Coalition directly contributes to the security and stability of Yemen and the broader region. Yemen is one part of an Iranian strategy to extend its revolution to the region. Iranian leaders have boasted that Sanaa, my capital, is under Iran’s control, along with three other Arab capitals – Beirut, Baghdad and Damascus. The Houthis are yet another proxy in a campaign of violent expansionism that poses a serious threat to the peace and security of the world and must be confronted and contained. Just who are the Houthis? To understand this group, you don’t have to look much further than what is printed on their flag, which reads: ["God is Great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse the Jews, and Victory to Islam.”](https://www.france24.com/en/20181115-uneasy-calm-yemens-hodeida-residents-fear-renewed-violence) This motto is partially modelled on the motto of revolutionary Iran. In March of 2018, the Houthi movement’s leader, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, vowed to fight alongside Hezbollah in a future war with Israel, and al-Houthi recently sent a delegation to Lebanon to meet with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. The Houthis have also devised an egregious political manifesto further to their slogan, which is laced with anti-American and anti-Semitic fervor. And they also profess a divine right to rule over all of Yemen. Indeed, their authority would be called an “Houthiocracy”, combining the worst elements of both an autocratic and theocratic regime as evident and inspired by their Iranian patrons, and where a minority group with despotic tendencies are oppressing the general population under its control. In Yemen, the Houthis have executed a brutal guerrilla war using illegal and internationally banned tactics, including child soldiers, human shields, land mines, ballistic missiles aimed at civilian targets in Saudi Arabia and other acts of terrorism. The Houthi flag, their words and actions should not leave any doubt as to where the United States should lend its support in this conflict and we hope that members of Congress will think twice before taking actions that will benefit the Iranian agenda. Only a peaceful, political resolution can bring an end to the war in Yemen and especially one that respects the GCC Initiative, the National Dialogue Conference Outcomes and UN Security Council Resolution 2216 (i.e., the Three References). But as far back as 2013, there have been a number of serious attempts to work with the Houthis to create a framework for peace. Yet each time we were close to an agreement, the Houthis reneged and ultimately walked away from negotiations, preferring to continue their military assault on the capital and other territories. Faced with this history, it is clear that unless the Houthis are met with combined political and military pressures and denying them sources of support from Iran, such as fuel, hard currency and weapons being illegally smuggled to them by land or sea, they will wage war indefinitely. Our hope is to reach a negotiated peace, but we will not be able to reach that objective without the continued support of the Arab coalition and the support of the United States. The world, except for Iran and Houthis, wants the same thing – a peaceful resolution in Yemen. We have found a path to peace and it is working. We should not undermine the progress we are making now and instead of pulling back, the U.S. needs to support us through the combination of negotiation and pressure. If our allies withdraw, then we fear that the crisis we want to solve will only intensify, leading to more destruction and the loss of more innocent lives, not less. The Government of the Republic of Yemen urges all members of Congress to reassess their stance appealing for the withdrawal of U.S. support from this conflict, and to consider the profound consequences and negative effect this would have on our shared security interests in both the U.S. and region.

### AT: US Key

#### Trump already ended refueling of war planes, but withdrawing all military aid means the rebels get the upper hand and make things worse. Posey and Phillips 12/6

Madyson Hutchinson Posey and James Phillips, 12-6-2018, "Ending U.S. Military Support for Saudi Arabia in Yemen Would Trigger Dangerous Consequences," Heritage Foundation, <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/ending-us-military-support-saudi-arabia-yemen-would-trigger-dangerous>. Posey = Former Research and Administrative Assistant, James Phillips is a senior research fellow for Middle Eastern affairs at The Heritage Foundation.

Senators must remember that Saudi Arabia is not the only belligerent in Yemen. A cutoff of U.S. support would also hurt the elected and internationally recognized government of Yemen, which was ousted by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in 2015 in a bloody coup that violated a [U.N.-brokered ceasefire](https://www.cnn.com/2014/09/21/world/meast/yemen-prime-minister-resigns/index.html). Withdrawing U.S. support would also harm the interests of other U.S. allies fighting in Yemen, including the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. The war in Yemen is complex. Those who rush to blame Saudi Arabia entirely for the suffering of the Yemeni people ignore the war crimes and heavy-handed treatment meted out by the Houthis to their opponents and the ruthless role that Iran plays in supporting the Houthi Ansar Allah (“Supporters of Allah”) movement, a Shia Islamist extremist group. The Saudis are rightly criticized for not doing more to prevent civilian casualties as they target Ansar Allah positions. But the Houthis should not be given a free pass for deliberately targeting civilian targets in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates with increasingly sophisticated Iranian ballistic missiles. Ansar Allah also deserves criticism for its violent role in destabilizing Yemen and creating the conditions that led to the current humanitarian disaster. Ansar Allah regularly attacks the Saudi border, launches missiles strikes into Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and diverts international medical and food aid to favor its own supporters and sell on the black market. Ansar Allah also has targeted U.S. Navy vessels, those of allied nations, and civilian shipping in the [Red Sea](https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/bab-el-mandeb-the-us-ignores-the-most-dangerous-strait-the-world-its-peril) with Iranian-supplied missiles, gunboat attacks, and boat bombs. Undermining the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen risks exacerbating this threat to international shipping and giving Iran the opportunity to threaten oil shipments through the Bab al-Mandab Strait, just as it has threatened to do in the Strait of Hormuz. Those who advocate withdrawing support for Saudi Arabia apparently believe that they can somehow end the current conflict in Yemen through a one-sided strategy that penalizes allies and boosts Ansar Allah, a group that chants “Death to America” and looks more like Hezbollah, Iran’s Lebanese proxy group, every day. Never mind that Saudi Arabia is supporting the internationally recognized government of Yemen in this effort. Never mind that leaving Ansar Allah to run amuck will not bring an end to the humanitarian suffering, but only prolong it. The U.S. currently extends only limited support to Saudi Arabia in Yemen centered on intelligence and information sharing. There are no U.S. troops involved in combat operations, except for occasional commando raids and air strikes against Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, a Sunni terrorist group that continues to target the U.S. homeland, as well as Saudi Arabia, France, and other countries. The Trump administration already has stopped the aerial refueling of Saudi warplanes involved in the Yemen conflict and called for a negotiated settlement. But the United States cannot afford to abandon its allies and hope for the best. Undermining the Yemeni government and the Saudi-led coalition would make an acceptable political settlement impossible. The Yemeni government and Saudi Arabia will continue to fight this war with or without U.S. support. Those who would connect two unrelated issues, condemn Saudi involvement, and ignore Iran’s hostile role inside Yemen will only do more harm to innocent Yemeni civilians and empower Iran and its Yemeni proxies.

## Indo-Pak

### 1NC

#### Ending arms sales tanks relations and Saudi will for regional security cooperation – coercion fails. Bisaccio 10/23

Derek Bisaccio, 10-23-2018, "Examining U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia," Forecast International, <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/feature/5/196962/us-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia%3A-policy-options.html> Military Markets Analyst for Forecast International

It would be expensive, take significant amounts of time, and require a restructuring of Saudi Arabia’s security outlook, all to import systems whose quality and usefulness Saudi Arabia is already skeptical of. 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. Opponents of Saudi Arabia in general see no issue with downgrading U.S.-Saudi relations, and perhaps in time the U.S. might view its security interests as diverging from requiring Washington to work with governments like Saudi Arabia’s. But if the Trump administration’s goal in the present is to isolate Iran and concretely address its nuclear and missile programs as well as foreign policy in the region, coordination of efforts with Saudi Arabia will prove essential. Critics of the Crown Prince regularly paint him as reckless, which, if an accurate depiction, should prompt consideration of whether reducing America’s ability to influence Saudi policy choices is the wisest course of action for Washington to take. Depending on how severely the U.S. was to act, cutting defense cooperation could produce the opposite effect than intended with respect to Saudi policies: Saudi Arabia could well double-down, or in any case refuse to budge, rather than concede to Washington. Should the U.S. cut only a few deals, or refuse to sell a few systems, the pressure will be so miniscule as to hardly register in Riyadh. A more aggressive approach, however, would not be guaranteed to produce a better effect on Saudi policy. A useful comparison may be the U.S. response to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s overthrow of Egypt’s previous government and the subsequent massacre of protestors in Rabaa. The U.S. criticized the government of President Sisi and cut a significant amount of arms cooperation pending improvement toward a more democratic system. Two years later, the U.S. rescinded the policy, having made little to no progress.[iv] Bahrain hardly moved on its domestic policies despite the U.S. temporarily enacting a hold on the sale of F-16s to the country until it improved its human rights record. Perhaps extending these bans or making them bite harder would have the intended effect, but solely using coercive measures to target governments based on their domestic policies, however repulsive those policies may be, is not likely to produce positive change, particularly if those policies are related to what the government conceptualizes as maintenance of regime security. Talk by prominent U.S. lawmakers that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has “got to go” while the U.S. is considering implementing these sorts of coercive measures adds to the risk that Saudi Arabia might perceive the U.S. actions as hostile,[v] even if privately some members of the royal court agree with the criticism of the Crown Prince or see him as having gone too far in stamping out rivals.

#### Indo-Pak is uniquely dangerous now – levels of violence exceeded previous flashpoints and decentralized command forces results in nuclear miscalc. Schwemlein 3/5

James Schwemlein, 3-5-2019, "Trump Doesn't Want to Play Peacemaker," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/05/trump-doesnt-want-to-play-peacemaker-india-pakistan-war-pulwama/> James Schwemlein is a nonresident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and was a senior advisor to the special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the U.S. Department of State.

Pakistan’s return of the captive Indian Air Force pilot Abhinandan Varthaman to India on March 1, two days after his plane was shot down over Pakistani territory in a dogfight, has been welcomed as the potential beginning of the end of the latest violent flare-up between the two countries. But the crisis may not yet be over, and the sudden possibility of war between two nuclear powers has highlighted the risks posed by the Trump administration’s recusal from the United States’ past role as global leader and peacemaker. Three elements of this crisis highlight the growing risks of conflict in the region—and the worrying absence of the United States. First, the level of violence at each stage of the current crisis has exceeded previous flash points, including the 2001-2002 crisis following a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament and the 2008 Mumbai attacks. The Pulwama suicide bombing that killed more than 40 Indian soldiers in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir was directed by the Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM); the Indian airstrikes at Balakot in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the retaliatory Pakistani airstrikes that led to the downing of two Indian fighter jets upped the ante. Unless India and Pakistan can reach a broader understanding from this conflict, this escalation will continue into the next crisis. Second, any miscalculation by these two nuclear powers could be cataclysmic. The announcement by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan that he would convene the National Command Authority, the military-civilian committee charged with governing the use of nuclear weapons, as part of the country’s response to India’s airstrikes against Balakot had the effect of highlighting the risks of continuing a violent cycle. But it also emphasized how short the slope from conventional to nuclear weapons has become in the conflict. This is especially worrying given the decentralized command and control structures of both the Indian and Pakistani nuclear forces. Given the growing differential between India’s conventional forces and their Pakistani peers, there is also a [serious](https://twq.elliott.gwu.edu/nuclear-emulation-pakistan%E2%80%99s-nuclear-trajectory) risk that Pakistani commanders could rush to the use of nuclear weapons in a crisis. These two large and nuclear-equipped forces operate in close proximity, and anytime tensions are high, the risk of a disastrous miscalculation grows. Third, amid the discussion of strikes and counterstrikes, it remains true that terrorists based in Pakistan—and effectively tolerated, if not actively supported, by the army—started this crisis and could still make it worse. Pakistan’s denial of responsibility for the Pulwama attack was a denial of reality, accentuated further by Pakistan’s foreign minister [appearing to acknowledge](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lxafFJLrqI) contacts between his government and JeM in an interview on March 1 with the BBC. Another terrorist attack in India would reignite the crisis, and given JeM’s success at Pulwama in spurring chaos in the region, a copycat effort seems plausible, even likely. So long as terrorist groups are permitted space to operate in Pakistan, and so long as Pakistan sees strategic benefit in maintaining a proxy militant capability against its neighbors, another attack is inevitable. Amid these grim observations, the good news is that Pakistan’s return of the Indian pilot backs up Khan’s call to de-escalate the current conflict. But while the violent pique has diminished, the conflict continues. Heavy shelling continues along the contested Line of Control, which separates Pakistani- and Indian-controlled Kashmir, killing at least [eight civilians](https://wapo.st/2ILmC6T?tid=ss_tw&utm_term=.d212a1ed9fa1) in the last week. Forces on both sides remain on heightened alert. To prevent a resumption of the crisis, four meaningful steps are needed to restore order and address India’s legitimate terrorism concerns. First, the 2003 cease-fire agreement brokered between the two sides that governed the types of defensive weapons that could be used along the disputed boundary should be reinstated. This is far from the first time the agreement has been breached, but it remains the best means of reducing the risk of civilian and military casualties from minor border disputes and maintaining a degree of normalcy on both sides of the Line of Control. Even before the current crisis, cease-fire [violations](https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/10/24/ceasefire-violations-in-kashmir-war-by-other-means-pub-77573) along the Line of Control had steadily increased in recent years. In the two weeks since the Pulwama attack, heavy artillery has been used by both sides [for the first time](https://www.greaterkashmir.com/article/news.aspx?story_id=314834&catid=31&mid=53&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1) since the 1999 Kargil conflict. Earlier in 2018, the Indian and Pakistani armies reinstituted regular contact between their respective operational commanders via a hotline established under the cease-fire agreement; such contact, including at the tactical level between border units, is also important to prevent provocations from exploding into conflict. Second, Pakistan must take steps to impose restrictions on India-focused terrorist groups operating in its territory, including JeM and Lashkar-e-Taiba, the group responsible for the 2008 Mumbai attacks and whose founder, Hafiz Saeed, was pictured sitting near the Khan government’s minister of religious affairs at an event last September. Pakistan took a small step in this direction following the Pulwama attack by raiding JeM’s publicly acknowledged headquarters in Bahawalpur, Punjab. But such steps are easily reversed, and the Khan government subsequently downplayed the raid. Asset seizures, arrests, and other law enforcement actions against JeM are likely the minimum threshold for action. Third, China must end its long opposition to the imposition of U.N. sanctions against the JeM’s leader, Masood Azhar. France, Britain, and the United States co-sponsored the enforcement of sanctions last week in New York. Beijing should take the responsible step of publicly committing to support the sanctioning of Azhar in the interest of ending the current India-Pakistan crisis. Pakistan’s foreign minister told the BBC on Friday that Azhar was very sick—an excuse for declining to arrest him. Other press has indicated that he may be in renal failure and is being treated at a public hospital in Rawalpindi, near the Pakistani capital. But whether Azhar is alive or dead, it is long past time that sanctions be enforced against him and all of his known associates. After all, the U.N. terrorist sanctions regime also includes clear procedures for removing the names of deceased terrorists. Finally, the first cross-border airstrikes in decades and the short-fuse nuclear weapons capabilities that exist mean that the international community should seek to introduce a new conflict-monitoring regime in the region. New, commercially available high-resolution imaging has been used to great effect in the [North Korea context](https://beyondparallel.csis.org/undeclared-north-korea-sakkanmol-missile-operating-base/), to improve awareness of nuclear and missile technology developments. Introducing additional [monitoring](https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/11/satellite-imagery-remote-sensing-and-diminishing-risk-nuclear-war-south-asia) and surveillance tools, ideally through a cooperative framework between India and Pakistan, would reduce the risk of escalation in future crises and help reduce the saliency of facts produced from a viral [flash mob](https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/01/indias-media-is-war-crazy/) of the type that occurred during last week’s crisis. The tools could be used to monitor for cease-fire violations along the static Line of Control or in other ways, such as verifying defensive positions declared under the cease-fire agreement, which could be a source of conflict in the future. A third party, whether the United States, Britain, the United Nations, or someone else mutually agreed on by the two sides, could oversee the arrangement.

#### Saudi mediation solves, but US encouragement is key. Stavridis 3/11

James Stavridis, 3-11-2019, "How to avoid a nuclear conflict between India, Pakistan," Post and Courier, <https://www.postandcourier.com/opinion/commentary/how-to-avoid-a-nuclear-conflict-between-india-pakistan/article_10812e38-4433-11e9-9d16-bb68e88c58cf.html> James Stavridis is a retired four-star U.S. Navy admiral and NATO supreme allied commander who serves today as the dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

While India and Pakistan seem to have stopped bombing one another, the causes behind the cross-border tensions aren’t going away any time soon. The two nations are nuclear-armed; have large conventional armed forces; have had four serious wars since they became independent in 1947; and have enormous cultural and religious antipathy. This is a prescription for a disaster, and yet the confrontation is flying below the international radar — well below North Korea, Brexit, China-U.S. trade confrontations, Iran and even the “yellow vests” of France. A full-blown war in the valleys and mountains of Kashmir is a very real possibility. When I was the supreme allied commander of NATO, the most important mission of the alliance was dealing with terrorism in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, our Pakistani partners continued to support many of the radical elements of the Taliban. They were afraid of creeping Indian influence, and much preferred a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan to a more Western-leaning and independent Afghan government. The most recent crisis was set off in mid-February when a Pakistani terrorist group, Jaish-e-Mohammed, detonated a suicide bomb in Indian-controlled Kashmir, killing 40 Indian paramilitary soldiers. It was the deadliest attack on security forces since that insurgency began in earnest decades ago. While the Pakistani government denied involvement in the bombing, India believes it was aware of the incident, and therefore responded with significant airstrikes into Pakistan. Two Indian fighter jets were shot down and a pilot captured. There was an unmistakable echo of the 1947 and 1965 Kashmir conflicts, in which tens of thousands died. The extremely fragile cease-fire in place for two decades is fraying. Partly this is the result of domestic politics in India: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, elected on a Hindu nationalist agenda, is up for re-election in April and May. Former Indian Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam, now a professor at Tufts University, told me, “At the strategic level, the strikes have signaled a heightened resolve on the part of the Modi government to change the response matrix in the aftermath of a confirmed jihadi attack from safe havens in Pakistan.” Most worrisome, of course, are the significant nuclear arsenals of the combatants. Each has roughly 150 missiles, although only India has a submarine-based ballistic missile capability and thus a true nuclear triad (land, air and sea). Pakistan is developing sea-launched cruise missiles to counter that Indian threat. India has adopted a “no first use” doctrine, although Pakistan — which has smaller conventional forces and thus potentially the need for a more ambiguous doctrine — has not made an equivalent pledge. In past conflicts, the U.S. has played a mediating role. But today Pakistan is more inclined to work with China. India has strong relations with both the U.S. and Russia, but is unlikely to turn to either, so as not to appear beholden to any peer “great state.” Complicating the picture is that the Washington is trying to enlist Pakistani aid in ending the long war in Afghanistan by reining in the Taliban. What the U.S. can do most effectively is to quietly encourage both sides to step back from escalation — which Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan did by releasing the captured Indian jet pilot unharmed. We should also offer our intelligence capabilities to both India and Pakistan as each of them deal with the disruptive terrorist groups operating from Pakistani soil. The U.S. could also encourage other mediation by allies and international organizations, in particular Saudi Arabia, which reportedly was influential in the release of the Indian pilot. As Hussein Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to the U.S., recently pointed out, Pakistan in on the verge of an economic crisis. While the Khan government has tried to defuse the situation, in part by appealing to the International Monetary fund, internal pressures are building. Make no mistake: With Pakistan’s economic plight and the upcoming elections in India, South Asia is in a situation in which a military miscalculation, perhaps even a nuclear one, is real possibility.

### Link – MBS

#### Mediation is MBS’s way to salvage relations – decking arms sales ends this. Bar’El 2/22

Zvi Bar'El, 2-22-2019, "Mohammed bin Salman looks east but worries about the West," haaretz, https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium-mohammed-bin-salman-looks-east-but-worries-about-the-west-1.6959755

The prince came to India from Riyadh after returning from Pakistan so he wouldn’t fly directly between the two rivals. The ranting and raving by those two countries has reached a new high after last week’s attack in Kashmir in which 40 Indian police officers were killed. Delhi is accusing Pakistan and its prime minister, Imran Khan, of sheltering terrorists of the group Jaish-e-Mohammed, while Pakistan is demanding that India provide proof. The crown prince, via his foreign minister, promised to try to reconcile the two sides, but it seems he must first reconcile himself with the West and especially the United States, which is threatening to stop aiding his endless war in [Yemen](https://www.haaretz.com/misc/tags/TAG-yemen-1.5599311). The turning east and the royal visit will help Mohammed and Saudi Arabia salvage some of their standing after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. This is a front on which Russia, the United States and especially China are playing, so Saudi Arabia has to tread very carefully amid the parties’ conflicting interests.

### Link – US-Saudi Relations

#### Ending arms sales tanks relations and Saudi will for regional security cooperation – coercion fails. Bisaccio 10/23

Derek Bisaccio, 10-23-2018, "Examining U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia," Forecast International, <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/feature/5/196962/us-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia%3A-policy-options.html> Military Markets Analyst for Forecast International

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. Opponents of Saudi Arabia in general see no issue with downgrading U.S.-Saudi relations, and perhaps in time the U.S. might view its security interests as diverging from requiring Washington to work with governments like Saudi Arabia’s. But if the Trump administration’s goal in the present is to isolate Iran and concretely address its nuclear and missile programs as well as foreign policy in the region, coordination of efforts with Saudi Arabia will prove essential. Critics of the Crown Prince regularly paint him as reckless, which, if an accurate depiction, should prompt consideration of whether reducing America’s ability to influence Saudi policy choices is the wisest course of action for Washington to take. Depending on how severely the U.S. was to act, cutting defense cooperation could produce the opposite effect than intended with respect to Saudi policies: Saudi Arabia could well double-down, or in any case refuse to budge, rather than concede to Washington. Should the U.S. cut only a few deals, or refuse to sell a few systems, the pressure will be so miniscule as to hardly register in Riyadh. A more aggressive approach, however, would not be guaranteed to produce a better effect on Saudi policy. A useful comparison may be the U.S. response to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s overthrow of Egypt’s previous government and the subsequent massacre of protestors in Rabaa. The U.S. criticized the government of President Sisi and cut a significant amount of arms cooperation pending improvement toward a more democratic system. Two years later, the U.S. rescinded the policy, having made little to no progress.[iv] Bahrain hardly moved on its domestic policies despite the U.S. temporarily enacting a hold on the sale of F-16s to the country until it improved its human rights record. Perhaps extending these bans or making them bite harder would have the intended effect, but solely using coercive measures to target governments based on their domestic policies, however repulsive those policies may be, is not likely to produce positive change, particularly if those policies are related to what the government conceptualizes as maintenance of regime security. Talk by prominent U.S. lawmakers that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has “got to go” while the U.S. is considering implementing these sorts of coercive measures adds to the risk that Saudi Arabia might perceive the U.S. actions as hostile,[v] even if privately some members of the royal court agree with the criticism of the Crown Prince or see him as having gone too far in stamping out rivals.

### Saudi Key

#### US-Saudi coalition k2 prevent Russia-China fill-in to Indo-Pak conflict. Bhadrakumar 3/3

M.K. Bhadrakumar 03 Mar 2019, 3-3-2019, "Russia and China Offer the SCO Platform for India-Pak de-escalation," NewsClick, <https://www.newsclick.in/russia-and-china-offer-sco-platform-india-pak-de-escalation> Former career diplomat in the Indian Foreign Service. Devoted much of his 3-decade long career to the Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran desks in the Ministry of External Affairs and in assignments on the territory of the former Soviet Union.  After leaving the diplomatic service, took to writing and contribute to The Asia Times, The Hindu and Deccan Herald. Lives in New Delhi.

Saudi Arabia is pushing forward as mediator between India and Pakistan with a messianic zeal that patently enjoys US backing. The Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir is arriving in Delhi tomorrow. He was to have visited Islamabad on Friday but rescheduled his plan so that he can touch base with Modi first and thereafter meet the Pakistani leaders, including army chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa. Modi and Bajwa will be Adel’s key interlocutors. How far the Saudi waltz will advance remains to be seen. How Modi handles the piquant situation will bear watch. Certainly, the Saudi mediation makes India look rather immature and that becomes willy-nilly a reflection of Modi’s foreign policy legacy. The point is, no matter what Modi may boast about “new India”, the geopolitical reality is that India’s stature diminishes when it needs a small country like Saudi Arabia under an autocratic ruler to help out with what is arguably one of the most critical templates of its diplomacy. Saudi Arabia has no track record as a peacemaker. On the contrary, it has a notorious reputation the world over as a promoter of terrorist groups. Meanwhile, India does not have to be beholden to the Saudis to ease its tensions with Pakistan. The indications are that Russia and China are jointly sponsoring an initiative in this regard. [China is deputing a special envoy](https://tribune.com.pk/story/1921588/1-china-send-special-envoy-pakistan-india/) to visit India and Pakistan to discuss the crisis situation. The Pakistani FM Shah Mehmood Qureshi disclosed this in Islamabad. To be sure, Russia and China, which actively coordinate on the foreign policy front, are in consultation each other on the India-Pakistan tensions. We may also factor in that the foreign ministers of Russia and China had an opportunity last Wednesday to meet EAM Sushma Swaraj at the RIC ministerial. Following that, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi also [briefed Qureshi in a phone conversation](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1642047.shtml) where the latter had expressed the hope that “the Chinese side will continue to play a constructive role in easing the current tension.” Equally, at the height of the India-Pakistan crisis, on February 27, Russian Foreign Ministry also had issued a [statement expressing “grave concern](http://www.mid.ru/en_GB/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3547930) over the escalating situation along the Line of Control and the surge in tensions” between India and Pakistan “which are Russia’s friends.” It took a neutral stance and called on both sides “to show restraint and redouble efforts to resolve existing problems by political and diplomatic means.” It is entirely conceivable that the Chinese special envoy’s visit is a related development signifying a coordinated effort by Beijing and Moscow and in consultation with Islamabad and New Delhi. This is of course a major shift in the tectonic plates of Eurasian politics and it has an added significance insofar as it is taking place in the New Cold War conditions. Indeed, it does not need much ingenuity to figure out that a US-sponsored Saudi mediation between India and Pakistan must be a worrisome development for both Russia and China, from the geopolitical perspective. At any rate, on Thursday, President Vladimir Putin telephoned Modi. According to the [Kremlin readout](http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59916), they discussed the “crisis in relations between India and Pakistan” and the Russian leader “expressed hope for a prompt settlement.” The careful wording hinted that Putin offered to lend a helping hand, jointly with China, to ease the tension. Curiously, the very next day, Russian Foreign Minster telephoned Qureshi in Islamabad — presumably to follow up on the Putin-Modi conversation — and offered help to “de-escalate” the tensions. The Russian Foreign Ministry readout, [cited by state news agency TASS](http://tass.com/world/1047141), says: “Moscow expressed its readiness to contribute to de-escalating tensions and that there is no alternative to settling all differences between Islamabad and New Delhi by political and diplomatic means.” Importantly, Lavrov also outlined to Qureshi how the de-escalation process can be achieved — via the mechanism of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). A [Xinhua report](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/02/c_137861511.htm) since highlighted this aspect — that Lavrov told Qureshi about the “possibility of using the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s Regional Anti-terrorist Structure for this purpose.” Alongside, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova outlined in an important statement on Thursday Moscow’s broad approach. Zakharova said: “We are worried about the escalation of tension in relations between India and Pakistan and dangerous manoeuvres of both states’ armed forces along the Line of Control that are fraught with a direct military clash.” “We are urging the sides to display maximum restraint. We continue to assume that contentious matters should be resolved by political-diplomatic methods on a bilateral basis in line with the provisions of the 1972 Simla Agreement and the 1999 Lahore Declaration.” “We reaffirm our readiness to provide all-out support to the Indian and Pakistani efforts in countering terrorism.” From the Indian perspective, this adds up to an extremely positive outcome of EAM’s consultations in Zhejiang with her Russian and Chinese counterparts. This must be [EAM Swaraj’s finest hour in international diplomacy](https://www.thestatesman.com/india-pakistan-tensions/india-china-russia-agree-closer-policy-cooperation-breeding-grounds-terrorism-1502735193.html), as the curtain begins descending shortly on her scintillating stint as India’s foreign minister. No doubt, the urgency of “de-escalation” of the tensions with Pakistan is self-evident. The “de-escalation” is far from over with the return of the Indian pilot. In fact, the [tensions on the Line of Control can spiral](https://dailytimes.com.pk/360485/indian-loc-violation-two-soldiers-and-2-civilians-martyred/)out of control anytime in the present surcharged atmosphere. Without doubt, the international community — read the US and NATO allies — is [closely watching.](https://dailytimes.com.pk/360271/pakistan-will-surely-respond-to-any-aggression-coas/) The Afghan endgame is at a most sensitive stage and any eruption of tensions between India and Pakistan will negatively impact the peace process. India should wholeheartedly welcome the Sino-Russian proposal, cast within an SCO framework as far more preferable to the alliance with the Saudis and the Emiratis — or, for that matter, any UN intervention. The fact of the matter is that both Russia and China are stakeholders in India-Pakistan normalisation and neither has any hidden agenda in this regard. Of course, [Russia and China are like-minded partners](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1641466.shtml) for India in the fight against terrorism. On the other hand, unlike in the Cold War era, Pakistan is keen on Eurasian integration, too.

#### Backing Saudi mediation stops Indo-Pak escalation. Stavridis 3/11

James Stavridis, 3-11-2019, "How to avoid a nuclear conflict between India, Pakistan," Post and Courier, <https://www.postandcourier.com/opinion/commentary/how-to-avoid-a-nuclear-conflict-between-india-pakistan/article_10812e38-4433-11e9-9d16-bb68e88c58cf.html> James Stavridis is a retired four-star U.S. Navy admiral and NATO supreme allied commander who serves today as the dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

While India and Pakistan seem to have stopped bombing one another, the causes behind the cross-border tensions aren’t going away any time soon. The two nations are nuclear-armed; have large conventional armed forces; have had four serious wars since they became independent in 1947; and have enormous cultural and religious antipathy. This is a prescription for a disaster, and yet the confrontation is flying below the international radar — well below North Korea, Brexit, China-U.S. trade confrontations, Iran and even the “yellow vests” of France. A full-blown war in the valleys and mountains of Kashmir is a very real possibility. When I was the supreme allied commander of NATO, the most important mission of the alliance was dealing with terrorism in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, our Pakistani partners continued to support many of the radical elements of the Taliban. They were afraid of creeping Indian influence, and much preferred a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan to a more Western-leaning and independent Afghan government. The most recent crisis was set off in mid-February when a Pakistani terrorist group, Jaish-e-Mohammed, detonated a suicide bomb in Indian-controlled Kashmir, killing 40 Indian paramilitary soldiers. It was the deadliest attack on security forces since that insurgency began in earnest decades ago. While the Pakistani government denied involvement in the bombing, India believes it was aware of the incident, and therefore responded with significant airstrikes into Pakistan. Two Indian fighter jets were shot down and a pilot captured. There was an unmistakable echo of the 1947 and 1965 Kashmir conflicts, in which tens of thousands died. The extremely fragile cease-fire in place for two decades is fraying. Partly this is the result of domestic politics in India: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, elected on a Hindu nationalist agenda, is up for re-election in April and May. Former Indian Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam, now a professor at Tufts University, told me, “At the strategic level, the strikes have signaled a heightened resolve on the part of the Modi government to change the response matrix in the aftermath of a confirmed jihadi attack from safe havens in Pakistan.” Most worrisome, of course, are the significant nuclear arsenals of the combatants. Each has roughly 150 missiles, although only India has a submarine-based ballistic missile capability and thus a true nuclear triad (land, air and sea). Pakistan is developing sea-launched cruise missiles to counter that Indian threat. India has adopted a “no first use” doctrine, although Pakistan — which has smaller conventional forces and thus potentially the need for a more ambiguous doctrine — has not made an equivalent pledge. In past conflicts, the U.S. has played a mediating role. But today Pakistan is more inclined to work with China. India has strong relations with both the U.S. and Russia, but is unlikely to turn to either, so as not to appear beholden to any peer “great state.” Complicating the picture is that the Washington is trying to enlist Pakistani aid in ending the long war in Afghanistan by reining in the Taliban. What the U.S. can do most effectively is to quietly encourage both sides to step back from escalation — which Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan did by releasing the captured Indian jet pilot unharmed. We should also offer our intelligence capabilities to both India and Pakistan as each of them deal with the disruptive terrorist groups operating from Pakistani soil. The U.S. could also encourage other mediation by allies and international organizations, in particular Saudi Arabia, which reportedly was influential in the release of the Indian pilot. As Hussein Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to the U.S., recently pointed out, Pakistan in on the verge of an economic crisis. While the Khan government has tried to defuse the situation, in part by appealing to the International Monetary fund, internal pressures are building. Make no mistake: With Pakistan’s economic plight and the upcoming elections in India, South Asia is in a situation in which a military miscalculation, perhaps even a nuclear one, is real possibility.

#### Saudi’s the only mediation option – empirics prove they’re successful. Minhas 3/13

Khurram Minhas, 3-13-2019, "The Saudi mediation," Express Tribune, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1928061/6-the-saudi-mediation/> The writer is a PhD candidate at the National University of Science and Technology and is a researcher at Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

Saudi Arabia is gradually expanding its influence in South Asia not just with deals worth billions of dollars, but also through offering mediation between Pakistan and India in the wake of the recent escalation between the two nuclear rivals. Since February 17, Saudi Arabia has one way or the other tried to defuse tensions between Pakistan and India, whether during the Crown Prince’s visit to Islamabad and Delhi or through persistent engagement of Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al Jubeir with Indian and Pakistani leadership. On March 7, Adel al Jubeir visited Pakistan on the directives of Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman and met highest civil and military leadership. Four days later, on March 11, he visited India and met Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. This is his third meeting with the Indian FM in over a fortnight to dial down tensions between the two nuclear rivals. Pakistan accepted the kingdom’s mediatory offers. Adel al Jubeir seems to carry an important message from Pakistan to India. Though, India has deliberately kept his visit low profile, it carries substantial significance due to Adel al Jubeir’s meetings with Pakistani officials. Riyadh wishes for resumption of the ‘comprehensive dialogue’ between Islamabad and New Delhi, which seems difficult before Indian elections. However, positive signalling and better communication through mediators like Saudi Arabia can play a role in de-escalation. Perhaps, this is why FM Qureshi is hopeful that there will be no further escalation between Pakistan and India. Saudi Arabia has a long history of rendering its good offices for mediation. It has often tried to position itself as a mediator in various Middle Eastern protracted conflicts. Riyadh has played a pivotal role as mediator in Bahrain-Qatar dispute over Hawar Island, Arab-Israel conflict, intra-Palestine conflict and Lebanon’s conflict. Interestingly, none of the conflicts has ever been resolved by the kingdom, but it has often successfully defused escalation between the parties and improved its fanfare within the region during the process. It also provided Riyadh a substantial leverage within the internal affairs of these states, which is important to counter Iranian influence. It seems Riyadh is applying the same policy in South Asia. Riyadh’s mediation will not guarantee resolution of outstanding disputes between New Delhi and Islamabad, but the addition of another power broker that can use its offices during the escalation between two arch rivals. Historically, the kingdom took sides in South Asian conflicts clearly siding with Islamabad. Financial, political and diplomatic support of Riyadh during 1965 and 1971 wars is a clear manifestation of Riyadh’s pro-Islamabad policies. King Faisal was generous enough to provide 75 warplanes to Pakistan and termed Indian aggression in East Pakistan as “treacherous”. However, a shift is visible in Riyadh’s policy towards South Asia, where it has assumed the mediatory role rather than taking sides. Apart from the deepening political, security and economic interests with India, Pakistan’s policy of ‘neutrality’ in intra-Arab conflicts and Islamabad’s repeated offers of mediation between Saudi Arabia and Yemen might have become reasons for the current shift in Riyadh’s policy towards South Asia. Furthermore, there is an understanding within Saudi Arabia that Iran often navigated in South Asian affairs through its desire to mediate between Pakistan and India. Riyadh wants to curtail Tehran’s influence through actively displaying itself as mediator and peace broker in the region. To conclude, a successful mediation requires a strong ability of the mediator to ensure timely implementation of actions that can calm tensions between the warring parties. Indeed, the kingdom enjoys this leverage in case of Pakistan; however, India seems to be reluctant to provide Riyadh this leverage due to its domestic political compulsions and its age-old stance of resolution of the dispute through bilateral means. Yet it is a significant development for the region as apart from three superpowers, namely the US, Russia and China, the kingdom has emerged as an eager candidate of mediation between Pakistan and India.

### Yes – Nuclear Escalation

#### Indo-Pak is uniquely dangerous now – levels of violence exceeded previous flashpoints. Schwemlein 3/5

James Schwemlein, 3-5-2019, "Trump Doesn't Want to Play Peacemaker," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/05/trump-doesnt-want-to-play-peacemaker-india-pakistan-war-pulwama/> James Schwemlein is a nonresident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and was a senior advisor to the special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the U.S. Department of State.

Pakistan’s return of the captive Indian Air Force pilot Abhinandan Varthaman to India on March 1, two days after his plane was shot down over Pakistani territory in a dogfight, has been welcomed as the potential beginning of the end of the latest violent flare-up between the two countries. But the crisis may not yet be over, and the sudden possibility of war between two nuclear powers has highlighted the risks posed by the Trump administration’s recusal from the United States’ past role as global leader and peacemaker. Three elements of this crisis highlight the growing risks of conflict in the region—and the worrying absence of the United States. First, the level of violence at each stage of the current crisis has exceeded previous flash points, including the 2001-2002 crisis following a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament and the 2008 Mumbai attacks. The Pulwama suicide bombing that killed more than 40 Indian soldiers in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir was directed by the Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM); the Indian airstrikes at Balakot in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the retaliatory Pakistani airstrikes that led to the downing of two Indian fighter jets upped the ante. Unless India and Pakistan can reach a broader understanding from this conflict, this escalation will continue into the next crisis. Second, any miscalculation by these two nuclear powers could be cataclysmic. The announcement by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan that he would convene the National Command Authority, the military-civilian committee charged with governing the use of nuclear weapons, as part of the country’s response to India’s airstrikes against Balakot had the effect of highlighting the risks of continuing a violent cycle. But it also emphasized how short the slope from conventional to nuclear weapons has become in the conflict. This is especially worrying given the decentralized command and control structures of both the Indian and Pakistani nuclear forces. Given the growing differential between India’s conventional forces and their Pakistani peers, there is also a [serious](https://twq.elliott.gwu.edu/nuclear-emulation-pakistan%E2%80%99s-nuclear-trajectory) risk that Pakistani commanders could rush to the use of nuclear weapons in a crisis. These two large and nuclear-equipped forces operate in close proximity, and anytime tensions are high, the risk of a disastrous miscalculation grows. Third, amid the discussion of strikes and counterstrikes, it remains true that terrorists based in Pakistan—and effectively tolerated, if not actively supported, by the army—started this crisis and could still make it worse. Pakistan’s denial of responsibility for the Pulwama attack was a denial of reality, accentuated further by Pakistan’s foreign minister [appearing to acknowledge](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lxafFJLrqI) contacts between his government and JeM in an interview on March 1 with the BBC. Another terrorist attack in India would reignite the crisis, and given JeM’s success at Pulwama in spurring chaos in the region, a copycat effort seems plausible, even likely. So long as terrorist groups are permitted space to operate in Pakistan, and so long as Pakistan sees strategic benefit in maintaining a proxy militant capability against its neighbors, another attack is inevitable. Amid these grim observations, the good news is that Pakistan’s return of the Indian pilot backs up Khan’s call to de-escalate the current conflict. But while the violent pique has diminished, the conflict continues. Heavy shelling continues along the contested Line of Control, which separates Pakistani- and Indian-controlled Kashmir, killing at least [eight civilians](https://wapo.st/2ILmC6T?tid=ss_tw&utm_term=.d212a1ed9fa1) in the last week. Forces on both sides remain on heightened alert. To prevent a resumption of the crisis, four meaningful steps are needed to restore order and address India’s legitimate terrorism concerns. First, the 2003 cease-fire agreement brokered between the two sides that governed the types of defensive weapons that could be used along the disputed boundary should be reinstated. This is far from the first time the agreement has been breached, but it remains the best means of reducing the risk of civilian and military casualties from minor border disputes and maintaining a degree of normalcy on both sides of the Line of Control. Even before the current crisis, cease-fire [violations](https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/10/24/ceasefire-violations-in-kashmir-war-by-other-means-pub-77573) along the Line of Control had steadily increased in recent years. In the two weeks since the Pulwama attack, heavy artillery has been used by both sides [for the first time](https://www.greaterkashmir.com/article/news.aspx?story_id=314834&catid=31&mid=53&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1) since the 1999 Kargil conflict. Earlier in 2018, the Indian and Pakistani armies reinstituted regular contact between their respective operational commanders via a hotline established under the cease-fire agreement; such contact, including at the tactical level between border units, is also important to prevent provocations from exploding into conflict. Second, Pakistan must take steps to impose restrictions on India-focused terrorist groups operating in its territory, including JeM and Lashkar-e-Taiba, the group responsible for the 2008 Mumbai attacks and whose founder, Hafiz Saeed, was pictured sitting near the Khan government’s minister of religious affairs at an event last September. Pakistan took a small step in this direction following the Pulwama attack by raiding JeM’s publicly acknowledged headquarters in Bahawalpur, Punjab. But such steps are easily reversed, and the Khan government subsequently downplayed the raid. Asset seizures, arrests, and other law enforcement actions against JeM are likely the minimum threshold for action. Third, China must end its long opposition to the imposition of U.N. sanctions against the JeM’s leader, Masood Azhar. France, Britain, and the United States co-sponsored the enforcement of sanctions last week in New York. Beijing should take the responsible step of publicly committing to support the sanctioning of Azhar in the interest of ending the current India-Pakistan crisis. Pakistan’s foreign minister told the BBC on Friday that Azhar was very sick—an excuse for declining to arrest him. Other press has indicated that he may be in renal failure and is being treated at a public hospital in Rawalpindi, near the Pakistani capital. But whether Azhar is alive or dead, it is long past time that sanctions be enforced against him and all of his known associates. After all, the U.N. terrorist sanctions regime also includes clear procedures for removing the names of deceased terrorists. Finally, the first cross-border airstrikes in decades and the short-fuse nuclear weapons capabilities that exist mean that the international community should seek to introduce a new conflict-monitoring regime in the region. New, commercially available high-resolution imaging has been used to great effect in the [North Korea context](https://beyondparallel.csis.org/undeclared-north-korea-sakkanmol-missile-operating-base/), to improve awareness of nuclear and missile technology developments. Introducing additional [monitoring](https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/11/satellite-imagery-remote-sensing-and-diminishing-risk-nuclear-war-south-asia) and surveillance tools, ideally through a cooperative framework between India and Pakistan, would reduce the risk of escalation in future crises and help reduce the saliency of facts produced from a viral [flash mob](https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/01/indias-media-is-war-crazy/) of the type that occurred during last week’s crisis. The tools could be used to monitor for cease-fire violations along the static Line of Control or in other ways, such as verifying defensive positions declared under the cease-fire agreement, which could be a source of conflict in the future. A third party, whether the United States, Britain, the United Nations, or someone else mutually agreed on by the two sides, could oversee the arrangement.

### No – China Mediation

#### China won’t mediate – blocked UN resolution to mark Azhar as a global terrorist. Tiezzi 3/14

Shannon Tiezzi, The Diplomat, 3-14-2019, "China Once Again Blocks India's Bid to List JeM Founder as Global Terrorist," Diplomat, https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/china-once-again-blocks-indias-bid-to-list-jem-founder-as-global-terrorist/

Once again, China has blocked the designation of Jaish-e-Mohammed founder Masood Azhar as a “global terrorist” by the United Nations Security Council. India had pushed for Azhar to be included on the list of sanctioned individuals under Security Council resolution 1267, a motion backed by UNSC permanent members the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. JeM claimed responsibility for the deadly terrorist attack on Indian security forces in Pulwama, Indian-administered Kashmir, on February 14. India has tried to have Azhar listed before, most notably in 2016. Then, as now, the proposal was motivated by a terrorist attack – at that time, in response to the attack on an Indian Air Force base at Pathankot. China placed a technical hold on the request in 2016, and has now done so again, despite a heavy emphasis on having Azhar given the global terrorist designation by New Delhi. In all, this marked the fourth time China has used its permanent member status on the UNSC to place a hold on sanctioning Masood Azhar. The move was not a surprise. As of Monday, there was little indication that China’s position had changed. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang, when asked about the potential listing of Azhar, [repeated the official line](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1644609.shtml) that “China has all along participated in relevant discussions in a responsible manner and in strict accordance with the rules of procedure and provisions of the 1267 Committee.” That was a oblique reference to China’s rationale for placing a hold on Azhar’s designation in the past. Beijing typically claims that the proposal does not meet the technical requirements of the committee rather than outright insisting that Azhar is not a terrorist. “China will continue to communicate and work with relevant parties in a responsible manner so as to properly resolve this matter,” Lu continued. “Only by making a decision through responsible and serious discussions can we find a lasting solution.” For China, the most “relevant party” is of course Pakistan, “all-weather friend” and “iron brother” to Beijing. Azhar is based in Pakistan and reportedly has ties to Pakistani intelligence. Even if those rumors are unfounded, it would be deeply embarrassing for Azhar, who operates openly and freely in Pakistan, to be denounced at the United Nations as a terrorist. If Azhar were to be sanctioned under resolution 1267, states – including Pakistan — would be required to freeze his assets and prevent his travel. China’s interests in keeping Pakistan happy have if anything grown since Beijing last blocked Azhar’s name from being added to the UNSC list, thanks to the continued expansion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Still, there was a sliver of hope this time. For one thing, India has been on a high-profile mission to reset its relationship with China in the past year, following the April 2018 Wuhan summit between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Plus, international outrage ran high over the Pulwama attack, meaning there was a window of opportunity to pressure China into allowing the designation. As Tanvi Madan [pointed out on Twitter](https://twitter.com/tanvi_madan/status/1105500513930498050), Beijing had allowed Hafiz Saeed, the Pakistan-based founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba, to be added to the sanctions list in 2008, shortly after the Mumbai attacks. But apparently in the end the Pulwama attack was not enough to change Beijing’s calculus – or Pakistan’s, despite a [near-brush with all-out war](https://thediplomat.com/2019/02/india-and-pakistan-on-the-brink/) that saw India and Pakistan exchange cross-border air strikes. Earlier this month, Pakistani Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry [told Al Jazeera](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/security-council-vote-jaish-muhammad-chief-sanctions-190313110320131.html) that Azhar was not a key figure in JeM, and thus listing him served no purpose. “Masood Azhar is now more of a symbolic thing,” Chaudhry said, describing the JeM founder as “too ill, frail, and old.” “China believes that only a plan adopted by all can offer a long-term solution,” Lu said when asked again by the Masood Azhar designation [on March 13](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1645211.shtml), further signaling that China will only change its position on the issue when Pakistan does. After China’s rejection, India’s Ministry of External Affairs [issued a statement](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/31151/1267_Sanctions_Committee_not_able_to_come_to_a_decision_on_the_proposal_for_listing_Mohammed_Masood_Azhar_Alvi_under_the_UN_Sanctions_regime) saying, “We are disappointed by this outcome” while also expressing gratitude for “the unprecedented number of … Security Council members as well as non-members” who supported the proposal.

### No – Russia Mediation

#### Indian ambassador rejected Russian mediation. Haidar 3/2

Suhasini Haidar, 3-2-2019, "India-Pakistan tensions: No Russian mediation required, situation is stabilising, says India," Hindu, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-pakistan-tensions-no-russian-mediation-required-situation-is-stabilizing-says-india/article26419301.ece

Rejecting any mediation by [Russia](https://www.thehindu.com/tag/1979-244/russia/?utm=bodytag) or other countries, India’s Ambassador to Moscow said that tensions between India and Pakistan appear to be de-escalating. “The situation is already stabilising and stabilising rather quickly,” Venkatesh Verma, one of India’s most senior diplomats, based in Moscow, during an interview to agency RIA-Novosti on Saturday. “India has clearly stated that it is not interested in an escalation of the situation. And the best way to achieve a normal state of affairs in the region resides in the actions of Pakistan in the fight against terrorist groups.” Reacting to reports that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had offered to mediate as well as provided a venue for talks between India and Pakistan, when he spoke to Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on March 1, Mr. Verma said that no “formal offer of mediation” had been received by India. “I want to emphasize that we did not receive a formal offer of mediation. And even we do, we will not accept it. So far, no country has offered to mediate in resolving the conflict,” Mr. Verma affirmed. According to the Russian MFA statement, Mr. Lavrov had expressed “Moscow’s readiness to promote the de-escalation of tensions and the lack of an alternative to resolving any differences between Islamabad and New Delhi by politico-diplomatic means.” On Thursday, at the height of tensions following the IAF strike on Balakot and the attempt by Pakistan Air Force to bomb key military installations in Jammu and Kashmir, which subsequently led to the capture of Indian pilot Wg Cdr Abhinandan, President Vladimir Putin had spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During the discussion, Mr. Putin had “expressed hope for a prompt settlement” of the “crisis” while offering support for India in dealing with terrorism. In a separate statement, Russian Chair of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs Senator Konstantin Kosachev went a step further and said Russia could be a “direct mediator in a trilateral format”. The statements from Moscow have been read with some disquiet in New Delhi, as it denotes an attempt at balancing between Pakistan’s demand for international intervention and India’s demand for Pakistan to act against terrorist groups. Since 2014, Moscow has built new ties with Islamabad, driven by military exchanges, exercises, as well as cooperation on the current Afghan-Taliban talks. “In our opinion, the role of Russia may also consist in influencing Pakistan so that it does not allow terrorist groups to use its territory,” Mr. Verma said when asked what India hopes from Russia. The comments on mediation come even as credible reports emerged that leaders of the United States, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had played a key role in diffusing the situation on Wednesday.

### No – US Mediation

#### US won’t mediate alone. Schwemlein 3/5

James Schwemlein, 3-5-2019, "Trump Doesn't Want to Play Peacemaker," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/05/trump-doesnt-want-to-play-peacemaker-india-pakistan-war-pulwama/> James Schwemlein is a nonresident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and was a senior advisor to the special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the U.S. Department of State.

De-escalating this crisis is more likely with outside mediation. The United States has historically led the effort to de-escalate disputes between India and Pakistan, including after the 1999 Kargil War, the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament, and the 2008 Mumbai attacks. These efforts were pursued in cooperation with allies such as the U.K., which in the current crisis has already engaged at the highest levels to [deliver](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/pm-urges-pakistan-s-imran-khan-to-take-action-against-terror-groups-a4081511.html) clear messages. Thus far there is no sign that the Trump administration plans to engage in any meaningful way. President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have not engaged either leader. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton have made calls to express solidarity with India following the Pulwama attack and to urge calm after last week’s airstrikes, but beyond this rhetoric, no broader effort appears to be underway to reduce tensions in a systematic way. No official travel to the region has been announced. The United States would not have to do it alone. Regional powers, particularly China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, could mediate a de-escalation. There are [signs](https://www.khaleejtimes.com/news/government/sheikh-mohameds-urdu-hindi-message-for-pakistan-india-pms) of engagement with each [power](http://www.ummid.com/news/2019/march/02.03.2019/saudi-fm-to-visit-india-then-deliver-mohammed-bin-salmans-imp-message-to-pakistan.html). All three coming together to press Pakistan to implement sanctions would be a meaningful conciliation for India, given their past records of helping Pakistan avoid international censure. All three stand to benefit from greater stability in the subcontinent. They are all large investors in Pakistan and see India as a growing economic partner—for manufacturing and IT exports in China’s case and oil and finance in the case of both Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It is too early to put a lid on the post-Pulwama crisis between India and Pakistan. While there appears to be a clear path out of the current dispute, there is also an open slope toward the nightmare of a nuclear exchange. There is still time for the Trump administration to show up, but if Washington will not show leadership at this moment, others can and should engage.

### No – US Leverage

#### US-India relations have been fraying – GSP. Thakker 3/6

Aman Thakker, The Diplomat, 3-6-2019, "The US GSP Decision: Risks to US-India Relations and Upsides for China," Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/the-us-gsp-decision-risks-to-us-india-relations-and-upsides-for-china/> Aman Thakker is a Research Associate at the Wadhwani Chair in U.S.-India Policy Studies at CSIS and a Contributor for The Diplomat.

The Trump administration’s [decision to withdraw India’s Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) benefits](https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/trump-announces-decision-to-revoke-indias-developing-country-gsp-status/) not only risks adversely affecting the broader strategic relationship with India, but also giving a boost to Chinese exports. On March 4, 2019, President Donald Trump wrote a [letter](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/text-letter-speaker-house-representatives-president-senate-8/) to Congress to provide notice of his intent to terminate the designation of India as a beneficiary country under the Generalized System of Preferences, a program [designed](https://ustr.gov/issue-areas/trade-development/preference-programs/generalized-system-preference-gsp) to “promote economic growth and development in the developing world.” Although the Indian government [noted](http://www.pib.nic.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1567445) that the “GSP concessions extended by the U.S. amounted to duty reduction of only $190 million” per year, this decision could spill over and adversely affect other aspects of the U.S.-India relationship. Moreover, by revoking India’s GSP benefits, the Trump administration may also worsen America’s trade deficit with other countries, notably China. **Risks to the U.S.-India Relationship** The decision to revoke India’s GSP benefits was a culmination of a decision by the Office of the United States Trade Representative to [initiate a review](https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/press-releases/2018/april/ustr-announces-new-gsp-eligibility) of India’s eligibility for the program in April 2018. The key factors for the review were unfavorable market access for U.S. dairy and medical devices. Over the next 10 months, as both countries attempted to negotiate a mutually agreeable trade deal, other issues such as Indian local content rules, price controls, rules mandating data localization, and changes to FDI rules regarding e-commerce became crucial parts of the agenda. However, the policy dispute overlooked the fact that U.S.-India trade was booming over the past year. Total goods trade [grew](https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5330.html) 16.7 percent between December 2017 and November 2018, with U.S. exports to India growing at 27 percent during the same timeframe. Revoking GSP at this juncture risks threatening this growth in trade. India has been [postponing retaliatory tariffs](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/india-again-postpones-levying-retaliatory-tariffs-on-us-goods-to-jan-31/articleshow/67119568.cms) to U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum imports in hopes of reaching a favorable agreement with the United States. While India’s commerce secretary has said that New Delhi will [keep these retaliatory tariffs out](https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2019/03/05/business/05reuters-usa-trade-india-retaliation.html) of discussions with the United States following the decision to revoke India’s GSP benefits, that may still change in the future and threaten this fast-growing trade relationship. The United States and India have also taken strides to advance their broader relationship. India [signed](https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/09/285729.htm) the Communication, Compatibility, and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in September 2018, and the United States has [outlined a central role](https://www.csis.org/events/defining-our-relationship-india-next-century-address-us-secretary-state-rex-tillerson) for India as part of its new “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” strategy. With steady, continued progress in the defense relationship, both countries will need to be careful that the trade dispute does not spill over into these other aspects of the relationship.

#### US-India relations have been fraying – GSP. Panagariya 3/13

Arvind Panagariya, 3-13-2019, "India is Trump’s Next Target in the Trade War," Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/13/india-is-trumps-next-target-in-the-trade-war/

From a political perspective, though, Trump’s move on GSP is dangerous. And it would be imprudent for the United States to push India any further on trade issues. The country is in the midst of parliamentary elections, and the Indian government can ill afford to appear weak. It would likely deny concessions that it would be willing to grant under other circumstances. The government may even choose to retaliate to signal strength to the voters. Therefore, any aggressive action by the United States runs the risk of triggering a trade war that would do little good for either side. From $20 billion in 2000, bilateral trade between the two countries has grown sixfold—[to $126 billion in 2017](https://www.usispf.org/us-india-trade). Cumulative foreign direct investment stands around [$45 billion](https://www.statista.com/statistics/188633/united-states-direct-investments-in-india-since-2000/) from the United States to India and [$10 billion](https://www.statista.com/statistics/188940/foreign-direct-investment-from-india-in-the-united-states/) in the opposite direction. No wonder that, so far, Indian officials have been quite measured in their response to the impending withdrawal of GSP. But it is unclear how long such forbearance may last. Once the Indian elections are over, the new government would do well to undertake a thorough review of all its trade policies and regulations. It should reassess the wisdom of the country’s recent turn to protectionism and import substitution. Such policies were a central factor in India’s economic failure during the first four decades after independence. By contrast, openness to trade and foreign investment have paved the way to economic success in recent times. In parallel, the United States needs to appreciate that democracy places certain limits on India’s leadership. Sometimes, New Delhi must accommodate political pressures that lead it to choose regulatory policies that are not to Washington’s liking. In the interest of long-run partnership, it would be prudent to occasionally accommodate such behaviors. For example, India’s decision in 2016 to open up online marketplaces to foreign investors resulted in Amazon and Walmart emerging as two largest e-commerce platforms in the country within a short period. That in turn created political pressure to safeguard the interests of local small traders, who form a key constituency of the present government. New Delhi responded by reversing some of the original liberalization, but the net outcome remains an e-commerce sector that is more open to foreign investors. From a long-term perspective, the two nations must keep in mind the vast potential for cooperation not just defense, but also in trade. The United States remains the richest and most robust economy in the world. India is predicted to grow 7 to 8 percent annually on its path to becoming the third largest economy in a decade. There is vast scope for win-win bargains between the two countries. With some patience, both can benefit as much from cooperation in trade in coming years as they have in defense and related areas in the recent past.

#### US alone doesn’t have the same leverage anymore; the best we can do is support the Saudis. Ayres 2/28

Alyssa Ayres 2-28-2019, "What The U.S. Is Doing To Ease Tensions Between India And Pakistan," NPR.org, <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/28/699118976/what-the-u-s-is-doing-to-ease-tensions-between-india-and-pakistan> She's a senior fellow for India, Pakistan and South Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations.

AYRES: Our leverage has changed over the years. I think what you've seen is Pakistan has slowly realized that not only is the U.S. calling for a de-escalation and for Pakistan to be very firm and take greater action against these terrorist groups, but you've seen a whole host of other countries do the same thing - the EU, from Australia, from France. The U.N. Security Council released a press statement last week. So you see a kind of consensus about this problem. KELLY: I'm curious, though, about the U.S. leverage in particular in a moment where we see the U.S. playing a different role on the global stage and where its status as an international mediator, say, in the Middle East has been called into question. Is that same dynamic underway in South Asia? AYRES: The United States hasn't played a role of an active mediator in trying to solve the bilateral problems between India and Pakistan. But in these moments of tension, the United States has played a role of calling upon both countries to use restraint. And increasingly, you see the United States calling upon Pakistan very specifically to stop this use of terror. So the role is different than in the Middle East. I don't think the United States has the type of clout it might've had 35 years ago. But you have seen a consensus among the powers around the world all echoing each other to create that kind of echo chamber about the kind of actions Pakistan should take.

### 2NR – OV

## MBS

### Solvency

#### MBS is here to stay – King Salman won’t change his mind and control is already consolidated. Shihabi 3/11

Ali Shihabi, 3-11-2019, "Mohammed bin Salman Is Here to Stay," Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/11/mohammed-bin-salman-is-here-to-stay/ Ali Shihabi is the Founder of the Arabia Foundation. A Saudi national, he graduated with a BA from Princeton University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. Ali began his career in Riyadh in 1985 in banking and finance. In 1999 he founded Rasmala, a GCC-focused private equity fund. In 2012, he took early retirement from banking to write two books: Arabian War Games, a work of fiction published in 2013, and The Saudi Kingdom: Between the Jihadi Hammer and the Iranian Anvil, published in 2015 as part of the Princeton University Series on the Middle East.

There is no question that Khashoggi’s killing was a crime perpetrated by agents of the Saudi government. But the idea that the United States can magically disentangle Saudi Arabia from its crown prince is fanciful. If Mohammed bin Salman stays, Washington will not be able to sideline him without harming its own vital interests. First, King Salman took a huge step in appointing Mohammed bin Salman as crown prince in 2017. He promoted his son not just over many other candidates in the second and third generation of the Saud family but also over three of his older brothers, all of whom have impressive résumés. The king, an astute practitioner of royal politics since the early 1950s, would not have come to this decision lightly. All previous successions had followed a clear pattern of age and seniority among the sons of the founder. Having taken the momentous step of overturning that order, it would be inconceivable for the king to change his mind. Doing so would reopen the Pandora’s box of intergenerational succession, which would destabilize the entire monarchy. Second, Mohammed bin Salman has proved a quick study of power politics himself. Since his appointment as crown prince, he has moved swiftly to consolidate power by bringing the most important internal security organs, including the domestic intelligence service and elite special forces, under his direct control. In the past, these bodies had been parceled out among several royal figures. Mohammed bin Salman also installed a loyalist as the head of the national guard and recently appointed his brother as vice minister of defense, which gives him effective control of all the kingdom’s security institutions. Meanwhile, he has replaced many key royal governors with close allies. His control over so much of the Saudi state means that it would be virtually impossible for any faction within the royal family to organize against him, even if the United States did threaten to cut ties. Moreover, during times of crisis, the royal family has consistently rallied to—not against—the throne. The crown prince’s succession is thus virtually assured; his future and the future of Saudi Arabia are indissolubly intertwined. Given that Saudi Arabia is an important ally of the United States in terms of regulating global energy markets, security cooperation, and pushing back against Iranian expansionism, shunning Mohammed bin Salman won’t likely serve U.S. interests. After all, for all the talk of the crown prince’s brashness (former State Department officials Aaron David Miller and Richard Sokolsky described the crown prince as a “[ruthless, reckless, and impulsive leader](https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/10/12/u.s.-saudi-relationship-is-out-of-control-pub-77484)”), some of the changes he has brought to his country have benefitted the United States. Not least among them are his efforts to drastically curtail Wahhabi clerical influence at home by detaining dozens of radical clerics and drastically limiting the power of the religious police and to empower Saudi women by better integrating them into the workforce. And despite what many in the West see as Saudi Arabia’s missteps during his tenure—including its involvement in the war in Yemen, blockading Qatar, detaining Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri, the imprisonment and alleged torture of women’s rights activists, the detention of Saudi political and moneyed elites, and the diplomatic spat with Canada—Saudi Arabia has also used its considerable diplomatic and financial leverage to support key U.S. policies throughout the Middle East. These include efforts at Arab-Israeli peace and stabilization and reconstruction initiatives in Iraq and northeastern Syria. The United States should remember that Mohammed bin Salman’s successes as well as some of his mistakes are products of the same qualities: his youth and drive. He is 33, which is an asset insofar as it aligns him with the needs, wants, and hopes of a country in which 70 percent of the population is under 35. Youth entails boldness and an increased appetite for risk—essential qualities in a leader who is trying to bring about the type of total social and economic transformation the kingdom requires. But with youth also comes inexperience, something the steep learning curve to which Mohammed bin Salman has been subjected should ultimately mitigate—as should new measures at the royal court to subject all proposals presented to the crown prince to adequate institutional review. All in all, Saudi Arabia should have a more measured and thoughtful foreign policy in the future. Upbraiding Saudi Arabia may seem like a cost-free way for U.S. politicians and pundits to signal virtue to the public. (And to signal disapproval of a U.S. president who has maintained warm ties with the Saudi royal family.) But there will be costs if the United States marginalizes one of its long-standing allies. The country has critical interests in the kingdom and a vital stake in the region’s future. It must therefore engage rather than shun the Saudi leadership without harboring any illusions of getting to pick who ascends to the throne. In the wake of the Khashoggi assassination, that may be a tough pill to swallow. But antagonizing rather than cultivating and guiding the future king of Saudi Arabia, whose reign could last 50 years, is hardly smart politics.

#### No rift – aff securitization is what makes MBS more powerful. Al-Rasheed 3/13

Madawi Al-Rasheed, 3-13-2019, "Is there any truth to rumours of a rift in the Saudi royal palace?," Middle East Eye, https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/there-any-truth-rumours-rift-saudi-royal-palace Madawi al-Rasheed is a Saudi Arabian professor of social anthropology. She was at the department of Theology and Religious Studies in King's College London. She is currently Visiting Professor at the Middle East Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Rumours of a rift between King Salman and his son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), remain unfounded and attributed to unnamed sources. Recently, a Guardian [article](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/05/fears-grow-of-rift-between-saudi-king-salman-and-crown-prince-mohammed-bin-salman) suggested that 83-year-old King Salman disapproved of a move by MBS - made while the king was at a summit in the Egyptian resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh - to appoint Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan as ambassador to Washington, replacing his brother, Prince Khalid bin Salman, who became deputy defence minister. The fact that MBS was not at the airport to welcome his father back home after the February summit was also cited as an indication of a growing rift. King in everything but name MBS was designated deputy king while his father was abroad, as is customary in such circumstances. While King Salman was in Egypt, the Guardian article noted, his entourage was "so alarmed at the possible threat to his authority" that a new 30-person security detail was flown in to replace the existing team. So, did the king fear that his son might stage a coup and announce himself as the new monarch while he was abroad? This is unlikely and foolish, as MBS does not need to go so far as to depose his father. He is already king in everything but name, and having already antagonised many royal factions, he would be hesitant to further rock the boat. Deposing his father would cement MBS as the final destroyer of royal cohesion. He would be reminded of this treacherous act until his death. But he would not feel compelled to do so, regardless, as his father’s old age and unbounded trust allows him to rule as de facto king. What is more intriguing is the fact that King Salman has yet to name a deputy crown prince. Should something happen to MBS, Saudi Arabia does not have a deputy. Given that the king is now so old - he was hardly coherent when he read a short statement in Sharm el-Sheikh - a vacuum could emerge if MBS were to disappear. Shielded from criticism Reports of a growing rift remain ambiguous, serving only to strengthen MBS’s grip on power. Saudi royal affairs remain top-secret, and leaks and rumours are eagerly awaited, with a gap in the public’s understanding of how decisions are taken within the royal household. It is in the interests of MBS to have such rumours circulate in the Western press. The crown prince benefits from the umbrella that his father provides to shield him from mounting criticism at home and abroad. The young prince can change his mind about almost any policy issue - from the privatisation of [Aramco](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-aramco-ipo-exclusive/exclusive-aramco-listing-plan-halted-oil-giant-disbands-advisors-sources-idUSKCN1L71TZ?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=twitter) to abolishing fuel subsidies - when negative consequences emerge. The king can then be portrayed as having expressed objections to his son’s erratic decisions. Salman gets the credit, as he is seen as still being in control, while MBS does not lose face. If King Salman had reservations over how his son was handling the kingdom’s affairs, especially after the gruesome murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul last October, he would have acted immediately. Instead, he toured the kingdom with his son by his side, sending a strong message that he retains the full support of the royal court. The king did not puncture the many lies surrounding Khashoggi’s death, from the initial denials of the murder to the “[cover-up](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/saudi-cover-team-dispose-khashoggi-body-report-181105094945308.html)” team reportedly sent to dispose of the body. King Salman only insisted on a Saudi investigation, just like his son. The king supported his son and was an accomplice in shielding him from a serious, independent investigation. The king might have thought that MBS went a bit too far, but the future of the throne was more important than the truth. Redrawing foreign policy On larger regional issues, King Salman reportedly had a stronger reaction to the decision to move the [US embassy](https://www.timesofisrael.com/saudi-king-slams-trump-for-transferring-us-embassy-to-jerusalem/) to Jerusalem, at a time when the Saudis have moved towards greater normalisation with Israel. The king occasionally pointed to the thorny Jerusalem issue, while his son fully endorsed greater economic and military [cooperation with Israel](https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/mbs-latest-long-line-rogue-regimes-supported-israel). Last summer, King Salman [reportedly told](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/saudis-say-u-s-peace-plan-must-include-e-j-l-as-palestinian-capital-1.6319323) US officials that a peace plan must include East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state. MBS, however, was clearly not that bothered. His new team of Saudi journalists flooded the media with positive endorsements of the greater cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel. King Salman’s reservations served to offer a semblance of reluctance to appease potential public opposition, when it was clear that Riyadh had adopted a strategy of courting Israel to counter Iran. Despite rumours of a rift between father and son, any serious observer of Saudi internal affairs should be wary of believing unsubstantiated reports. While many observers may hope that the king one day sacks MBS, this is an unrealistic prospect. Foreign governments should know how to deal with the crown prince now - before he becomes king - rather than waiting to see if his father sacks him. This involves redrawing foreign policy and engaging in new thinking about Saudi Arabia under MBS. Western governments, whose economic and financial interests in Saudi Arabia will continue with or without the erratic crown prince, must reconsider their relationship with Riyadh so as not to allow the MBS and his ilk to get away with murder.

## Fill-In

### Britain

#### Britain is a huge alt cause – they significantly underreport their numbers and aren’t even discussing cutting aid.

Stravrianakis ’19 (Anna Stavrianakis is a senior lecturer at the University of Sussex, 02/11/19, “Why can't we talk about the UK sending arms to Yemen?” <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/feb/11/uk-arms-exports-yemen-conflict> | SP)

Given that the UK’s own rules state that it won’t sell weapons to countries where there is a clear risk they might be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law, the slew of evidence from Yemeni and international activists about attacks on medical facilities and schoolchildren should have led to restrictions on weapons transfers to the coalition – not least because the UK government is clear that there is no military solution to the conflict. Yet in nearly four years of war, weapons exports to Saudi have sky-rocketed, now accounting for almost half of UK arms exports. Since March 2015, more than £4.7bnin arms exports have been licensed to the kingdom, and that’s just the weapons we know about: government statistics significantly under-report on the likely value of exports. This is a perverse outcome: the UK operates a policy that includes explicit protection of international humanitarian law and that the government incessantly claims is one of the most robust regimes in the world. Yet we see growing levels of harm that come from exponentially increased weapons transfers. The Oxford dictionary defines “reckless” as “heedless of danger or the consequences of one’s actions”. This is a truer characterisation of government arms export policy: replete with bureaucratic process and political rhetoric, but indifferent to consequences.

### Russia

## Conditions

### 1NC

#### Text: The United States ought to condition military aid to Saudi Arabia on the following: Byman and O’Hanlon 10/26

Daniel L. Byman and Michael E. O'Hanlon, 10-26-2018, "It’s time to put the brakes on Saudi Arabia’s war in Yemen," Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/10/26/its-time-to-put-the-brakes-on-saudi-arabias-war-in-yemen/

To ensure that Riyadh takes such a more realistic approach in Yemen, Washington should make its military assistance for the war conditional. The United States has considerable influence. Saudi Arabia depends, in part, on the United States and U.S. contractors for intelligence and logistics. Riyadh also values America’s good opinion (and, if anything, values Trump’s support more than it did Obama’s), so it is sensitive to U.S. criticism. The warring parties could start by declaring a pause in the bombing of Houthi targets and the opening of negotiations, followed by a large-scale infusion of humanitarian aid. The Americans would make it clear to Saudi Arabia that the pace of airstrikes will have to decline (and will reinforce this policy by delivering munitions “just in time” rather than in large batches). American planners should be co-located with Saudis, giving each side veto power over the use of any lethal ordinance.

To clarify:

1. Pause bombing of Houthi targets
2. Ramp up humanitarian aid
3. Decline pace of airstrikes
4. Deliver munitions slowly, as opposed to large batches
5. Veto use of lethal ordinance

#### We get conditions CPs if there’s a solvency advocate –

1. The aff is a condition – it’s conditioned on whether a regime is authoritarian
2. It’s in the lit – solvency advocate means there’s solvency deficits, and you read “conditions fail” in the aff
3. Neg flex – we’re k2 testing the aff’s condition

#### Solves the case without pushing the Saudis to use their stockpile. Knights 11/5

Michael Knights, 11-5-2018, "U.S.-Saudi Security Cooperation (Part 1): Conditioning Arms Sales to Build Leverage," Washington Institute, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/u.s.-saudi-security-cooperation-part-1-conditioning-arms-sales-to-build-lev> Michael Knights is a Boston-based senior fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states.

**PRECISION-GUIDED MUNITIONS** Sales of air-delivered precision-guided munitions (PGMs) are another lightning rod issue in the bilateral security relationship. Following the 2009-2010 round of hostilities with the Houthis, the kingdom sought to refresh its stock of antipersonnel bombs with a large order of 1,300 U.S.-built CBU-105 sensor-fused weapons (a higher-reliability submunition that manufacturers say does not qualify as a cluster bomb due to its low malfunction rate). Yet by November 2015, eight months into the current war, the Saudis had used up nearly 2,600 PGMs, according to strike metrics compiled by The Washington Institute. In response, the Saudis requested a $1.29 billion package comprising around 19,000 air-delivered PGMs, an order that began delivery in July 2017. In addition to that package, the Senate narrowly approved a new $500 million commercial sale of PGMs to Riyadh in June 2017—the first installment in a mammoth $4.46 billion series of air-launched munition deals that would provide the Saudis with 104,000 U.S. PGMs in the next half decade. Riyadh may be accelerating its purchases in anticipation of a prolonged war in Yemen and the potential loss of U.S. sales down the road. According to Washington Institute data collected in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, the kingdom’s forces have used around 14,500 munitions since March 2015, almost all PGMs, with the average rate gradually declining from 333 PGMs per month in 2015 to 270 per month this year. The U.S. munitions currently arriving in Saudi Arabia were ordered in November 2015, when Riyadh recognized it might need new PGMs by 2019, but the intervening years have seen few signs of a PGM shortfall. Based on a rough sense of prewar stocks and a constant dribble of replacements, Riyadh could probably keep bombing at its current rate for several years even if all new U.S. PGM deals were rejected. Thus, while cutting off such sales may be a good way to signal U.S. displeasure or publicly distance Washington from the war, the data indicates that it would not meaningfully slow the air campaign anytime soon.

## Regulations

### 1NC

#### Text: The United States ought not provide military aid to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia except for the following: (a) continue military training missions (b) advise-and-assist support (c) advising Saudi forces on lawful targeting. Knights 11/5

Michael Knights, 11-5-2018, "U.S.-Saudi Security Cooperation (Part 1): Conditioning Arms Sales to Build Leverage," Washington Institute, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/u.s.-saudi-security-cooperation-part-1-conditioning-arms-sales-to-build-lev> Michael Knights is a Boston-based senior fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states.

If the latest push for peace talks falls apart, U.S. officials may seek to distance America even further from the Yemen war via punitive measures against Riyadh. Yet while some of these potential measures are reversible options that offer a good means of signaling displeasure, others would damage Saudi Arabia’s legitimate defensive efforts and may prove difficult to reverse. Policymakers should be realistic about the minimal role that U.S. forces actually play in directly supporting the war. Going forward, Washington should limit itself to the following steps: Continue military training missions**.** USMTM, OPM-SANG, and MoI-MAG are vital sources of U.S. influence and access in Saudi Arabia and are highly valued by both governments. Although this makes them very powerful cards to play, it also underlines how going too far could undo half a century’s worth of defense diplomacy. These missions will never be a foolproof way of preventing Riyadh from acting on its own perceived interests, but they have served as a vital channel of high-level dialogue through dozens of revolutions, wars, and energy crises. Continue advise-and-assist support to defensive missions**.** According to Washington Institute data obtained from research along the Saudi-Yemeni frontier, the kingdom has suffered hundreds of fatalities each year from attacks on its Border Guards and missile strikes on southern Saudi towns. The United States should continue helping the Saudis defend their territory, including through increased defensive aid to hard-hit border units. Keep advising Saudi forces on lawful targeting**.** Critics correctly argue that Saudi Arabia is not amending its targeting policies fast enough despite U.S. advice, but that does not mean giving up is the correct solution. Preventing additional civilian casualties is the most important contribution Washington can make, and this effort should not be politicized. To put more pressure on Riyadh without rescinding advisory support on targeting policy, the United States should condition future training and advise/assist efforts on [Saudi forces halting their airstrikes](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/setting-limits-on-the-saudi-air-campaign-in-yemen) against Houthi leadership targets and high-risk populated areas. Stop refueling aircraft near Yemen**.** Although U.S. refueling support is not critical to the overall Saudi air campaign, withholding it from aircraft operating near the border might force Riyadh to reduce the number of emerging targets it attacks in Sana and Saada, where airstrikes have caused the worst civilian death tolls.

## THAAD

### 1NC

#### Text: The United States ought not provide military aid to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia except for Terminal High Altitude Area Defence systems.

#### New THAAD deal k2 regional stability and preventing Iranian aggression. Khan 12/9

Sabahat Khan, 12-9-2018, "Saudi THAAD deal is a regional game changer," <https://thearabweekly.com/saudi-thaad-deal-regional-game-changer> Sabahat Khan is a senior analyst at the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis (INEGMA).

DUBAI - Saudi Arabia and the United States are in late stages of discussions regarding the sale of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system, which was principally agreed to more than a year ago. With formalities of the sale largely settled, Royal Saudi Air Defence operators will be looking to receive the first of seven THAAD systems ordered by as early as 2020. THAAD is the United States’ newest and most advanced ballistic missile defence system and Saudi Arabia would be the second international customer after the United Arab Emirates, which ordered the system in 2011. Both of the Emirates’ THAAD systems have been operational since 2016. Riyadh’s and Abu Dhabi’s acquisitions were driven by the threat of Iran’s ballistic missile programme. Iran conducted a missile test on December 1 which, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, involved a “medium-range ballistic missile that’s capable of carrying multiple warheads.” The test was a timely reminder of the regional missile threat and confirmed intelligence estimates that Iran’s capabilities were becoming more sophisticated. Another concern is Iran’s readiness to share missiles or technical assistance with partners, including non-state actors such as Hezbollah and Yemen’s Houthis, accelerating regional missile proliferation. The Arab Gulf is acutely aware of ballistic missile threats, having witnessed the Iraqi invasion of Iran and Kuwait, in which Scud missiles featured prominently. Technology has improved considerably since then and today’s generation of ballistic missiles are much more powerful, accurate and difficult to defend against. THAAD offers a strategic defence capability. Its cutting-edge technologies are considered “best-in-class” against advanced ballistic missile threats. THAAD is designed to stop missiles at the beginning of their terminal descent at very high altitudes. Its interceptor weapon, the SM-3, is a hypersonic “hit-to-kill” missile that can travel faster than 9,000 kph and has a range of 150km. Jane’s intelligence service reported that each of THAAD units includes highly advanced AN/TPY-2 radar, mobile tactical stations, launchers and SM-3 interceptor missiles. The acquisition of THAAD propels Saudi Arabia’s defence into a new era and with it the Arab Gulf region’s security. Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) has been a longstanding goal of partners in the Arab Gulf and Saudi Arabia’s THAAD acquisition is likely to be a catalyst to kick-start the transformation towards a regional missile shield. The idea behind regional IAMD is to optimise capability by pooling resources and positioning assets to improve reaction times and make defence operations more effective. Riyadh potentially adding seven units of THAAD could make the Arab Gulf capable of defending more effectively, quickly and across a much greater coverage against potential missile attacks. Missile defence systems deployed in the Arab Gulf, such as the Patriot system — both the PAC-2 and the upgraded PAC-3 — in Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman, have a great deal of commonality in technology and operational approaches. Theatre-deployed US assets add additional layers of defence and operational robustness to the region’s own missile defence assets. Such developments allow conditions to improve for a regional missile shield in the next few years. Saudi Arabia has also had serious interest in the ship-based Aegis Ballistic Missile Defence System, which is an integral component of US-European missile defence. Even as it stands, the introduction of new naval vessels with advanced sensing and communication capabilities will see Arab Gulf navies playing much greater roles in supporting air and missile defence, led by the Royal Saudi Navy. Future acquisitions of unmanned aerial vehicles, such as the Predator-XP already operated by the UAE, will help the Arab Gulf renew and modernise the technological foundation it needs to support air and missile defence against increasingly advanced ballistic missile threats. Riyadh’s and Washington’s ties are reinforced with the sale of THAAD and military-to-military relations will inevitably become deeper as a result. Saudi Arabia’s clout and the size of its growing missile defence capabilities are sufficient to drive the process of regional IAMD and the acquisition of THAAD is a milestone in those efforts.

#### It’s part of the arms deal. Trevithick 17

Joseph Trevithick, 6-8-2017, "We Finally Know Exactly What The Saudis Are Getting In That Huge Arms Deal," Drive, http://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/11329/we-finally-know-exactly-what-the-saudis-are-getting-in-that-huge-arms-deal

A more detailed list of the United States’ planned $110 billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia has emerged, though both parties may not ultimately move forward with all of the provisions. Still, the breakdown provides a good sense of the two countries priorities. On June 8, 2017, [Defense News](http://www.defensenews.com/articles/revealed-trumps-110-billion-weapons-list-for-the-saudis) first reported the specifics, based on what it described as a “White House document … authenticated by a second source.” It’s not clear how much of the list is straight from the document versus an analysis of the information it contains. $84.4 billion of the approximately $110 billion package were included in Memorandums of Intent (MOI), which are offers the U.S. government describes as being responsive to a particular country’s desire for “potential future defense capabilities.” These are deals that the U.S. government would still need to finalize and that Congress and the State Department would still need to approve. Here is the more detailed breakdown of items from the MOIs, according to Defense News: $13.5 billion for seven THAAD batteries, with an estimated delivery time of 2023-2026*. $4.46 billion for 104,000 air-to-ground munitions, divided amongst five types (GBU 31v3, GBU-10, GBU-12, GBU-31v1, GBU-38). $6.65 billion for enhancements to Saudis’ Patriot anti-missile system, with a scope of work from 2018-2027. $2 billion for “light close air support” aircraft, with the aircraft and delivery date still unknown. It is possible that the winner of this contract could be related to the U.S. Air Force’s OA-X close-air support study. $2 billion for four new aircraft, of a to-be-determined variety, for “TASS & Strategic ISC.” TASS stands for “tactical airborne surveillance system,” similar in concept to the U.S. Air Force JSTARS system. It's possible the replacement could be the same as the JSTARS replacement currently being considered by the Pentagon. Those would be delivered in 2024. $5.8 billion for three KC-130J and 20 C-130J new aircraft, along with sustainment through 2026. Those planes would start delivery in 2022. $6.25 billion for an eight-year sustainment deal for Saudi Arabia's fleet of F-15 fighters, with another $20 million for an F-15 C/D recapitalization program study. $2 billion for an unknown number of MK-VI Patrol Boats, with an unknown delivery date. $6 billion for four Lockheed Martin-built frigates, based on the company’s littoral combat ship design. That order falls under the Saudi Naval Expansion Program II (SNEP II) heading, with planned delivery in the 2025-2028 timeframe. $2.35 billion to modify 400 existing Bradley fighting vehicles, along with another $1.35 for 213 new vehicles. $1.5 billion for 180 Howitzers, with an estimated delivery time of 2019-2022. $18 billion for C4I System and integration, with no further details given on what that means, nor with a delivery date offered.*

### 2NR

### AT: Already Passed

#### The Pentagon’s only awarded 6% of the total deal. Macias 3/4

Amanda Macias, 3/4/19, “Pentagon awards Lockheed Martin nearly $1 billion for Saudi missile system deal,” CNBC, https://www.cnbc.com/2019/03/04/pentagon-awards-lockheed-martin-nearly-1-billion-for-saudi-missile-system-deal.html

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon awarded Lockheed Martin $946 million on behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the defense giants’ THAAD missile defense system, the Defense Department announced Monday. The multi-million dollar award is the first installment of what is expected to be a $15 billion deal. In November, [CNBC learned that Saudi Arabia signed a letter of offer and acceptance with the United States](https://www.cnbc.com/2018/11/28/saudi-arabia-close-to-clinching-15-billion-deal-to-buy-thaad-missile-system.html) for Lockheed Martin’s THAAD missile system, a significant step forward in the $15 billion deal. Saudi officials, alongside their U.S. counterparts, signed the crucial government-to-government agreement on November 26, paving the way for the massive sale of 44 THAAD launchers, missiles and related equipment. Manufactured by [Lockheed Martin](https://www.cnbc.com/quotes/?symbol=LMT), the Pentagon’s top weapons supplier, THAAD, or terminal high altitude area defense, is regarded as America’s crown jewel in missile defense systems.

#### All we’ve sent is tooling, test equipment, and personnel – aff still stops us from sending the actual launchers. Rich 3/5

Gillian Rich, 3-05-2019, "Lockheed Gets First THAAD Missile Defense-Payment As Congress Still Skeptical Of Saudi Arabi," Investor's Business Daily, https://www.investors.com/news/saudi-arabia-thaad-missile-defense-order/

Lockheed Martin ([LMT](https://research.investors.com/stock-quotes/nyse-lockheed-martin-corp-lmt.htm)) will get the first payment for its Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system for Saudi Arabia, the Pentagon announced late Monday. The THAAD missile defense system payment comes as Congress has moved to limit arming the kingdom. Under the $945.9 million contract, Lockheed Martin will provide tooling, test equipment, and personnel for the [THAAD](https://dod.defense.gov/News/Contracts/Contract-View/Article/1774554/) missile defense system. The $15 billion deal includes 44 launchers and was part of the $110 billion Boeing ([BA](https://research.investors.com/stock-quotes/nyse-boeing-co-ba.htm)), Lockheed and Raytheon ([RTN](https://research.investors.com/stock-quotes/nyse-raytheon-company-rtn.htm)) arms package for Saudi Arabia announced during President Donald Trump's 2017 visit. However, many deals weren't finalized.

### Success

#### THAAD’s different, better, and key to making Patriot work – cites their author. Woolf 17

Christopher Woolf, 5-3-2017, "How good is the new missile defense system the US just deployed in South Korea?," Public Radio International, https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-05-03/how-good-new-missile-defense-system-us-just-deployed-south-korea

\*Brackets in original

THAAD — the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system — has just been deployed by the US military in South Korea. The stated goal is to defend against North Korean missiles. But how well does it work? And how does it work? “It’s just a very powerful, very accurate rocket,” says David Axe, editor of the blog [War Is Boring](http://warisboring.com/). “[It’s] tied to a very sophisticated radar.” But there’s something about the way it works that makes it different from other air defense systems. “It’s not an explosive warhead rocket,” Axe explains. “It’s just basically a solid warhead. They call it a kinetic warhead, or a kinetic munition. So rather than exploding it simply strikes its target.” In a sense, it’s like a very expensive slingshot that’s trying to hit an arrow in flight. Obviously it has to be accurate — close is just not good enough. THAAD has been operationally effective for about 10 years now, and the US has deployed it elsewhere in the world. The THAAD system was in development for decades, since the days when President Ronald Reagan wanted to deter the Soviet Union. Investment accelerated when the first Gulf War in 1991 revealed the threat posed by weapons like Saddam Hussein’s Scud missiles. But success was slow in coming, and dozens of tests failed in the early years. Billions of dollars of investment have made it much more effective. “It’s meant to defeat incoming short-, medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles,” Axe says. “It does not defend against world-spanning intercontinental ballistic missiles,” he adds. These are the kind of missiles that could hit the United States, but which North Korea has not yet mastered. Axe describes THAAD as providing a protective arc that can be compared to a bubble. “The exact numbers are classified, but it covers a bubble about 100 miles high, and 100 miles surrounding the launcher.” One hundred miles high takes the system just outside Earth’s atmosphere. Axe says it’s important to intercept the enemy’s missiles before they start coming down, as they fall “real fast.” “The key to making this work,” Axe adds, “is you’ve got to have very good sensors that can pinpoint and detect and track incoming missiles very accurately, and then your own missile needs to be able to travel very fast and very high and arrive at a very precise point, in order to actually physically strike that incoming rocket.” The system has not been tested in battle, and analysts are aware that an enemy could try to counter it by sending a swarm of missiles. “That’s always a problem with any air defense system, that you can simply overwhelm it,” Axe says. North Korea, and China for that matter, rely on masses of missiles. So THAAD is good, but no panacea. “And it was never meant to be,” Axe explains. “THAAD is part of a layered missile defense system. Most countries that try to build missile defense systems, aim for defense in depth. So in addition to THAAD, you might have sea-based Aegis missiles, that fire from warships and can cover other areas and are much more mobile. And then you have shorter-range Patriot missiles. You can connect all of these weapons to the same sensor and command network so you can coordinate your defenses.”

### Not Aid

#### If we lose the PIC, you lose the debate – arms sales aren’t military aid either – their author. ICIJ recut

ICIJ 7 - The Int'l Consortium of Investigative Journalists, “A citizen’s guide to understanding U.S. foreign military aid,” <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2007/05/22/5772/citizen-s-guide-understanding-us-foreign-military-aid> WJ

For the “Collateral Damage” investigative study, the Center for Public Integrity created a database that tracks a subset of those financial flows: taxpayer-funded programs or assistance that contribute to a nation’s offensive military capabilities. The database does not include certain large nuclear non-proliferation programs or expenditures such as Foreign Military Sales or Direct Commercial Sales, which are not supported directly with taxpayer dollars. The database is also limited to tracking funds appropriated to either the Defense Department or the State Department. For this report, these are the criteria for “foreign military assistance” or “foreign military aid.”

#### THAAD’s 15% of the arms deal that’s designed to boost Saudi military capability; there’s no warrant in the ICIJ evidence for why THAAD doesn’t count if the aff does