

Resolved: The United States should end its arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Our sole contention is ensuring long term regional stability.

Right now, the Middle East is trending toward peace. Spetalnick of Reuters in 2018 explains that Congress is taking a bigger role in regulating future arms sales and has taken moves to put a hold on deals that would be used to kill civilians. Walsh of the New York Times furthers in December that peace talks have begun in Yemen, with measures to free prisoners being agreed upon, which Edroos of Al Jazeera explains was a “positive” and “encouraging” first step that built off of previous talks. The end of the Yemen war is in sight.

Unfortunately, if we fail to continue selling arms, the region will lose its best chance at stability when other countries step in and fill the vacuum.

Indeed, Davies of the Guardian in 2018 explains that if there was a freeze in Saudi-US relations, “Riyadh could, for example, simply switch its purchases to other major arms exporters such as Russia and China.” Pletka of the American Enterprise Institute in 2018 furthers that although systems between US and Russian weapons, for example, would not be compatible, Saudi Arabia is so oil-rich they could easily purchase all new systems from the Russians without hassle. Overall, Caverly of the Naval War College in 2018 explains that ceasing to sell arms to Saudi Arabia would rupture our relationship with the country entirely, as our alliance is predicated on the arms sales.

There are three reasons why affirming would be dangerous.

1. Losing pressure on Saudi Arabia. England of the Financial Times reported in October that the Trump administration pushed Saudi Arabia to enter peace talks. Lang of Axios in November found that this external pressure began the peace process currently taking place and that furthermore, by threatening to withhold intelligence and logistical support for coalition forces, the Trump administration can force further change and peace. Without the US having this leverage through the alliance, there would be no potential for peace in Yemen.
2. Preventing Saudi Arabian proliferation. Einhorn of the Brookings Institution in 2016 writes that Saudi Arabia is the most likely country in the Middle East to nuclearize. Guzansky of the Middle East Quarterly in 2013 furthers that the US nuclear umbrella is the only deterrent between Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, Arms Control Association in 2018 explains that Saudi proliferation would create a destabilizing arms race in the Middle East. Roubini of The Guardian in 2017 specifically identifies that if the US no longer guaranteed Saudi Arabia security, all regional powers, from Iran to Turkey to

Egypt, might decide they can defend themselves only with nuclear weapons. This is dangerous, because as [Kahl of the CNAS concludes in 2013](#), even if all leaders were rational, unreliable early warning systems, close geographic proximity, and deep mutual distrust could still inadvertently produce a regional nuclear war via miscalculations.

3. Preventing a regional war. Indeed, [Pollock of the Brookings Institution in 2015](#) explains that in the absence of American engagement, Gulf states, led by Saudi Arabia, become scared and lash out against Iran. In fact, Pollock writes that the air campaigns in Yemen are an example of a fear of diminishing US disengagement. [Shinkman further elaborates that, in 2015](#), Obama began to draw back from the Middle East, scaling military presence and telling Saudi Arabia to fight their own wars. [Pollock](#) concludes that “in the absence of a strong American” presence, Gulf States will attack Iran. [Ostovar of Foreign Policy in 2017](#) furthers that any conflict would grow to involve all the states in the Middle East.

Preventing the destabilization of the Middle East is crucial. Already, the war in Yemen has, according to [Ensor of the Telegraph](#), killed 60,000 people through the military conflict, and left another 85,000 dead through starvation. Furthermore, the [United Nations warns in October](#) that Yemen is on the brink of a historic famine that could put as many as 13 million people at risk of death by starvation.

To end the tragedy that is the Yemen war, we proudly negate.

SOME BASIC INFO ABOUT A MIDDLE EASTERN NATO

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/dangers-creating-new-arab-alliance-32362>

Unfortunately, the only way a coalition of these states will “work” is if the United States browbeats the other members into accepting Saudi control, which would threaten to drag them into multiple conflicts orchestrated by Riyadh for Riyadh’s benefit. But most vulnerable to manipulation would be Washington, which would be expected to backstop the Saudis irrespective of their actions, such as the criminal destruction of Yemen.

In fact, turning policy over to the Saudi royals is an open invitation to region-wide war, incompetence, and corruption. Saudi Arabia and the UAE would use MESA to advance their own objectives and not those of America or other fellow members. With Bahrain and Egypt already on their payrolls, the Saudis and Emiratis would attempt to use the new U.S.-backed alliance to cow their more moderate Gulf neighbors.

Yemen's Houthi rebels committed more than 700 violations of the UN-brokered ceasefire in Hodeidah in the past four weeks, causing dozens of deaths, the government and the allied Arab military coalition said.

In a letter seen by The National, the governments of Yemen and coalition members Saudi Arabia and the UAE called on the Security Council to increase international pressure on the Houthis in light of their continued violations.

According to a detailed list included in the letter, the rebels killed 48 and wounded 371 in 702 attacks since January 3. In total, the rebels violated the ceasefire in the Red Sea port city and surrounding areas 970 times since it went into effect on December 18, causing 71 deaths.

Many of the violations came from heavy artillery fire aimed at pro-government “national resistance forces”, the letter says, but the rebels have also used mortar shelling, RPG fire and sniper attacks.

“We call upon members of the United Nations Security Council to do everything in their power to demand the Iran-backed Houthis comply with the terms of the Stockholm Agreement,” the letter said, referring to the ceasefire deal reached at talks in Sweden between the rebels and government in December.

The ceasefire requires the rebels to withdraw from Hodeidah's ports and for both sides to move their forces out of the city. But the Houthis are reinforcing their military positions among the civilian population and digging trenches in the city in preparation for clashes, the letter says.

The majority of Yemen's food and humanitarian relief is shipped through Hodeidah and the UN considers the ceasefire there a priority to ensure aid reaches 14 million Yemenis on the brink of famine. It is also seen as a first step to ending more than four years of conflict.

The rebel failure to abide by the truce deal has prompted UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr Anwar Gargash, to warn that the coalition was "prepared to use more calibrated force to prod Houthi compliance with Stockholm Agreement".

The Arab Coalition has not ceased its attacks on the Houthis, but says it is pursuing its military campaign outside the area covered under the ceasefire deal. The goals of these attacks, the letter said, "is to apply carefully calibrated pressure and convince the Houthis to reconsider their options and start engaging seriously in the process agreed to in Stockholm".

Matt Spetalnick, 10-13-2018, "U.S. weapons makers rattled over Saudi Arabia deals," U.S., <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-politics-dissident-arms/u-s-weapons-makers-rattled-over-saudi-arabia-deals-idUSKCN1MM1VF>

Even before Khashoggi's unexplained disappearance, Democratic lawmakers had "holds" for months on at least four military equipment deals, largely because of Saudi attacks that killed Yemeni civilians.

"This makes it more likely they'll expand holds to include systems that aren't necessarily controversial by themselves. It's a major concern," the senior administration official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. About \$19 billion in deals have been officially notified to Congress, according to government records, making it unlikely that they can be halted. These include training packages for Saudi troops and pilots and the THAAD anti-missile system that could cost as much as \$15 billion. One lobbyist for a defense company who spoke on condition of anonymity said worries about a potential across-the-board blockage of Saudi sales by Congress had surfaced in recent days, a development that would hurt a range of contractors.

A second U.S. official said there were also current holds in place on training sales for the Saudi government. Under U.S. law, major foreign military sales can be blocked by Congress. An informal U.S. review process lets key lawmakers use a practice known as a "hold" to stall deals if they have concerns such as whether the weapons being supplied would be used to kill civilians. Democratic Senator Chris Murphy, an outspoken critic of Saudi Arabia, threatened on Thursday to introduce a resolution of disapproval for any Saudi military deal that came up. Senator Bob Corker, the Republican chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, told reporters on Thursday he recently told a defense contractor not to push for a deal with the Saudis, even before the Khashoggi case. "With this, I can assure it won't happen for a while," Corker said. While details of all the previously blocked Saudi deals were not immediately available, one was the planned sale of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of high-tech munitions to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Since 2015, Gulf Arab states have fought to restore a government in Yemen driven out by the Houthis, Shi'ite Muslim fighters Yemen's neighbors view as agents of Iran. The war has killed more than 10,000 people and created the world's most urgent humanitarian emergency. Senator Robert Menendez, the top Foreign Relations Committee Democrat, said the Trump administration had not satisfied concerns he first raised in June about the sale to members of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen of Raytheon's precision-guided munitions.

Declan Walsh, 12-6-2018, "Yemen Peace Talks Begin With Agreement to Free 5,000 Prisoners," No Publication, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/06/world/middleeast/yemen-peace-talks.html> CAIRO — Yemen's warring sides agreed on Thursday to exchange prisoners, starting

[peace consultations in Sweden](#) that aim to end a conflict that has killed tens of thousands of civilians and pushed millions to the brink of famine.

The United Nations envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, opened the talks, saying they represented a “critical opportunity” for Yemen. The prisoner exchange, said to involve at least 5,000 detainees, is the first of several confidence-building measures intended to draw the Houthi rebels and a Saudi-led coalition that supports President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi into more substantive negotiations.

Faisal Edroos, 12-3-2018, "All you need to know about the Yemen peace talks," No Publication, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/yemen-peace-talks-181202101535422.html>

British Foreign Minister Jeremy Hunt called the evacuation a "positive 1st step," adding that it was "encouraging to see some of the practical steps I discussed with the Iranian, UAE and Saudi leaders on recent trips come to pass".

The fate of wounded rebels had been a stumbling block to the start of a previous round of aborted peace talks in September.

Efforts to launch peace negotiators in Switzerland failed spectacularly when the Houthis refused to turn up, saying they needed stronger security guarantees from the international community.

Previous talks also broke down in 2016, when 108 days of negotiations in Kuwait failed to yield a deal and delegates from the rebel movement were left stranded outside of Yemen for three months.

CEASING TO SELL ARMS WOULD RUPTURE THE ENTIRE RELATIONSHIP

Deirdre Shesgreen, 10-16-2018, "US weapons sales a flashpoint as President Trump presses Saudi Arabia over missing journalist," USA TODAY, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/10/16/u-s-weapons-sales-saudis-flashpoint-debate-over-missing-journalist/1661290002/>

This isn't just about military capacity," said Jonathan D. Caverley, an expert on the global weapons trade with the Naval War College. He said Saudi Arabia has purchased almost all its weapons from the U.S. as a way to cement the U.S.-Saudi alliance and “to bind the United States towards a large forward-operated presence in the Gulf.”

“... It would be weird if we did not take advantage of this (leverage) to execute our national interest, without rupturing our relationship entirely,” Caverley added.

Khashoggi vanished two weeks ago while visiting the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Turkish officials say they have evidence Khashoggi was killed and dismembered inside the diplomatic compound. Saudi officials have called the allegations “baseless” and have asserted that Khashoggi left the consulate unharmed.

Glen Carey, 3-2-2018, "Saudis Want to Make Their Own Weapons. Russia Is Eager to Help," Bloomberg,

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-02/saudis-want-to-make-their-own-weapons-russia-is-eager-to-help>

In case they're reluctant to do so, the Saudis are making it clear that they have other options. They're already planning to buy the Russian S-400 air-defense system, under a deal that would let them manufacture related products at home. The prospect of more such agreements is likely to alarm American policy makers, who worry about losing ground to Russia and China in the Middle East.

Christopher Woody, 10-8-2018, "The Saudis still haven't locked in the massive arms deals Trump touted, and they're still talking to Russia about its advanced S-400 air defense system," Business Insider,

<https://www.businessinsider.com/saudi-arabia-hasnt-signed-us-arms-deals-talking-to-russia-about-s-400-2018-10>

In a sign of Trump's continued emphasis on arms sales as a component of US foreign policy, White House senior adviser and Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner personally intervened with Lockheed to secure a 20% discount for the air-defense system. **Yet Riyadh let a September 30 deadline to wrap up that purchase come and go, according to The Post.** A Saudi official told The Post that the kingdom was still "highly interested" in the deal. "Like any military purchase," the official added, "there are negotiations happening which we hope will conclude in the quickest means possible." Perhaps more concerning for US officials is Saudi Arabia's continued interest in the Russian-made advanced S-400 air-defense system. According to The Post, the Saudis have resisted US requests to disavow their interest buying the S-400 and have continued talks with Moscow. Saudi Arabia would be only the latest ally with interest in the Russian-made air-defense system.

Deirdre Shesgreen,, 10-16-2018, "US weapons sales a flashpoint as President Trump presses Saudi Arabia over missing journalist," USA TODAY,

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/10/16/u-s-weapons-sales-saudis-flashpoint-debate-over-missing-journalist/1661290002/>

Secondly, Spindel says, it's unlikely that Saudi Arabia would turn to China or another U.S. competitor to fill its weapons orders if the U.S. cancels any coming sales. Much of Saudi's current weapons systems are American-made; any additions from Russia or China would not be compatible. "These arms don't talk to one another, so it can be hard to have a wholesale change in who supplies your weaponry," she said. It would be extremely expensive for Saudi Arabia to switch systems, "so the U.S. actually does have a lot of leverage here," she added.

But others said the Saudis could turn to another country as a diplomatic slap to the U.S. – and

because money is not a real obstacle to the oil-rich country. **“If we canceled, they would buy from the Russians and the Chinese because they can afford it and it would send us a message,” Danielle Pletka, senior vice president for foreign and defense policy at the American Enterprise Institute, a center-right think tank, said Saudi Arabia. “It would decrease our leverage and we don’t have someone else” in the region to partner with on other vital foreign policy matters.**

Rob Davies, 10-15-2018, "How much damage can Saudi Arabia do to the global economy?," Guardian,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/15/how-much-damage-can-saudi-arabia-do-to-the-global-economy>

The alliance stands to benefit US employers such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, General Electric and ExxonMobil. Some of the firms are reported to have expressed concern to Trump already about the impact that a freeze in Saudi-US relations might have. Riyadh could, for example, simply switch its purchases to other major arms exporters such as Russia and China.

Trump’s trip to the Arabian peninsula last year also yielded an agreement that the kingdom’s Public Investment Fund, which manages its vast oil wealth, would invest in US infrastructure programmes. The PIF is to stump up \$20bn of a \$40bn pot overseen by the global asset manager Blackstone. The fund, however, has yet to gather any serious momentum

Reuters Editorial, 1-29-2019, "U.S. lawmakers again seek to end U.S. support for Saudis in Yemen," U.S.,

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-saudi-yemen/u-s-lawmakers-again-seek-to-end-u-s-support-for-saudis-in-yemen-idUSKCN1PN313>

The Senate passed a Yemen-related war powers resolution by a 56-41 vote in December, as seven Republicans joined Democrats to vote for what was considered a rebuke of Republican President Donald Trump amid anger with Saudi Arabia not just over civilian deaths in Yemen, but also the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at a Saudi consulate in Turkey. Trump had promised a veto.

It was the first time either chamber of Congress had backed a resolution to withdraw U.S. forces from a military engagement under the War Powers Act. That law, passed in 1973, limits the president’s ability to commit U.S. forces to potential hostilities without congressional approval.

England of the Financial Times 2018

<https://www.ft.com/content/822261a6-dce6-11e8-9f04-38d397e6661c>

US raises pressure on Saudi Arabia with call for Yemen peace talks

The Trump administration has added to mounting international pressure on Saudi Arabia by calling for peace talks to end the fighting in Yemen, where a Saudi-led coalition is locked in a devastating conflict with rebels.

Pressure On, 11-13-2018, "Yemen peace talk odds helped by pressure on Saudis and support at UN," Axios,

<https://www.axios.com/yemen-peace-talk-odds-helped-pressure-saudis-and-support-un-1f411ee8-6388-4b1e-b63c-99303c6a06f3.html>

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} The U.K.'s foreign secretary is now in Iran — the Houthi's foreign patron — in a bid to secure Tehran's support for the UN peace process. What's needed: Outside pressure will also be essential for making progress on the humanitarian front. If the draft UN resolution passes and the parties comply with its terms, it may yet be possible to stave off the worst of the massive famine that threatens to engulf up to 14 million Yemenis. But military operations in Hodeida must cease and humanitarians will need full access to the port city. The bottom line: **The Trump administration must be ready to ratchet up pressure for compliance, perhaps by threatening to withhold intelligence and logistical support for coalition forces.** They have so far resisted these steps, but bipartisan congressional pressure had already been building and has spiked since the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Andrew Chatzky, 9-24-2010, "Is Big Saudi Arms Sale a Good Idea?," Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/expert-roundup/big-saudi-arms-sale-good-idea>

Also, there are two positive foreign policy consequences that could come from the sale. Its psychological effect could give the Saudis more credibility with regional elites in their contest for influence with Iran, making potential Saudi allies in places like Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, and Yemen more confident in throwing in their lot with Riyadh. And if Iran obtains a nuclear weapons capability, the Saudis would undoubtedly consider the option of proliferating themselves. **If they are confident of their American security guarantee--and these big arms sales are warrants of the American commitment to their security--American advice not to obtain nuclear weapons will carry more weight.**

Robert Einhorn and Richard Nephew, 5-31-2016, "The Iran nuclear deal: Prelude to proliferation in the Middle East?," Brookings,

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-iran-nuclear-deal-prelude-to-proliferation-in-the-middle-east/>

Saudi Arabia is widely considered to be the most likely regional state to pursue the nuclear option, an impression reinforced by occasional remarks by prominent Saudis that the Kingdom will match whatever nuclear capability Iran attains. The Saudis regard Iran as an implacable foe, not just an external threat determined to achieve regional hegemony but also an existential threat intent on undermining the Saudi monarchy. Moreover, while their concerns about Iran have grown, their confidence in the U.S. commitment to the security of its regional partners has been shaken. They cite what they regard as evidence of Washington's unreliability, such as not preventing former Egyptian President Mubarak's ouster, failing to enforce the red line against Syria's use of chemical weapons, giving lukewarm support to Syrian rebels, and accepting a greater Iranian regional role.

Yoel Guzansky, xx-xx-xxxx, "Questioning Riyadh's Nuclear Rationale: Saudi Arabia's Atomic Ambitions," Middle East Forum,

<https://www.meforum.org/3512/saudi-arabia-pakistan-nuclear-weapon>

The question of Saudi acquisition of a nuclear deterrent is more relevant than ever when both enemies and friends of the United States are looking at a possible regional drawdown on Washington's part as well as a lack of support for the pro-Western regimes that remain in place. If the U.S. government provides Riyadh with formal security guarantees, it would be natural for it to demand that the kingdom forego its strategic goals. But Riyadh's inclusion under a U.S. defense umbrella is not a given and depends both on the quality of relations between the two countries and other Saudi considerations. Riyadh remains skeptical over Washington's willingness to come to its aid and may thus seek to purchase a nuclear deterrent, which would provide it with more freedom vis-à-vis its stronger ally. Under present circumstances, it is not unreasonable for Riyadh to rely on other states for its defense in addition to Washington for the simple reason that it has done so in the past. Likewise, it is more than likely that the Saudis will not act transparently because they have acted in secret previously.

At the same time, the kingdom is accelerating its independent nuclear development—one of the largest development projects in its history—as another option in response to Iran. Saudi Arabia has in recent years started to prepare openly for the development of a civilian nuclear program and is broadening efforts to construct a knowledge base in the field, possibly as another way of establishing nuclear military capabilities over the long term.[23] It has initiated a string of projects and signed cooperation agreements with France, Russia, the United States, South Korea, and China.[24] In 2006, Riyadh called for the Gulf Cooperation Council (a regional bloc that includes Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman) to develop a shared program to use nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes in accordance with international treaties.[25] The Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, sought to assuage concerns about possible intentions to develop nuclear weapons stating, "It is no secret and we're doing everything out in the open. Our goal is to pursue technology for peaceful uses—no more and no less." [26] Yet notwithstanding similar declarations over the years, the kingdom has signaled that it would not surrender the capability to enrich uranium on its soil, which continues to raise doubts about its intentions.[27]

Colin Kahl, Center for a New American Security, February 2013

https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/CNAS_AtomicKingdom_Kahl.pdf?mtime=20160906080505

The bad news is that low probability is not the same as no probability, and all of the possible Saudi responses entail significant risks and costs. In the near term, it is technically impossible for Saudi Arabia to indigenously develop nuclear weapons; the risk of Pakistan transferring nuclear weapons to the Kingdom is also overstated. Nevertheless, the risk of the latter scenario is not zero. Moreover, even if Riyadh fails to acquire its own nuclear weapons shortly after Iran does, a Saudi hedging strategy could still produce such a capability over the long run. Either the low-probability Pakistani option or the higher-probability hedging path could lead to the emergence of a poly-nuclear Middle East, with profound consequences for the region. The basic

principles of nuclear deterrence that held during the Cold War, and that continue to hold in South and East Asia today, would likely hold if there were multiple nuclear powers in the Middle East. However, **tensions and crises would probably increase. And even if all the relevant actors were assumed to be rational, various factors – the absence of secure second-strike capabilities (at least for some period of time), unreliable early warning and command-and-control systems, close geographic proximity and deep mutual distrust – could still inadvertently produce a regional nuclear war via miscalculations, accidents or unauthorized use.**¹⁸

Kenneth M Pollack, 7-9-2015, "Regional implications of a nuclear agreement with Iran,"
Brookings,

<https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/regional-implications-of-a-nuclear-agreement-with-iran/>

The second is the other side of the coin from the first. **In the absence of American engagement, leadership and military involvement, the GCC states (led, as always, by the Saudis)** become frightened and their tendency is to **lash out** and overextend themselves. Again, the unprecedented GCC air campaign in **Yemen is a striking example of this.** As the Gulf Arabs see it, **they have never seen the United States so disengaged** from the region—at least not in 35 years—and so **they feel that they have had to take equally exceptional action to make up for it.** I continue to see the GCC intervention in Yemen as a wholly unnecessary and unhelpful move, a rash decision meant to check what the GCC sees as a looming Iranian "conquest" of Yemen. In private, GCC officials make no bones in saying that they felt compelled to do so because the United States was embracing Iran rather than deterring or defeating it. While all of that is a set of overstatements and exaggerations, it drives home the point that **In the absence of a strong American role** in pushing back on Iran, **the GCC's default mode is to attack on their own,** and that only makes the situation worse, not better.

Minister Of, 4-5-2018, "The Risks of Nuclear Cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the Role of Congress," No Publication,

<https://www.armscontrol.org/issue-briefs/2018-04/risks-nuclear-cooperation-saudi-arabia-role-congress>

Unfortunately, the administration's interest in revitalizing the U.S. nuclear industry, disdain for the Iran deal, and desire to strengthen the U.S. alliance with Saudi Arabia casts doubt on whether it will use the significant leverage it has over the kingdom to push for adequately strong safeguards. If Trump walks away from the Iran deal—as seems increasingly likely—and strikes a pact with Saudi Arabia that does not include a Saudi pledge not to enrich or reprocess, the prospects for a dangerous and destabilizing nuclear fuel-making race in the Middle East will greatly increase.

Josie Ensor, Middle East Correspondent, xx-xx-xxxx, "Yemen death toll 'six times higher' than estimated," Telegraph,

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/12/12/yemen-death-toll-six-times-higher-estimated/>

More than 60,000 people have been killed in Yemen in the last two years, according to a new assessment, a figure six times higher than previous estimates.

The figure of 10,000 used by the United Nations is outdated and nowhere near the likely true fatality figure of 60,223, according to UK-based independent research group Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

Calculating death tolls in Yemen, which is approaching its fourth year, is complicated by the lack of access.

The figure offered by ACLED, which looked at open-source data and local news reports, does not include those thought to have died from malnutrition. Save the Children charity says some 85,000 may have died from starvation since 2016.

The death toll “is far higher than official estimates - and still underestimated,” Clionadh Raleigh, ACLED’s executive director, said. □

Jonathon Gatehouse · Cbc News · Posted, 10-15-2018, "Yemen spirals towards world's worst famine in a century, with millions of lives at risk," CBC,
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/thenational/national-today-newsletter-yemen-saudi-cannabis-marketing-1.4862908>

Yemen is on the brink of a historic famine that could put as many as 13 million people at risk of death by starvation, the United Nations warns.

Lise Grande, the UN's humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, issued the warning in an interview with the BBC yesterday. Grande said the fierce fighting between Saudi-backed government forces and Houthi rebels, and the ongoing blockade of aid shipments, have created the conditions for humanitarian disaster on a scale not seen since Ethiopia in the 1980s or the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

Bethan Mckernan Beirut @Mck_beth, 8-1-2017, "Ten times more people are dying from murder and suicide in Middle East than they are from war," Independent,
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/middle-east-murder-suicide-rates-more-deaths-war-yemen-syria-iraq-isis-ten-times-a7882801.html>

The Middle East is one of the most conflict-riven areas on the planet - but murder and suicide are actually killing far more people in the region, a major new study has found. Murder and suicide accounted for 1.4 million deaths across 22 countries in the eastern Mediterranean, including Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, recent research published by the International Journal of Public Health (IJPH) showed. Across the 22 countries - which have a combined population of 600 million people - the violence of war was directly responsible for another 144,000 deaths over the same period, the study containing 15 papers and three editorials said. The data showed a 100 per cent increase in suicides and 152 per cent increase in murders

over the course of 25 years, compared to a respective rise of 19 per cent and 12 per cent in the rest of the world, the study's lead author told the AFP - [a knock-on effect of the psychological scars of war](#).

The IJPH used data estimates from the most recent Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors study (GBD), which is published annually, and surveys health loss across 132 countries.

Afshon Ostovar, 4-18-2017, "The First Saudi-Iranian War Will Be an Even Fight," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/05/07/the-first-saudi-iranian-war-will-be-an-even-fight/>
Since 2011, first in Syria and then in Yemen, proxy forces of Iran and Saudi Arabi have been in constant, brutal competition. Both sides seem to have concluded that a direct war isn't in their interest, with neither having ever directly attacked the other. But there has always been a risk of escalation — and that risk will heighten dramatically on Tuesday if President Donald Trump withdraws from the Iran nuclear deal, as seems likely. That could lead to an increase in military provocations by Iran in the region, and embolden any Saudi response. **Thus, as crude as it might be to think of the ongoing Yemeni conflict as military practice for the Saudis, given the brutal toll it has had on civilians, that is precisely what it has been.** Without dismissing Saudi's legitimate national security concerns about Yemen, or minimizing the extensive suffering the war has caused, the conflict has offered an opportunity for the Saudis (and the Emiratis) to test their air and land capabilities in combat and to work on integrated joint operations. **However, it is unlikely that such a conflict would involve only those two parties and not grow to involve other states.** Iran lacks state allies (except for Syria, of course, which is hardly a state now), but it does have a robust, transnational alliance with nonstate clients in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. Groups such as Lebanese Hezbollah or Asaib Ahl al-Haq in Iraq would almost certainly support Iran in such a conflict, including by targeting Saudi nationals in their own countries, but they couldn't attack Saudi territory militarily with any degree of effectiveness.

Nouriel Roubini, 1-3-2017, "Will Donald Trump's election put America first and global conflict next?," Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jan/03/donald-trump-america-first-global-conflict-nouriel-roubini>

Meanwhile, an "America first" approach under Trump will likely worsen the longstanding Sunni-Shia proxy wars between Saudi Arabia and Iran. And if the US no longer guarantees its Sunni allies' security, all regional powers – including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt – might decide that they can defend themselves only by acquiring nuclear weapons, and even more deadly conflict will ensue.

Paul D., 4-2-2015, "The Obama Doctrine: Let the Mideast Fight Its Own Wars," US News & World Report, <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/04/02/obamas-middle-east-policies-leave-saudi-arabia-iran-to-fight-it-outn>

THROUGHOUT HIS presidency, Barack Obama has tried to place the responsibility for Middle East security on the region's leaders, particularly allies like Saudi Arabia whom America has provided with billions of dollars worth of military machinery. At the same time, his

administration has backed away from deploying American troops to what have become a growing number of dangerous hot spots.

“It’s more effective to use our capabilities to help partners on the ground secure their own country’s futures,” Obama said in a weekly address in September, employing what has become his oft-repeated line about refusing to get “dragged into another ground war” in the Middle East. Instead, he has been pushing for Arab nations to move their militaries beyond their traditional roles of securing territorial borders and protecting the ruling establishment against domestic uprising.