Nihar and I affirm Resolved: The United States should end its arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

## **Contention 1 is aiding terrorism**

[Smith of CNN this February](https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2019/02/middleeast/yemen-lost-us-arms/)

In exchange for fighting for them,

**Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners have transferred American-made weapons to al Qaeda-linked fighters, hardline Salafi militias, and other factions waging war in Yemen, in violation of their agreements with the United States,** a CNN investigation has found. The weapons have also made their way into the hands of Iranian-backed rebels battling the coalition for control of the country, exposing some of America's sensitive military technology to Tehran and potentially endangering the lives of US troops in other conflict zones. **Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, its main partner in the war, or tribes, bolster chosen armed actors**, and influence the complex political landscape, according to local commanders on the ground and analysts who spoke to CNN. Some terror groups have gained from the influx of US arms, with **[lowering] the barrier of entry to advanced weaponry now lowered by the laws of supply and demand**. Militia leaders have had ample opportunity to obtain military hardware in exchange for the manpower to fight the Houthi militias. **Arms dealers have flourished, with traders offering to buy or sell anything, from a US-manufactured rifle to a tank, to the highest bidder.**

**Explaining that they**

**have used the US-manufactured weapons as a form of currency to buy the loyalties of these militias.**

**However, this has given terrorists access to advanced weapons included American rifles and tanks,**

**Which has strengthened terrorist groups.**

[**The TSG quantifies in 2016**](http://www.soufangroup.com/tsg-intelbrief-the-quadrupling-of-al-qaeda-in-yemen/)

**The**quadrupling of the estimated size of **the terrorist group known as AQAP [has already quadrupled from 1000 to 4000 members, and this] is a direct result of the years of** political vacuums and **[these] military campaigns that have brought ruin to Yemen**

[**Joshua Landis, University of Oklahoma**](https://www.sott.net/article/313193-Jihadis-in-Syria-resort-to-selling-their-surplus-US-supplied-weapons-on-Facebook) finds further precedent that

**In Syria, "Probably 60 to 80 percent of the [American] arms that America shoveled in [ended up going] to [terrorists]. al-Qaeda and its affiliates," according to**

**As a result,**

[The International Crisis Group](https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/174-yemen-s-al-qaeda-expanding-base) concludes that

**[AQAP] is stronger than it has ever been.** As the country’s civil war has escalated and become regionalised, its local franchise, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), is thriving in an environment of state collapse, growing sectarianism, shifting alliances, security vacuums and a burgeoning war economy. Reversing this trend requires ending the conflict that set it in motion. This means securing an overarching political settlement that has buy-in from the country’s diverse constituencies, including Sunni Islamists. As this will take time, steps must be taken now to contain AQAP’s growth: improving governance in vulnerable areas, disaggregating Sunni Islamist groups and using military tools judiciously and in coordination with local authorities. These efforts will be imperilled if states interested in fighting AQAP and Yemen’s nascent Islamic State (IS) branch, such as the U.S., take military actions that ignore the local context and result in high civilian casualties, like the Trump administration’s 29 January 2017 raid on AQAP affiliates in al-Bayda, or fail to restrain partners who tolerate or even encourage AQAP/IS activities.

**And Backing AQAP has disastrous consequences**

[**Smith continues**](https://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/14/middleeast/yemen-al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula/)

**U.S. officials consider AQAP the most dangerous branch of al Qaeda,** according to CNN terrorism analyst Paul Cruickshank. In November, AQAP released a statement calling on Muslims around the world to forget their differences and renew their efforts to **[responsible for] carry[ing] out [attacks at the]**operations against American targets, whether civilian, military or diplomatic. Al-Awlaki was an influence on Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who are alleged to have killed three people in the **Boston Marathon bombings** in 2013, Bergen said. He also influenced Carlos Bledsoe, who shot up an Army recruiting center in **Little Rock, Arkansas,** killing an American soldier in 2009. After the attacks, Bledsoe said his spiritual inspiration was al-Awlaki. Maj. Nidal Hasan killed 13 people at **Fort Hood, Texas,**in 2009 after sending 18 emails to al-Awlaki in Yemen, a correspondence that was known to the FBI. Al-Awlaki did not direct this attack, but he was the key inspiration for Hasan. AQAP set out its objectives in a May 2010 statement as the **. While In the Middle East, they are "expulsion of [persecuting] Jews and crusaders" from the Arabian Peninsula, the re-establishment of the Islamic caliphate, the introduction of Sharia, or Islamic law,** and the liberation of Muslim lands, according to analysis from Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism. This suggests **the group aims [and trying] to rid Yemen and Saudi Arabia of non-Muslims and overthrow the nations' governments, to be replaced with what it considers to be an Islamic state.** To that end, it has **[by] target[ing] foreigners and government forces in Yemen, as well as Saudi leaders.** In 2009, Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz, the Saudi Arabian deputy minister of interior, survived a bomb attack carried out by an AQAP militant. Through its Inspire magazine, the group also hopes to radicalize Western Muslims and stoke grass-roots jihadist action in Western nations, the Jane's report says. The group's current incarnation **"is widely considered to be the al Qaeda regional franchise that represents the most serious international threat,"** it concludes.

### Contention 2 is Stopping Starvation

Saudi Arabia has been conducting a bombing campaign in Yemen since 2015, supposedly targeting the Houthi Rebels.

However, **William Hartung Center for International Policy 18** William D. [director of the Arms and Security Project at the Center for International Policy. He has also served as a Senior Research Fellow in the New America Foundation's American Strategy Program, and is former director of the Arms Trade Resource Center at the World Policy Institute] “Congress Can Help End the Suffering in Yemen” September 19, 2018. IB

**The Saudi coalition—aided by U.S.-supplied weapons and refueling assistance—has [instead] bombed and killed thousands of civilians in Yemen. One recent strike destroyed a school bus, killing 40 children**. Fragments of a Lockheed Martin laser-guided bomb were found near the scene of the attack. And a recent CNN report—based on its own reporting and on-the-ground research by the Yemen-based Mwatana Organization for Human Rights—documents the presence of **fragments of U.S.-made bombs at the sites of a series of strikes on civilian targets, including homes, a factory, a civilian vehicle, and a wedding**. The bombings mentioned above are not isolated incidents. **Saudi air strikes have also targeting hospitals, water treatment plants, and even a funeral**. Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) has argued that “**Either the Pentagon should be 100 percent certain that U.S. weapons and funding aren’t being used to commit war crimes in Yemen, or we should cut off U.S. support right now.**” Unfortunately, earlier this month **the Trump administration** ignored this plea when it—**falsely—certified that the Saudis were taking due care to avoid killing civilians.** The certification was a blatant evasion of a congressional requirement that the United States end its support for the Saudi/UAE-backed war in Yemen if it was determined that the coalition was engaging in the indiscriminate killing of civilians. Members of Congress from both parties were quick to denounce the Trump administration’s decision. Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) said that “Pompeo’s ‘certification’ is a farce. The Saudis deliberately bombed a bus full of children. There is only one moral answer, and that is to end our support for their intervention in Yemen.” Rep. Justin Amash (R-MI) stated simply that “This war in Yemen is unconscionable, and the United States should not be a party to it.” The U.S.-supported Saudi bombings are part of a larger pattern of neglect of human life that includes a blockade that has slowed the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance. **The blockade has put millions of Yemenis at risk of starvation, and attacks on civilian infrastructure have sparked the largest cholera outbreak in living memory**. Meanwhile**, a Saudi/UAE effort to wrest control of the port of Hodeidah from the Houthis threatens to dramatically worsen an already horrific toll of civilian suffering**, according to private aid groups and UN officials. Both sides of the war have committed heinous human right abuses—all the more reason to press for peace.

[Jake Sullivan Former National Security Advisor, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Feb 6, 2019](https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20190206/108861/HHRG-116-FA00-Wstate-SullivanJ-20190206.pdf)

First, Congress can and must take action to end U.S. support for the war in Yemen, and help pave the way for a diplomatic solution. I served in the Obama administration when the initial intelligence, refueling, and logistical **[while] assistance to the Saudis-led coalition** began. **The logic behind that assistance was at least in part that it would [intended to] give the United States influence in pushing the coalition to (a) abide by international humanitarian law and (b) conduct its military action in a way to maximize the possibility of a diplomatic solution and minimize non-combatant casualties**. As the years have gone by, **it is clear that**

**However, the approach did not work**, a point that I, along with dozens of former colleagues from the Obama administration, made last year in a public letter. **Our initial approach ultimately [and instead has] turned into a blank check [for violence]  under the current administration, and the moral and human cost has been staggering. U.S. assistance is contributing to the continuation of a conflict that has created and perpetuated what today is the world's worst humanitarian crisis. This has had devastating direct and indirect impacts on the Yemeni people.**

**Ending arm sales to Saudi Arabia resolves this crisis in Yemen in two ways**

**First, by crippling their military**

#### **[Bruce Riedel of Brookings in 2018](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/10/10/after-khashoggi-us-arms-sales-to-the-saudis-are-essential-leverage)**

**The Saudis have continued to buy spare parts, munitions, and technical support for the enormous amount of American equipment they have bought** from previous administrations. **[which is why] the** Royal **Saudi Air Force** (RSAF) **is entirely dependent on American** and British **support for its air fleet of F15 fighter jets, Apache helicopters, and Tornado aircraft.**

**He finds that**

 **If** either **Washington** or London **halts the flow [of arms]** of logistics, **the** RSAF **[Air Force] will be grounded**.**The Saudi army** and the Saudi Arabian National Guard are **[is]similarly dependent** on foreigners (the Saudi Arabian National Guard is heavily dependent on Canada). The same is also true for the Saudis allies like Bahrain.

**Without our support, they will have nobody to turn to**

As [dewan](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/22/middleeast/arms-exports-saudi-arabia-intl/index.htm) in 2018 explains

A number of countries have substantially decreased or banned arms sales to Saudi Arabia including Denmark, Germany, France and the UK, while china and russia only sell a negligible amount of weapons. The US is the main remaining supplier, responsible for 61% of Saudi Arabia’s total purchases.

#### Ending arms sales ends air strikes on civilians which

Daniel L. **Byman 18 concludes**, 12-5-2018, [Daniel Byman is a senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, where his research focuses on counterterrorism and Middle East security. He previously served as the research director of the center. He is also senior associate dean for undergraduate affairs at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service and a professor in its Security Studies Program. Previously, Byman served as a staff member with the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States (“The 9/11 Commission”) and the Joint 9/11 Inquiry Staff of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees. Prior to that, Byman was a policy analyst and the director for research in the Center for Middle East Public Policy at the RAND Corporation and worked for the U.S. government. His most recent book is "Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement: What Everyone Needs to Know" (Oxford University Press, 2015). He is the author of several other books on counterterrorism, state sponsorship of terrorism, and conflict and terrorism in the Middle East.] "Yemen after a Saudi withdrawal: How much would change?," Brookings, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/12/05/yemen-after-a-saudi-withdrawal-how-much-would-change/> RE

**By itself, an end to the Saudi bombing campaign and blockade would be a milestone. The air strikes have killed thousands of Yemenis, including many children. The bombing also destroyed much of Yemen’s already-tottering infrastructure, making medical care and food distribution even more difficult. Less visibly, but more deadly, the Saudi blockade of many of Yemen’s ports and airport—done in the name of stopping Iranian arms from entering Yemen—has while prevent[ing] food and humanitarian aid from entering the country as well. This has contributed to the massive famine.**

**Second is by forcing peace talks**

**Bazzi 2018 from The Atlantic warns that**

**By accepting the coalition’s cosmetic attempts to minimize civilian casualties, the Trump administration is signaling to Saudi and Emirati leaders its apparent belief that a clear military victory in Yemen remains possible. And as long as the coalition believes it can crush the Houthis, there’s little incentive for it to negotiate. Trump, then, has bought into Saudi Arabia’s zero-sum calculation: that a military win in Yemen for the kingdom and its allies would be a defeat for Iran, while a negotiated settlement with the Houthis would be a victory for Tehran. Blinded by its obsession with Iran, the Trump administration is perpetuating an unwinnable war and undermining the likelihood of a political settlement**

**This is why** [**Wendell 2019**](https://www.mintpressnews.com/with-3-8-million-yemenis-displaced-last-year-new-report-shows-countrys-crisis-growing-worse/254934/) **writes that However, what makes the December figure so striking is the fact that “peace negotiations” took place early on in that month, which ostensibly led to [Despite attempts at peace negotiations] that the Saudi coalition [has violated ceasefires] went on to violate over 800 times.**

However, ending arms sales changes Saudi Arabia’s mindset.

[**Mohamad Bazzi of The Atlantic in September 2018**](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/09/iran-yemen-saudi-arabia/571465/)

After the Trump administration’s endorsement this month, the Saudi-UAE alliance has even less incentive to prevent civilian casualties and new humanitarian disasters. **Saudi Arabia and its allies are more likely to accept a peace process if it is clear that the United States** won’t support an open-ended war in Yemen and **won’t provide the military assistance required to keep the war apparatus going.**But Trump has shown little sign of pressuring his Saudi and Emirati allies, least of all over Yemen. The only realistic check left is in Congress, where more voices are asking why the world’s most powerful country is helping to perpetuate the world’s worst humanitarian crisis

**The Impact is ending the world’s worst humanitarian crisis**

[Jake Sullivan continues Former National Security Advisor, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Feb 6, 2019](https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20190206/108861/HHRG-116-FA00-Wstate-SullivanJ-20190206.pdf)

**Meanwhile, civilian casualties from coalition [air]strikes rose 164 percent [in 3 months]  between June and September of last year alone, and blockades have prevented food and humanitarian supplies from reaching the yemeni people who need them the most. The Stockholm Agreement has been a welcome step, but a tentative and fragile one.** The Director of National Intelligence testified to the Congress last week that the **"humanitarian impacts of the conflict in Yemen—including, causing famine and disease, and internal displacement—will be acute in 2019 and that could easily worsen if the coalition cuts key supply lines to Sanaa." The DNI underscored this point with astonishing figures, stating that there are, "more than 22 million people, or ap- proximately 75 percent of the population, in need of assistance, with millions of people [are] at severe risk of famine by the UN definition—numbers that are likely to rise quickly if disruptions to aid access continue." Late last year, the UN's humanitarian coordinator said that [Quantifying that] 22 million people urgently need aid and nearly a quarter of Yemen's population is on the brink of starvation, with food insecurity affecting two-thirds of the population.**

He furthers that

Part of the reason **th[e] conflict** is so intractable is that **it has become internationalized, with Iran** as well as the Saudi-led coalition —as well as **[the US] fueling it. The longer this conflict continues [without a resolution], the more the participants will destabilize the region**— including by unleashing more potent extremist and terrorist forces. Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, for example, has continued to take advantage of the governance vacuum in parts of the country. The right approach for the United States is to put pressure on the coalition to curtail its military activities, including by withdrawing U.S. military assistance, while increasing constructive ef- forts—in tandem with our allies and partners— to disrupt and reduce Iran's support for the Huthis. When it comes to countering the Iranian threat, our current approach has done nothing but make things worse: it has

**causing even more violence and civilian deaths.**

**Stop Saudi Arabia from killing innocent civilians,** affirm

**Reject high magnitude low probability impacts “1% risk of extinction”– mindset paralzyes collapses all policymaking**

**Meskill 09** (David, professor at Colorado School of Mines and PhD from Harvard, “The "One Percent Doctrine" and Environmental Faith,” Dec 9, http://davidmeskill.blogspot.com/2009/12/one-percent-doctrine-and-environmental.html)

Tom Friedman's piece today in the Times on the environment (http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/09/opinion/09friedman.html?\_r=1) is one of the flimsiest pieces by a major columnist that I can remember ever reading. He applies Cheney's "**one percent doctrine**" (which is similar to the environmentalists' "precautionary principle") to the risk of environmental armageddon. But this doctrine **is both intellectually incoherent and practically irrelevant**. It is intellectually incoherent because **it cannot be applied consistently in a world with many potential disaster scenarios. In addition to the global-warming risk, there's also the asteroid-hitting-the-earth risk, the terrorists-with-nuclear-weapons risk** (Cheney's original scenario), **the super-duper-pandemic risk, etc**. Since each of these risks, on the "**one percent doctrine," would deserve all of our attention, we cannot address all of them simultaneously**. That is, even within the one-percent mentality, **we'd have to begin prioritizing**, making choices and trade-offs. **But why then should we only make these trade-offs between responses to disaster scenarios? Why not also choose between them and other, much more cotidien, things we value**? **Why treat the unlikely but cataclysmic event as somehow fundamentally different, something that cannot be integrated into all the other calculations we make**? And in fact, this is how we behave all the time. **We get into our cars** in order to **buy a cup of coffee**, even though there's some chance we will be killed on the way to the coffee shop. **We are constantly risking death, if slightly, in order to pursue the things we value**. **Any creature that adopted the "precautionary principle"** would sit at home - no, not even there, since there is some chance the building might collapse. **That creature would neither be able to act, nor not act, since it would nowhere discover perfect safety**. Friedman's approach reminds me somehow of Pascal's wager - quasi-religious faith masquerading as rational deliberation (as Hans Albert has pointed out, Pascal's wager itself doesn't add up: there may be a God, in fact, but it may turn out that He dislikes, and even damns, people who believe in him because they've calculated it's in their best interest to do so). As my friend James points out, it's striking how descriptions of the environmental risk always describe the situation as if it were five to midnight. It must be near midnight, since otherwise there would be no need to act. But it can never be five \*past\* midnight, since then acting would be pointless and we might as well party like it was 2099. Many religious movements - for example the early Jesus movement - have exhibited precisely this combination of traits: the looming apocalypse, with the time (just barely) to take action. None of this is to deny - at least this is my current sense - that human action is contributing to global warming. But what **our response to this news should be is another matter entirely.**

Cards

**Pillar 18** Paul [Paul R. Pillar is Nonresident Senior Fellow at Georgetown University’s Center for Security Studies and served for 28 years in the U.S. intelligence community, including as the National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia, and deputy chief of the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center] “The Saudi War in Yemen Is Strengthening Terrorism” March 20, 2018. https://www.justsecurity.org/54106/saudi-war-yemen-strengthening-terrorism/ IB

As we should have learned in Afghanistan and Iraq, **neither we nor Saudi Arabia can bomb our way to victory. Extremists prosper in ungoverned spaces and amid war’s misery and deprivation. As long as the Yemen war drags on, civilians will suffer and the terrorist threat to the United States will increase.** **The collapse of government institutions [in yemen] amid three years of war has created openings for AQAP and ISIS to recruit and even to control territory**.

The **civilian casualties from the Saudi campaign and U.S.-Saudi ties risk creating a generation of Yemeni civilians who see the United States as an enemy.** In Yemen, America’s humanitarian and counterterrorist interests align, because both require a political resolution of the conflict.

**And he concludes that**

**Unless the fighting stops, the humanitarian situation will further worsen and the recruiting ability of AQAP and ISIS will continue to increase.**

[**The TSG quantifies in 2016**](http://www.soufangroup.com/tsg-intelbrief-the-quadrupling-of-al-qaeda-in-yemen/)

**The**quadrupling of the estimated size of **AQAP [has already quadrupled from 1000 to 4000 members, and this] is a direct result of the years of** political vacuums and **military campaigns that have brought ruin to Yemen**

#### **A terrorism resurgence would devastate the region**

https://www.**rand**.org/blog/2018/09/why-we-should-measure-the-economic-impact-of-terrorism.html

Terrorism in the middle east has killed thousands of civilians, destabilized countries, and destroyed regional economies and the oil industry.

AND Europe and the European Parliament released a report in May on the cost of terrorism in the EU. Examining far more than direct costs, such as loss of life or damage to persons and infrastructure, the study also measured the indirect psychological impact on European citizens—people not involved in terrorist attacks, but suffering from anxiety and fear as a result—and its effects on GDP. It found that terrorism had a significant economic impact, costing Europe €180 million between 2004 and 2016.
Even though instability has long plagued countries in the Middle East, scholars have not yet conducted similar studies measuring the cost of terrorism in this region. There could be three reasons for this: Terrorism is so frequent that it is considered the “norm”; the Western countries that conduct these studies are geographically distant; or the complexity of violent actors in this region makes the subject difficult to research. However evidence suggests that terrorism has had a devastating economic impact on the Middle East far outweighing that of the West. In 2016, there were 2,965 terrorist attacks in Iraq, 1,342 in Afghanistan, and 366 in Syria (PDF). In contrast there were 30 terrorist attacks in all of western Europe in the same year. Though the Global Terrorism Database notes that the number of terrorist attacks in Europe is rising, the situation in the Middle East is exponentially worse—a region where attacks are essentially a part of daily life for many citizens. Terrorism has also had a major impact on one of the Middle East's other most critical industries, oil. Terrorists have targeted oil facilities in several Middle Eastern nations, causing supply shortages. At one point, Iraqi oil production had fallen by as much as 320,000 barrels per day because of ISIS attacks. ISIS' territory includes a number of oil facilities. The proceeds of oil sales go to the terrorist group, diverting revenue that would normally be used to finance national infrastructure projects. In 2014, ISIS controlled 60 per cent of Syria's oil capacity and the group made almost $3 million per day from the illegal oil trade. Even though ISIS has recently lost a large amount of territory, the terrorist organization still controls significant wells in northern Iraq—denying Baghdad of much needed revenue.

**Second is protecting civilians**

[**Cummings of the NYT in 2018**](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/28/world/middleeast/un-yemen-war-crimes.html)

**The main cause of civilian casualties in the war,** the report says, **has been airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition**. It estimates that **there have been 18,000 such strikes in little more than three years, inflicting a level of damage on civilians that** “certainly **contributed to Yemen’s dire** economic and humanitarian **situation.”**

**The Saudi blockade exacerbates this violence**

[**The International Rescue Committee in 2018**](https://www.rescue.org/article/why-yemen-worlds-worst-humanitarian-crisis)

Conditions in Yemen are deteriorating across every measure. **Over 8 million people are at risk of starvation and 16 million lack access to basic health care. As the airstrikes continue** — one every 99 minutes for the past on January 30. **Initially thought to be a suicide speedboat, the attacker is now assumed to have been a** three years — **Yemenis are unable to access the** food and health **services they need to survive.**

#### Third, by preventing further escalation

**If the war does not wind down, the situation will worsen and more civilians will die**

**Vaughan and Henderson of the US Navy 17** (Cmdr. Jeremy Vaughan, U.S. Navy, is a Federal Executive Fellow at The Washington Institute who has completed multiple deployments to the Persian Gulf. Simon Henderson is the Institute's Baker Fellow and director of its Gulf and Energy Policy Program. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/bab-al-mandab-shipping-chokepoint-under-threat> 3-1)

More conflicts in Yemen and the nearby Bab al-Mandeb strait could further internationalize the conflict and spur other countries to intervene.

On February 9, the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence issued an alert warning commercial vessels about the risk of mines in the Bab al-Mandab Strait: "**The U.S. Government has reason to believe** in late January, **mines were laid by Houthi rebels** in Yemeni territorial waters in the Red Sea close to the mouth of Mocha harbor." The alert follows a number of other troubling incidents in the strategic waterway over the past few months. Saudi and Emirati naval vessels have been attacked while trying to enforce a blockade on the Iranian-supported Houthi rebels who control large parts of Yemen. And last October, patrolling U.S. Navy ships were targeted as well. Diplomatic efforts to end Yemen's civil war appear to be getting nowhere, and the fighting on land is largely deadlocked, though forces loyal to the internationally recognized government of President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi recently captured Mocha port near the Bab al-Mandab. Iran's motives for helping the Houthis are unclear but have the effect of challenging Saudi Arabia, which views the fighting as a proxy war. **More incidents at sea, especially involving civilian shipping, could further internationalize the conflict and spur other actors to intervene**. In terms of capability and tradition, **the leadership role in any such effort to safeguard freedom of passage would necessarily be taken by the U.S. Navy.** A KEY CHOKEPOINT In a 2014 web post describing heavily transited oil chokepoints in the Middle East and elsewhere, the U.S. Energy Information Administration noted that **blocking such waterways, even temporarily, "can lead to substantial increases in total energy costs and world energy prices**." The **Bab al-Mandab**, which controls access to the Red Sea and the southern end of the Suez Canal, **is particularly crucial at present because of Egypt's reliance on imported liquefied natural gas to maintain its electricity supplies**. One LNG tanker destined for Egypt transits the strait each week. If passage were impeded, those shipments -- and all other vessels heading to Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea -- would have no alternative but to make the long voyage around the southern tip of Africa. The Bab al-Mandab is around ten miles wide at its narrowest point, where the Yemeni island of Perim protrudes into the waterway toward Eritrea and Djibouti. Under an international traffic separation scheme, northbound international shipping uses a two-mile-wide lane on the Arabian side just west of Perim, while southbound traffic uses a similar lane on the African side. Separated by just over a mile of water, the two lanes work well for international traffic but are ignored by smaller local ships and fishing vessels. More than sixty commercial ships transit the strait every day, and several passenger cruise liners use the route as well. THE THREATS **Houthi rebels have attacked warships in or near the strait on at least four occasions since last fall**. On October 1, antishipping cruise missiles fired from the Houthi-controlled coastline severely damaged the Swift, an Emirati-operated troop landing and logistics ship. In the following weeks, the destroyer USS Mason successfully defended itself against three similar attacks. The U.S. Navy launched a Tomahawk missile strike to knock out coastal radar sites that may have provided targeting information for the attacks. No further antishipping missile attacks have been reported since then, but radar sites can be rebuilt, and the Houthis' stores of such missiles have not been destroyed, so the threat remains. Additional threats have emerged in the past few weeks and may already be affecting international shipping patterns. The recent U.S. government warning about mines in the Bab al-Mandab advised ships to transit the strait only during daylight. Moored mines have a notorious tendency to break free of their tethers and could ramp up the risk to all ships in the area. Another new threat surfaced when **a Saudi frigate was attacked** off the Houthi-controlled port of Hodeida **remote-controlled drone** craft similar to the type Iranian smugglers employ to pick up contraband from Oman's Musandam Peninsula in the Strait of Hormuz, a Persian Gulf chokepoint. The UAE also has such craft (which it uses for target practice), so it is conceivable that the attack was conducted by a lost Emirati boat recovered by Iran. U.S. warships transiting the Strait of Hormuz are routinely harassed by small boats from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN), but weaponized speedboat drones, known in the military as unmanned surface vehicles (**USVs), change the danger profile into a credible threat**. An attacking USV must be disabled at distance from a warship's hull, a task that could prove exceptionally difficult during a swarming attack by multiple boats. Furthermore, **Iran's familiarity with explosively formed penetrators** (EFPs) **means that such technology may soon be seen at sea**. Fortunately, the difficulty in remotely placing such a narrowly focused explosive against a target's hull mitigates some of the risk; this could explain why the January 30 attack seemed to result in such minor damage, assuming an EFP was on board. Even so, an EFP-laden USV that gets through a ship's defenses could sink it.

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**Checker of The Washington Post in 2018** explains that, “The kingdom is too invested in U.S. equipment. It would take decades to transition from U.S. aircraft, for example, to Russian or Chinese aircraft. Same is true for tanks, communications equipment and other hi-tech equipment.”

**The first is militias**

[**https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/world/wp/2018/12/06/feature/the-merchants-of-despair/?noredirect=on**](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/world/wp/2018/12/06/feature/the-merchants-of-despair/?noredirect=on)

**The Saudi-led coalition waging war in Yemen has armed and financed local militias, including some with alleged links to Islamic extremists, that are now turning on one another in a competition for territory, wealth and control over the country’s future. This internecine fight is aggravating a humanitarian crisis now considered the most dire in the world and clouding the prospects for peace in this crippled country. Inside the city, however, tensions have steadily grown as the rival militias, supported by two of the United States’ closest Arab allies, have battled one another. Fierce clashes broke out in August between two rival proxies of the Saudi-led coalition. Mortars and rocket-propelled grenades pummeled the al-Jahmaliya neighborhood, adding to the wreckage from past years of urban warfare. The residents, including Qasim, cowered inside their homes. As the militias have turned their guns on one another, many residents say, there’s been less effort put into battling the Houthi rebels. “These internal splits are one of the important reasons why there has been no progress against the Houthis,” said Ahmed Al-Basha, a well-known social activist. “This is prolonging the war. It could also be foreclosing the chances of a lasting peace.**

~~??? Which is why Marcetic from Jacobin Magazine corroborates in 2018 that~~

~~“~~**~~If the United States~~** ~~of America and the United Kingdom tonight~~ **~~told King Salman that this war has to end, it would end tomorrow, because the Royal Saudi Air force cannot operate without American~~** ~~and British~~ **~~support.~~**~~”~~

[~~Peter Beaumant from the Guardian in 2018 explains~~](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/sep/26/huge-spike-in-yemen-violence-as-civilian-deaths-rise-by-164-in-four-months-hodeidah) ~~[the extent of the problem, writing that](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/sep/26/huge-spike-in-yemen-violence-as-civilian-deaths-rise-by-164-in-four-months-hodeidah)~~

~~“August was the most violent month of 2018 in Yemen with nearly 500 people killed in just nine days,” said Frank McManus, the IRC’s Yemen director, who added that, “~~**~~since 2015, the coalition has undertaken 18,000 airstrikes – one every 99 minutes – one-third of which have hit non-military targets~~**~~”. McManus said: “The protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure is not a luxury; it is an essential provision of international law. When these laws fail, civilians suffer. Calls from members of the UN security council for all conflict actors to respect international law and protect civilians ring hollow in the face of evidence from the ground in Yemen. The world needs a wake up call on Yemen and a new strategy to prevent the suffering of civilians.~~

**blood is on our hands, as According to William Hartung Center for International Policy 18** William D. [director of the Arms and Security Project at the Center for International Policy. He has also served as a Senior Research Fellow in the New America Foundation's American Strategy Program, and is former director of the Arms Trade Resource Center at the World Policy Institute] “Congress Can Help End the Suffering in Yemen” September 19, 2018. IB

**The Saudi coalition—aided by U.S.-supplied weapons and refueling assistance—has bombed and killed thousands of civilians in Yemen. One recent strike destroyed a school bus, killing 40 children**. Fragments of a Lockheed Martin laser-guided bomb were found near the scene of the attack. And a recent CNN report—based on its own reporting and on-the-ground research by the Yemen-based Mwatana Organization for Human Rights—documents the presence of **fragments of U.S.-made bombs at the sites of a series of strikes on civilian targets, including homes, a factory, a civilian vehicle, and a wedding**. The bombings mentioned above are not isolated incidents. **Saudi air strikes have also targeting hospitals, water treatment plants, and even a funeral**. Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) has argued that “**Either the Pentagon should be 100 percent certain that U.S. weapons and funding aren’t being used to commit war crimes in Yemen, or we should cut off U.S. support right now.**” Unfortunately, earlier this month **the Trump administration** ignored this plea when it—**falsely—certified that the Saudis were taking due care to avoid killing civilians.** The certification was a blatant evasion of a congressional requirement that the United States end its support for the Saudi/UAE-backed war in Yemen if it was determined that the coalition was engaging in the indiscriminate killing of civilians. Members of Congress from both parties were quick to denounce the Trump administration’s decision. Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) said that “Pompeo’s ‘certification’ is a farce. The Saudis deliberately bombed a bus full of children. There is only one moral answer, and that is to end our support for their intervention in Yemen.” Rep. Justin Amash (R-MI) stated simply that “This war in Yemen is unconscionable, and the United States should not be a party to it.” The U.S.-supported Saudi bombings are part of a larger pattern of neglect of human life that includes a blockade that has slowed the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance. **The blockade has put millions of Yemenis at risk of starvation, and attacks on civilian infrastructure have sparked the largest cholera outbreak in living memory**. Meanwhile**, a Saudi/UAE effort to wrest control of the port of Hodeidah from the Houthis threatens to dramatically worsen an already horrific toll of civilian suffering**, according to private aid groups and UN officials. Both sides of the war have committed heinous human right abuses—all the more reason to press for peace.

#### **But even as other countries have ended arm sales,**

**Bazzi of The Guardian in 2018** finds that, “Trump announced a series of weapons sales to the kingdom that will total nearly $110bn over [the next] 10 years.”

#### However, Ending Arm Sales grounds the RSAF

Bruce **Riedel 18** [Senior Fellow - Foreign Policy, Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, Center for Middle East Policy, Director - The Intelligence Project] “After Khashoggi, US arms sales to the Saudis are essential leverage” October 10, 2018. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/10/10/after-khashoggi-us-arms-sales-to-the-saudis-are-essential-leverage / IB

**The Saudis have continued to buy spare parts, munitions, and technical support for the enormous amount of American equipment they have bought from previous administrations. The Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) is entirely dependent on American** and British **support for its air fleet of F15 fighter jets, Apache helicopters, and Tornado aircraft. If either Washington or London halts the flow of logistics, the RSAF will be grounded**. The Saudi army and the Saudi Arabian National Guard are similarly dependent on foreigners (the Saudi Arabian National Guard is heavily dependent on Canada). The same is also true for the Saudis allies like Bahrain.

#### That resolves mass violence and ends air strikes on civilians

Daniel L. **Byman 18**, 12-5-2018, [Daniel Byman is a senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, where his research focuses on counterterrorism and Middle East security. He previously served as the research director of the center. He is also senior associate dean for undergraduate affairs at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service and a professor in its Security Studies Program. Previously, Byman served as a staff member with the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States (“The 9/11 Commission”) and the Joint 9/11 Inquiry Staff of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees. Prior to that, Byman was a policy analyst and the director for research in the Center for Middle East Public Policy at the RAND Corporation and worked for the U.S. government. His most recent book is "Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement: What Everyone Needs to Know" (Oxford University Press, 2015). He is the author of several other books on counterterrorism, state sponsorship of terrorism, and conflict and terrorism in the Middle East.] "Yemen after a Saudi withdrawal: How much would change?," Brookings, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/12/05/yemen-after-a-saudi-withdrawal-how-much-would-change/> RE

**By itself, an end to the Saudi bombing campaign and blockade would be a milestone. The air strikes have killed thousands of Yemenis, including many children. The bombing also destroyed much of Yemen’s already-tottering infrastructure, making medical care and food distribution even more difficult. Less visibly, but more deadly, the Saudi blockade of many of Yemen’s ports and airport—done in the name of stopping Iranian arms from entering Yemen—has prevented food and humanitarian aid from entering the country as well. This has contributed to the massive famine.**

#### Three Impacts:

#### First is ending war crimes against civilians

#### **Cutting supplies is a key response to Yemen.**

**Mohamed and Shaif 16** Rasha Mohamed is Amnesty International’s Yemen researcher. Follow her on Twitter at: @RashaMoh2. Rawan Shaif is a freelance journalist covering Yemen. “Saudi Arabia Is Committing War Crimes in Yemen” March 25, 2016. https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/25/civilian-casualties-war-crimes-saudi-arabia-yemen-war/ IB

These **gruesome scenes are just** two **examples of the horrors that Yemen has seen since the Saudi-led military coalition launched its air campaign** in March 2015. On one side of this war is the Houthi armed group, often referred to as the “Popular Committees,” which is supported by armed groups loyal to former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and parts of the army. On the other side is the military coalition led by Saudi Arabia and allied forces on the ground, usually referred to as muqawama, or the “resistance,” fighting on behalf of Hadi and his government. **The Houthis and their allies** — armed groups loyal to Saleh — **are the declared targets of the coalition’s 1-year-old air campaign. In reality**, however, **it is the civilians**, such as Basrallah and Rubaid, and their children, **who are predominantly the victims of this protracted war**. Hundreds of civilians have been killed in airstrikes while asleep in their homes, when going about their daily activities, or in the very places where they had sought refuge from the conflict. **The U**nited **S**tates, **Britain, and others**, meanwhile**, have continued to supply a steady stream of weaponry and logistical support to Saudi Arabia and its coalition.** One year on, it still remains unclear who is winning the war. Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners claim to have regained control of more than 80 percent of the country, but the Houthis remain in control of the key strongholds of Sanaa, Ibb, and Taiz. Moreover, armed groups such as al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State are gaining ground and support in the south and southeast parts of the country, taking advantage of the security vacuum to consolidate their power. One thing is clear: Yemeni civilians are losing the most. This **wanton disregard for the lives of civilians continues unabated**... At approximately 11:30 a.m. on March 15, the market in Khamees, a town in northern Yemen, was destroyed in two apparent airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition, claiming the lives of 106 civilians, including 24 children. One man, Hasan Masafi, who spoke to us over the phone, couldn’t even grieve his 18-year-old son’s death because he couldn’t locate his whole body. “We were only able to find his right leg,” he said. **The facts speak for themselves, and evidence of violations of international humanitarian law cannot be dismissed as mere hearsay**, as the British government has attempted to do with U.N. reports. **Amnesty International and other organizations have presented compelling evidence** over the past year that indicates all parties to the Yemen conflict have committed war crimes. But **some countries do not want to see the evidence that is staring them in the face**. **Flooding the region with arms is akin to adding fuel to the fire**. Attacks like the one on Khamees market have become the norm for civilians in Yemen. More than 3,000 civilians have been killed during the conflict, according to the United Nations. Thousands of others have been injured, more than 2.5 million have been displaced, and 83 percent of Yemenis are reliant on humanitarian assistance. **There is barely a single corner of Yemen or a single soul that hasn’t in some way been touched and scarred by this war. The Saudi-led coalition’s response to reports of civilians unlawfully killed** — and homes, schools, and infrastructure destroyed — **has been to constantly repeat the mantra that “only military targets are hit by airstrikes.” The situation on the ground tells a very different story. With each unlawful coalition airstrike, it becomes more evident that Saudi Arabia and other coalition members either do not care about respecting international humanitarian law or are incapable of adhering to its fundamental rules. And yet,** Britain, **the U**nited **S**tates, and France **continue to authorize lucrative arms deals** with the Saudi-led coalition — apparently without batting an eyelash. Since November 2013, the U.S. Defense Department has authorized more than $35.7 billion in major arms deals to Saudi Arabia.Since November 2013, the U.S. Defense Department has authorized more than $35.7 billion in major arms deals to Saudi Arabia. This includes the announcement of a $1.29 billion U.S. arms sale to Saudi Arabia in November 2015 that will supply Riyadh with 18,440 bombs and 1,500 warheads. Meanwhile, during his time in office, British Prime Minister David Cameron has overseen the sale of more than $9 billion worth of weaponry to Saudi Arabia, including nearly $4 billion since airstrikes on Yemen began, according to the Campaign Against Arms Trade, a London-based NGO. Regardless of when the weapons used by coalition forces in Yemen were acquired — whether before or since the start of the air campaign — the countries that supplied them have a responsibility to ensure that they are not facilitating violations of international law. While the relentless coalition airstrikes account for most of the civilian deaths in the conflict, civilians also find themselves increasingly trapped in the crossfire between Houthi and anti-Houthi armed groups, with each side supported by different units of the now-divided armed forces. A case in point is the southern city of Taiz, which has suffered restrictions on movement of food and medical supplies since at least November. Attacks continue to maim and kill civilians, including children. When Amnesty International visited the city in July 2015, we witnessed the irresponsible conduct of fighters firsthand and documented 30 ground attacks, which led to more than 100 casualties. One of those victims was 12-year-old Ayham Anees, who was killed in an apparent Houthi mortar attack in May. Munther Mohamed, Anees’s uncle, described rushing to the scene after hearing children’s screams following the attack. “I also saw my nephew Ayham, whose head had separated from his body,” he said. “I had told the children to play in the middle of the alley because it was the safest place, but it was not.” The crisis in Taiz has only gotten worse in recent days. While the Houthis have been partially pushed out of the city center, they still maintain control of the majority of the governorate. Where the Houthis have been forced to retreat, they have laid landmines — internationally banned weapons that have already claimed dozens of civilian lives. Last week, the spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition announced that operations are nearing their end in Yemen. What that means in practice is not yet clear, as airstrikes continue to pound the country. But accountability doesn’t take a back seat just because military operations may be winding down. **It’s time to bring these crimes against civilians to an end**. With peace talks expected to take place in Kuwait on April 18, all parties must prioritize several crucial conditions: protecting the long-term interests of ordinary Yemenis, ensuring an end to the horrors of the past year, and guaranteeing that those responsible will be held accountable. All those civilian lives lost as a result of violations won’t be forgotten, even if this chapter of war closes. It’s too late for the children of Salah Basrallah. But **there’s no excuse not to do the right thing now**. **States should act immediately to ensure that none of Yemen’s warring parties is supplied — either directly or indirectly — with weapons, munitions, military equipment, or technology that would be used in any furtherance of the conflict**. And they must do everything in their power to ensure there is an independent international investigation into violations by all sides aimed at ensuring justice and reparation — for Salah Basrallah and the thousands of other victims of this deadly war.

#### Second, revoking support results in peace

Doug **Bandow, 12-18**-2018, [senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan and editor of the political magazine Inquiry. He writes regularly for leading publications such as Fortune magazine, National Interest, the Wall Street Journal, and the Washington Times. Bandow speaks frequently at academic conferences, on college campuses, and to business groups. Bandow has been a regular commentator on ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News Channel, and MSNBC. He holds a JD from Stanford University.] "It's Time to End U.S. Support for the Saudi War on Yemen," Cato Institute, https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/its-time-end-us-support-saudi-war-yemen RE

**The ongoing peace talks offer some hope. They have advanced further than previous attempts, and have reached some positive agreements, such as prisoner exchange**, though implementation remains. **The fact that Western nations have turned against the war encouraged the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to start making concessions, necessary to reach a more enduring peace. So long as Riyadh can count on a blank check from Washington**—it turns out the United States wasn’t even charging enough for refueling Saudi aircraft—**the kingdom has no reason to temper its policy. Which means the administration should take the next step and end all support for the war; MbS and his companions should bear the full burden of what amounts to imperial warmongering.**

#### It signals an end to the war and fosters peace talks

Mohamad **Bazzi 18**, 9-30-18, [associate professor of journalism at New York University and the former Middle East bureau chief at Newsday.] "**The United States Could End the War in Yemen If It Wanted To**," Atlantic, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/09/iran-yemen-saudi-arabia/571465/> RE

After the Trump administration’s endorsement this month, the Saudi-UAE alliance has even less incentive to prevent civilian casualties and new humanitarian disasters. **Saudi Arabia and its allies are more likely to accept a peace process if it is clear that the United States won’t support an open-ended war in Yemen and won’t provide the military assistance required to keep the war apparatus going.** But Trump has shown little sign of pressuring his Saudi and Emirati allies, least of all over Yemen. The only realistic check left is in Congress, where more voices are asking why the world’s most powerful country is helping to perpetuate the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

~~John~~ **~~Hudson 15~~** ~~[analyst @ Foreign Policy] “Flexing New Powers, Congress to Review Arms Shipments to Saudi Arabia” December 10, 2015. https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/10/flexing-new-powers-congress-to-review-arms-shipments-to-saudi-arabia/ IB~~

~~The organizations leading the charge against the weapons sale include~~ **~~Oxfam America, Amnesty International USA, and Human Rights Watch~~**~~. The groups~~ **~~accuse Washington of being complicit in what they call~~ ~~Saudi Arabia’s~~ ~~“indiscriminate” airstrikes in Yemen where about 2,500 civilians have died in the fighting~~**~~.~~ ~~“~~**~~Arms transfers give a green light to indefinite military intervention, substantially relieving the pressure on the coalition and the government of Yemen to agree to a ceasefire,~~~~” Oxfam~~** ~~America~~ **~~senior~~** ~~humanitarian~~ **~~policy adviser~~** ~~Scott~~ **~~Paul told Foreign Policy~~**~~.~~

#### **Third, winding down the conflict prevents escalation**

#### **prevents escalation - Proximity to vital sea lanes makes escalation likely- ship attacks draw in foreign powers**

**Vaughan and Henderson 17**

(Cmdr. Jeremy Vaughan, U.S. Navy, is a Federal Executive Fellow at The Washington Institute who has completed multiple deployments to the Persian Gulf. Simon Henderson is the Institute's Baker Fellow and director of its Gulf and Energy Policy Program. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/bab-al-mandab-shipping-chokepoint-under-threat> 3-1)

On February 9, the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence issued an alert warning commercial vessels about the risk of mines in the Bab al-Mandab Strait: "**The U.S. Government has reason to believe** in late January, **mines were laid by Houthi rebels** in Yemeni territorial waters in the Red Sea close to the mouth of Mocha harbor." The alert follows a number of other troubling incidents in the strategic waterway over the past few months. Saudi and Emirati naval vessels have been attacked while trying to enforce a blockade on the Iranian-supported Houthi rebels who control large parts of Yemen. And last October, patrolling U.S. Navy ships were targeted as well. Diplomatic efforts to end Yemen's civil war appear to be getting nowhere, and the fighting on land is largely deadlocked, though forces loyal to the internationally recognized government of President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi recently captured Mocha port near the Bab al-Mandab. Iran's motives for helping the Houthis are unclear but have the effect of challenging Saudi Arabia, which views the fighting as a proxy war. **More incidents at sea, especially involving civilian shipping, could further internationalize the conflict and spur other actors to intervene**. In terms of capability and tradition, **the leadership role in any such effort to safeguard freedom of passage would necessarily be taken by the U.S. Navy.** A KEY CHOKEPOINT In a 2014 web post describing heavily transited oil chokepoints in the Middle East and elsewhere, the U.S. Energy Information Administration noted that **blocking such waterways, even temporarily, "can lead to substantial increases in total energy costs and world energy prices**." The **Bab al-Mandab**, which controls access to the Red Sea and the southern end of the Suez Canal, **is particularly crucial at present because of Egypt's reliance on imported liquefied natural gas to maintain its electricity supplies**. One LNG tanker destined for Egypt transits the strait each week. If passage were impeded, those shipments -- and all other vessels heading to Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea -- would have no alternative but to make the long voyage around the southern tip of Africa. The Bab al-Mandab is around ten miles wide at its narrowest point, where the Yemeni island of Perim protrudes into the waterway toward Eritrea and Djibouti. Under an international traffic separation scheme, northbound international shipping uses a two-mile-wide lane on the Arabian side just west of Perim, while southbound traffic uses a similar lane on the African side. Separated by just over a mile of water, the two lanes work well for international traffic but are ignored by smaller local ships and fishing vessels. More than sixty commercial ships transit the strait every day, and several passenger cruise liners use the route as well. THE THREATS **Houthi rebels have attacked warships in or near the strait on at least four occasions since last fall**. On October 1, antishipping cruise missiles fired from the Houthi-controlled coastline severely damaged the Swift, an Emirati-operated troop landing and logistics ship. In the following weeks, the destroyer USS Mason successfully defended itself against three similar attacks. The U.S. Navy launched a Tomahawk missile strike to knock out coastal radar sites that may have provided targeting information for the attacks. No further antishipping missile attacks have been reported since then, but radar sites can be rebuilt, and the Houthis' stores of such missiles have not been destroyed, so the threat remains. Additional threats have emerged in the past few weeks and may already be affecting international shipping patterns. The recent U.S. government warning about mines in the Bab al-Mandab advised ships to transit the strait only during daylight. Moored mines have a notorious tendency to break free of their tethers and could ramp up the risk to all ships in the area. Another new threat surfaced when **a Saudi frigate was attacked** off the Houthi-controlled port of Hodeida on January 30. **Initially thought to be a suicide speedboat, the attacker is now assumed to have been a remote-controlled drone** craft similar to the type Iranian smugglers employ to pick up contraband from Oman's Musandam Peninsula in the Strait of Hormuz, a Persian Gulf chokepoint. The UAE also has such craft (which it uses for target practice), so it is conceivable that the attack was conducted by a lost Emirati boat recovered by Iran. U.S. warships transiting the Strait of Hormuz are routinely harassed by small boats from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN), but weaponized speedboat drones, known in the military as unmanned surface vehicles (**USVs), change the danger profile into a credible threat**. An attacking USV must be disabled at distance from a warship's hull, a task that could prove exceptionally difficult during a swarming attack by multiple boats. Furthermore, **Iran's familiarity with explosively formed penetrators** (EFPs) **means that such technology may soon be seen at sea**. Fortunately, the difficulty in remotely placing such a narrowly focused explosive against a target's hull mitigates some of the risk; this could explain why the January 30 attack seemed to result in such minor damage, assuming an EFP was on board. Even so, an EFP-laden USV that gets through a ship's defenses could sink it.

#### **ME war goes nuclear – causes extinction**

**Russell 9** – Senior Lecturer in the Department of National Security Affairs @ Naval Postgraduate School

James, “Strategic Stability Reconsidered: Prospects for Nuclear War and Escalation in the Middle East,” Online

**Strategic stability in the region is thus undermined by various factors**: (1) **asymmetric interests** in the bargaining framework that can introduce unpredictable behavior from actors; **(2) the presence of** **non-state actors that introduce unpredictability** into relationships between the antagonists; (3) **incompatible assumptions about** the structure of **the deterrent relationship** that makes the bargaining framework strategically unstable; (4) perceptions by Israel and the United States that its window of opportunity for military action is closing, which could prompt a preventive attack; (5) the prospect that Iran’s response to pre-emptive attacks could involve unconventional weapons, which could prompt escalation by Israel and/or the United States; (6) **the lack of a communications framework to build trust and cooperation among framework participants**. These systemic weaknesses in the coercive bargaining framework all suggest that **escalation** by any the parties **could happen either on purpose or as a result of miscalculation** or the pressures of wartime circumstance. Given these factors, **it is disturbingly easy to imagine scenarios under which a conflict could quickly escalate in which** the regional **antagonists would** consider the **use** of chemical, **biological, or nuclear weapons. It would be a mistake to believe the nuclear taboo can** somehow **magically keep nuclear weapons from being used in the context of an unstable strategic framework**. Systemic asymmetries between actors in fact suggest a certain increase in the probability of war – a war in which **escalation could happen quickly and from a variety of participants.** Once such a war starts, events would likely develop a momentum all their own and decision-making would consequently be shaped in unpredictable ways. The international community must take this possibility seriously, and muster every tool at its disposal to prevent **such an** **outcome**, which **would be a**n unprecedented disaster for the peoples of the region, with **substantial risk for the entire world.**

**Contention 3 is framing.**

#### Affirm.

## Case Full Cards

#### The war in Yemen is an atrocity.

**Hartung 18** William D. [director of the Arms and Security Project at the Center for International Policy. He has also served as a Senior Research Fellow in the New America Foundation's American Strategy Program, and is former director of the Arms Trade Resource Center at the World Policy Institute] “Congress Can Help End the Suffering in Yemen” September 19, 2018. IB

**The Saudi coalition—aided by U.S.-supplied weapons and refueling assistance—has bombed and killed thousands of civilians in Yemen. One recent strike destroyed a school bus, killing 40 children**. Fragments of a Lockheed Martin laser-guided bomb were found near the scene of the attack. And a recent CNN report—based on its own reporting and on-the-ground research by the Yemen-based Mwatana Organization for Human Rights—documents the presence of **fragments of U.S.-made bombs at the sites of a series of strikes on civilian targets, including homes, a factory, a civilian vehicle, and a wedding**. The bombings mentioned above are not isolated incidents. **Saudi air strikes have also targeted hospitals, water treatment plants, and even a funeral**. Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) has argued that “**Either the Pentagon should be 100 percent certain that U.S. weapons and funding aren’t being used to commit war crimes in Yemen, or we should cut off U.S. support right now.**” Unfortunately, earlier this month **the Trump administration** ignored this plea when it—**falsely—certified that the Saudis were taking due care to avoid killing civilians.**The certification was a blatant evasion of a congressional requirement that the United States end its support for the Saudi/UAE-backed war in Yemen if it was determined that the coalition was engaging in the indiscriminate killing of civilians. Members of Congress from both parties were quick to denounce the Trump administration’s decision. Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) said that “Pompeo’s ‘certification’ is a farce. The Saudis deliberately bombed a bus full of children. There is only one moral answer, and that is to end our support for their intervention in Yemen.” Rep. Justin Amash (R-MI) stated simply that “This war in Yemen is unconscionable, and the United States should not be a party to it.” The U.S.-supported Saudi bombings are part of a larger pattern of neglect of human life that includes a blockade that has slowed the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance. **The blockade has put millions of Yemenis at risk of starvation, and attacks on civilian infrastructure have sparked the largest cholera outbreak in living memory**. Meanwhile**, a Saudi/UAE effort to wrest control of the port of Hodeidah from the Houthis threatens to dramatically worsen an already horrific toll of civilian suffering**, according to private aid groups and UN officials. Both sides of the war have committed heinous human right abuses—all the more reason to press for peace.

#### **Other countries military aid arms now, but the US is still a holdout.**

Angela **Dewan 18** [Digital News Producer with CNN International in London] “These are the countries still selling arms to Saudi Arabia” November 23, 2018. https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/22/middleeast/arms-exports-saudi-arabia-intl/index.html IB

**A number of countries have restricted arms sales to Saudi Arabia since the kingdom began airstrikes on Yemen** in 2015, in a war that the UN describes as the world's worst man-made humanitarian disaster. **Calls for more restrictions** on arms exports **have been growing**, **particularly in Europe**, **since the killing of** journalist Jamal **Khashoggi** at the Saudi consulate in Turkey last month. US President Donald **Trump, however, has repeatedly pointed to the US' lucrative arms deals with the Saudis as a reason to stand by the kingdom**. **Denmark and Finland** on Thursday **became the latest countries to suspend new arms deals** with Saudi Arabia. Denmark's Foreign Ministry said it was freezing new deals over both Khashoggi and Yemen, while the Finnish Foreign Ministry mentioned only Yemen. Finland also banned new arms sales to the United Arab Emirates, which is part of the Saudi-led coalition in the conflict. **Their announcements came** just **two days after Germany** said it was stopping all arms transfers to the kingdom. Denmark and Finland are not major suppliers of weapons to Saudi Arabia, but Germany certainly is. It had already suspended new arms deals to Saudi Arabia, but on Monday it widened that ban to include the transfers of weapons on existing orders as well. So where is Saudi Arabia getting its weapons from? **Arms deals are often done in secret or with little publicity**. **The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute** (SIPRI) **tries to track deals** involving major weapons, **and a database of Saudi imports from the last decade shows the United States as the biggest supplier**, followed by the United Kingdom, France, Spain and then Germany. **But a lot of exporters still selling to the Saudis have dramatically decreased their supply in recent years**. **The U**nited **K**ingdom, for example, transferred arms worth an estimated $843 million in 2016 but almost **halved that value** to $436 million last year, according to SIPRI. (The database uses values constant with 1990 prices to eliminate currency fluctuations and inflation.) **French exports** of major weapons to Saudi Arabia were worth $174 million in 2015 but **dropped** to $91 million in 2016 and $27 million last year. The value of **Spanish exports also dramatically decreased** in that time period, but the Spanish government confirmed this year it would go ahead with arms deals it had previously suggested it would freeze, bowing to pressure from Spanish manufacturers, according to reports. US dwarfs other exporters **Despite these decreases, the overall value of Saudi weapons imports actually increased by 38% between 2016 and 2017**. That was **almost entirely because of a huge uptick** **in transfers from the U**nited **S**tates, **which almost doubled its exports in terms of value** from $1.8 billion to $3.4 billion in that time. Germany also multiplied its exports from $14 million to $105 million, although it is expected to be much lower this year following its suspension. Overall, **no country comes close to the United States in major weapons supply.** **Over the past five years, for example, the US accounted for 61% of major arms sales to the Saudis.** The UK was a distant second, with a 23% share, while France, in third place, was a mere 4%. In a statement on Tuesday, **Trump said that canceling major arms contracts with the Saudis would be foolish, and that "Russia and China would be the enormous beneficiaries" if the US halted its sales. China supplies a negligible amount of major weaponry to Saudi Arabia**, SIPRI data shows, but it is on the increase. **Russia supplies so little it is not included in the organization's database.** "**Russia has tried hard** in the past 10 to 15 years **to get into the large Saudi arms market, but it has not been very successful.** Saudi Arabia has acquired Russian rifles and may have bought some other items, but such deals have been very small," said Pieter Wezeman, a senior researcher with SIPRI's arms transfers and military expenditure program. "China has made some more substantial inroads into the Saudi arms market, in particular selling armed drones," Wezeman said. "The details are shady and we may very well have underestimated China's role as an arms exporter to Saudi Arabia. But **China doesn't come anywhere near the USA, UK or even France as arms suppliers.** Still, the important point here is that Saudi Arabia has explored the possibility of diversifying its supplier base."

#### **Military aid greenlights war.**

John **Hudson 15** [analyst @ Foreign Policy] “Flexing New Powers, Congress to Review Arms Shipments to Saudi Arabia” December 10, 2015. https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/10/flexing-new-powers-congress-to-review-arms-shipments-to-saudi-arabia/ IB

The organizations leading the charge against the weapons sale include **Oxfam America, Amnesty International USA, and Human Rights Watch**. The groups **accuse Washington of being complicit in what they call Saudi Arabia’s “indiscriminate” airstrikes in Yemen where about 2,500 civilians have died in the fighting**. “**Arms transfers give a green light to indefinite military intervention, substantially relieving the pressure on the coalition and the government of Yemen to agree to a ceasefire,” Oxfam** America **senior** humanitarian **policy adviser** Scott **Paul told Foreign Policy**.

#### However, Ending Arm Sales grounds the RSAF

Bruce **Riedel 18** [Senior Fellow - Foreign Policy, Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, Center for Middle East Policy, Director - The Intelligence Project] “After Khashoggi, US arms sales to the Saudis are essential leverage” October 10, 2018. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/10/10/after-khashoggi-us-arms-sales-to-the-saudis-are-essential-leverage / IB

**The Saudis have continued to buy spare parts, munitions, and technical support for the enormous amount of American equipment they have bought from previous administrations. The Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) is entirely dependent on American** and British **support for its air fleet of F15 fighter jets, Apache helicopters, and Tornado aircraft. If either Washington or London halts the flow of logistics, the RSAF will be grounded**. The Saudi army and the Saudi Arabian National Guard are similarly dependent on foreigners (the Saudi Arabian National Guard is heavily dependent on Canada). The same is also true for the Saudis allies like Bahrain.

#### That resolves mass violence and ends air strikes on civilians

Daniel L. **Byman 18**, 12-5-2018, [Daniel Byman is a senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, where his research focuses on counterterrorism and Middle East security. He previously served as the research director of the center. He is also senior associate dean for undergraduate affairs at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service and a professor in its Security Studies Program. Previously, Byman served as a staff member with the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States (“The 9/11 Commission”) and the Joint 9/11 Inquiry Staff of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees. Prior to that, Byman was a policy analyst and the director for research in the Center for Middle East Public Policy at the RAND Corporation and worked for the U.S. government. His most recent book is "Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement: What Everyone Needs to Know" (Oxford University Press, 2015). He is the author of several other books on counterterrorism, state sponsorship of terrorism, and conflict and terrorism in the Middle East.] "Yemen after a Saudi withdrawal: How much would change?," Brookings, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/12/05/yemen-after-a-saudi-withdrawal-how-much-would-change/> RE

**By itself, an end to the Saudi bombing campaign and blockade would be a milestone. The air strikes have killed thousands of Yemenis, including many children. The bombing also destroyed much of Yemen’s already-tottering infrastructure, making medical care and food distribution even more difficult. Less visibly, but more deadly, the Saudi blockade of many of Yemen’s ports and airport—done in the name of stopping Iranian arms from entering Yemen—has prevented food and humanitarian aid from entering the country as well. This has contributed to the massive famine.**

#### Three Impacts:

#### First is ending war crimes against civilians

#### **Cutting supplies is a key response to Yemen.**

**Mohamed and Shaif 16** Rasha Mohamed is Amnesty International’s Yemen researcher. Follow her on Twitter at: @RashaMoh2. Rawan Shaif is a freelance journalist covering Yemen. “Saudi Arabia Is Committing War Crimes in Yemen” March 25, 2016. https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/25/civilian-casualties-war-crimes-saudi-arabia-yemen-war/ IB

These **gruesome scenes are just** two **examples of the horrors that Yemen has seen since the Saudi-led military coalition launched its air campaign** in March 2015. On one side of this war is the Houthi armed group, often referred to as the “Popular Committees,” which is supported by armed groups loyal to former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and parts of the army. On the other side is the military coalition led by Saudi Arabia and allied forces on the ground, usually referred to as muqawama, or the “resistance,” fighting on behalf of Hadi and his government. **The Houthis and their allies** — armed groups loyal to Saleh — **are the declared targets of the coalition’s 1-year-old air campaign. In reality**, however, **it is the civilians**, such as Basrallah and Rubaid, and their children, **who are predominantly the victims of this protracted war**. Hundreds of civilians have been killed in airstrikes while asleep in their homes, when going about their daily activities, or in the very places where they had sought refuge from the conflict. **The U**nited **S**tates, **Britain, and others**, meanwhile**, have continued to supply a steady stream of weaponry and logistical support to Saudi Arabia and its coalition.** One year on, it still remains unclear who is winning the war. Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners claim to have regained control of more than 80 percent of the country, but the Houthis remain in control of the key strongholds of Sanaa, Ibb, and Taiz. Moreover, armed groups such as al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State are gaining ground and support in the south and southeast parts of the country, taking advantage of the security vacuum to consolidate their power. One thing is clear: Yemeni civilians are losing the most. This **wanton disregard for the lives of civilians continues unabated**... At approximately 11:30 a.m. on March 15, the market in Khamees, a town in northern Yemen, was destroyed in two apparent airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition, claiming the lives of 106 civilians, including 24 children. One man, Hasan Masafi, who spoke to us over the phone, couldn’t even grieve his 18-year-old son’s death because he couldn’t locate his whole body. “We were only able to find his right leg,” he said. **The facts speak for themselves, and evidence of violations of international humanitarian law cannot be dismissed as mere hearsay**, as the British government has attempted to do with U.N. reports. **Amnesty International and other organizations have presented compelling evidence** over the past year that indicates all parties to the Yemen conflict have committed war crimes. But **some countries do not want to see the evidence that is staring them in the face**. **Flooding the region with arms is akin to adding fuel to the fire**. Attacks like the one on Khamees market have become the norm for civilians in Yemen. More than 3,000 civilians have been killed during the conflict, according to the United Nations. Thousands of others have been injured, more than 2.5 million have been displaced, and 83 percent of Yemenis are reliant on humanitarian assistance. **There is barely a single corner of Yemen or a single soul that hasn’t in some way been touched and scarred by this war. The Saudi-led coalition’s response to reports of civilians unlawfully killed** — and homes, schools, and infrastructure destroyed — **has been to constantly repeat the mantra that “only military targets are hit by airstrikes.” The situation on the ground tells a very different story. With each unlawful coalition airstrike, it becomes more evident that Saudi Arabia and other coalition members either do not care about respecting international humanitarian law or are incapable of adhering to its fundamental rules. And yet,** Britain, **the U**nited **S**tates, and France **continue to authorize lucrative arms deals** with the Saudi-led coalition — apparently without batting an eyelash. Since November 2013, the U.S. Defense Department has authorized more than $35.7 billion in major arms deals to Saudi Arabia.Since November 2013, the U.S. Defense Department has authorized more than $35.7 billion in major arms deals to Saudi Arabia. This includes the announcement of a $1.29 billion U.S. arms sale to Saudi Arabia in November 2015 that will supply Riyadh with 18,440 bombs and 1,500 warheads. Meanwhile, during his time in office, British Prime Minister David Cameron has overseen the sale of more than $9 billion worth of weaponry to Saudi Arabia, including nearly $4 billion since airstrikes on Yemen began, according to the Campaign Against Arms Trade, a London-based NGO. Regardless of when the weapons used by coalition forces in Yemen were acquired — whether before or since the start of the air campaign — the countries that supplied them have a responsibility to ensure that they are not facilitating violations of international law. While the relentless coalition airstrikes account for most of the civilian deaths in the conflict, civilians also find themselves increasingly trapped in the crossfire between Houthi and anti-Houthi armed groups, with each side supported by different units of the now-divided armed forces. A case in point is the southern city of Taiz, which has suffered restrictions on movement of food and medical supplies since at least November. Attacks continue to maim and kill civilians, including children. When Amnesty International visited the city in July 2015, we witnessed the irresponsible conduct of fighters firsthand and documented 30 ground attacks, which led to more than 100 casualties. One of those victims was 12-year-old Ayham Anees, who was killed in an apparent Houthi mortar attack in May. Munther Mohamed, Anees’s uncle, described rushing to the scene after hearing children’s screams following the attack. “I also saw my nephew Ayham, whose head had separated from his body,” he said. “I had told the children to play in the middle of the alley because it was the safest place, but it was not.” The crisis in Taiz has only gotten worse in recent days. While the Houthis have been partially pushed out of the city center, they still maintain control of the majority of the governorate. Where the Houthis have been forced to retreat, they have laid landmines — internationally banned weapons that have already claimed dozens of civilian lives. Last week, the spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition announced that operations are nearing their end in Yemen. What that means in practice is not yet clear, as airstrikes continue to pound the country. But accountability doesn’t take a back seat just because military operations may be winding down. **It’s time to bring these crimes against civilians to an end**. With peace talks expected to take place in Kuwait on April 18, all parties must prioritize several crucial conditions: protecting the long-term interests of ordinary Yemenis, ensuring an end to the horrors of the past year, and guaranteeing that those responsible will be held accountable. All those civilian lives lost as a result of violations won’t be forgotten, even if this chapter of war closes. It’s too late for the children of Salah Basrallah. But **there’s no excuse not to do the right thing now**. **States should act immediately to ensure that none of Yemen’s warring parties is supplied — either directly or indirectly — with weapons, munitions, military equipment, or technology that would be used in any furtherance of the conflict**. And they must do everything in their power to ensure there is an independent international investigation into violations by all sides aimed at ensuring justice and reparation — for Salah Basrallah and the thousands of other victims of this deadly war.

#### Second, revoking support results in peace

Doug **Bandow, 12-18**-2018, [senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan and editor of the political magazine Inquiry. He writes regularly for leading publications such as Fortune magazine, National Interest, the Wall Street Journal, and the Washington Times. Bandow speaks frequently at academic conferences, on college campuses, and to business groups. Bandow has been a regular commentator on ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News Channel, and MSNBC. He holds a JD from Stanford University.] "It's Time to End U.S. Support for the Saudi War on Yemen," Cato Institute, https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/its-time-end-us-support-saudi-war-yemen RE

**The ongoing peace talks offer some hope. They have advanced further than previous attempts, and have reached some positive agreements, such as prisoner exchange**, though implementation remains. **The fact that Western nations have turned against the war encouraged the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to start making concessions, necessary to reach a more enduring peace. So long as Riyadh can count on a blank check from Washington**—it turns out the United States wasn’t even charging enough for refueling Saudi aircraft—**the kingdom has no reason to temper its policy. Which means the administration should take the next step and end all support for the war; MbS and his companions should bear the full burden of what amounts to imperial warmongering.**

#### It signals an end to the war and fosters peace talks

Mohamad **Bazzi 18**, 9-30-18, [associate professor of journalism at New York University and the former Middle East bureau chief at Newsday.] "**The United States Could End the War in Yemen If It Wanted To**," Atlantic, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/09/iran-yemen-saudi-arabia/571465/> RE

After the Trump administration’s endorsement this month, the Saudi-UAE alliance has even less incentive to prevent civilian casualties and new humanitarian disasters. **Saudi Arabia and its allies are more likely to accept a peace process if it is clear that the United States won’t support an open-ended war in Yemen and won’t provide the military assistance required to keep the war apparatus going.** But Trump has shown little sign of pressuring his Saudi and Emirati allies, least of all over Yemen. The only realistic check left is in Congress, where more voices are asking why the world’s most powerful country is helping to perpetuate the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

#### **Third, winding down the conflict prevents escalation**

#### **prevents escalation - Proximity to vital sea lanes makes escalation likely- ship attacks draw in foreign powers**

**Vaughan and Henderson 17**

(Cmdr. Jeremy Vaughan, U.S. Navy, is a Federal Executive Fellow at The Washington Institute who has completed multiple deployments to the Persian Gulf. Simon Henderson is the Institute's Baker Fellow and director of its Gulf and Energy Policy Program. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/bab-al-mandab-shipping-chokepoint-under-threat> 3-1)

On February 9, the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence issued an alert warning commercial vessels about the risk of mines in the Bab al-Mandab Strait: "**The U.S. Government has reason to believe** in late January, **mines were laid by Houthi rebels** in Yemeni territorial waters in the Red Sea close to the mouth of Mocha harbor." The alert follows a number of other troubling incidents in the strategic waterway over the past few months. Saudi and Emirati naval vessels have been attacked while trying to enforce a blockade on the Iranian-supported Houthi rebels who control large parts of Yemen. And last October, patrolling U.S. Navy ships were targeted as well. Diplomatic efforts to end Yemen's civil war appear to be getting nowhere, and the fighting on land is largely deadlocked, though forces loyal to the internationally recognized government of President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi recently captured Mocha port near the Bab al-Mandab. Iran's motives for helping the Houthis are unclear but have the effect of challenging Saudi Arabia, which views the fighting as a proxy war. **More incidents at sea, especially involving civilian shipping, could further internationalize the conflict and spur other actors to intervene**. In terms of capability and tradition, **the leadership role in any such effort to safeguard freedom of passage would necessarily be taken by the U.S. Navy.** A KEY CHOKEPOINT In a 2014 web post describing heavily transited oil chokepoints in the Middle East and elsewhere, the U.S. Energy Information Administration noted that **blocking such waterways, even temporarily, "can lead to substantial increases in total energy costs and world energy prices**." The **Bab al-Mandab**, which controls access to the Red Sea and the southern end of the Suez Canal, **is particularly crucial at present because of Egypt's reliance on imported liquefied natural gas to maintain its electricity supplies**. One LNG tanker destined for Egypt transits the strait each week. If passage were impeded, those shipments -- and all other vessels heading to Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea -- would have no alternative but to make the long voyage around the southern tip of Africa. The Bab al-Mandab is around ten miles wide at its narrowest point, where the Yemeni island of Perim protrudes into the waterway toward Eritrea and Djibouti. Under an international traffic separation scheme, northbound international shipping uses a two-mile-wide lane on the Arabian side just west of Perim, while southbound traffic uses a similar lane on the African side. Separated by just over a mile of water, the two lanes work well for international traffic but are ignored by smaller local ships and fishing vessels. More than sixty commercial ships transit the strait every day, and several passenger cruise liners use the route as well. THE THREATS **Houthi rebels have attacked warships in or near the strait on at least four occasions since last fall**. On October 1, antishipping cruise missiles fired from the Houthi-controlled coastline severely damaged the Swift, an Emirati-operated troop landing and logistics ship. In the following weeks, the destroyer USS Mason successfully defended itself against three similar attacks. The U.S. Navy launched a Tomahawk missile strike to knock out coastal radar sites that may have provided targeting information for the attacks. No further antishipping missile attacks have been reported since then, but radar sites can be rebuilt, and the Houthis' stores of such missiles have not been destroyed, so the threat remains. Additional threats have emerged in the past few weeks and may already be affecting international shipping patterns. The recent U.S. government warning about mines in the Bab al-Mandab advised ships to transit the strait only during daylight. Moored mines have a notorious tendency to break free of their tethers and could ramp up the risk to all ships in the area. Another new threat surfaced when **a Saudi frigate was attacked** off the Houthi-controlled port of Hodeida on January 30. **Initially thought to be a suicide speedboat, the attacker is now assumed to have been a remote-controlled drone** craft similar to the type Iranian smugglers employ to pick up contraband from Oman's Musandam Peninsula in the Strait of Hormuz, a Persian Gulf chokepoint. The UAE also has such craft (which it uses for target practice), so it is conceivable that the attack was conducted by a lost Emirati boat recovered by Iran. U.S. warships transiting the Strait of Hormuz are routinely harassed by small boats from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN), but weaponized speedboat drones, known in the military as unmanned surface vehicles (**USVs), change the danger profile into a credible threat**. An attacking USV must be disabled at distance from a warship's hull, a task that could prove exceptionally difficult during a swarming attack by multiple boats. Furthermore, **Iran's familiarity with explosively formed penetrators** (EFPs) **means that such technology may soon be seen at sea**. Fortunately, the difficulty in remotely placing such a narrowly focused explosive against a target's hull mitigates some of the risk; this could explain why the January 30 attack seemed to result in such minor damage, assuming an EFP was on board. Even so, an EFP-laden USV that gets through a ship's defenses could sink it.

#### **ME war goes nuclear – causes extinction**

**Russell 9** – Senior Lecturer in the Department of National Security Affairs @ Naval Postgraduate School

James, “Strategic Stability Reconsidered: Prospects for Nuclear War and Escalation in the Middle East,” Online

**Strategic stability in the region is thus undermined by various factors**: (1) **asymmetric interests** in the bargaining framework that can introduce unpredictable behavior from actors; **(2) the presence of** **non-state actors that introduce unpredictability** into relationships between the antagonists; (3) **incompatible assumptions about** the structure of **the deterrent relationship** that makes the bargaining framework strategically unstable; (4) perceptions by Israel and the United States that its window of opportunity for military action is closing, which could prompt a preventive attack; (5) the prospect that Iran’s response to pre-emptive attacks could involve unconventional weapons, which could prompt escalation by Israel and/or the United States; (6) **the lack of a communications framework to build trust and cooperation among framework participants**. These systemic weaknesses in the coercive bargaining framework all suggest that **escalation** by any the parties **could happen either on purpose or as a result of miscalculation** or the pressures of wartime circumstance. Given these factors, **it is disturbingly easy to imagine scenarios under which a conflict could quickly escalate in which** the regional **antagonists would** consider the **use** of chemical, **biological, or nuclear weapons. It would be a mistake to believe the nuclear taboo can** somehow **magically keep nuclear weapons from being used in the context of an unstable strategic framework**. Systemic asymmetries between actors in fact suggest a certain increase in the probability of war – a war in which **escalation could happen quickly and from a variety of participants.** Once such a war starts, events would likely develop a momentum all their own and decision-making would consequently be shaped in unpredictable ways. The international community must take this possibility seriously, and muster every tool at its disposal to prevent **such an** **outcome**, which **would be a**n unprecedented disaster for the peoples of the region, with **substantial risk for the entire world.**

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/us-approves-500-million-missile-sale-saudi-arabia-amid-yemen-war-1076092>