# Sjostrom/Verska – St. James Quarters Neg

## Contention 1 – Filling the Void

#### Ali Mourad indicates in 2018 that:

Ali Mourad, 6-26-2018, "Saudi Arabia Relies on Mercenaries, Militias and the US to Win Wars," MintPress News, https://www.mintpressnews.com/saudi-arabia-relies-on-mercenaries-militias-and-the-us-to-win-wars/244751/, Date Accessed 2-23-2019 // JM

Later, Saudi Arabia’s military weakness would emerge in the 2009 “Saada War” against Yemen’s Houthi rebels. The latter were able to take [control of several locations](http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2009/me_egypt0983_12_23.asp) and towns inside the Saudi Kingdom, [reportedly killing dozens of Saudi soldiers](http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/12/22/94968.html) in the ensuing battles. As for Saudi Arabia’s ongoing war on Yemen, launched in March of 2015, the inherent weakness of Saudi ground forces manifested itself clearly through the Gulf kingdom’s [heavy reliance on foreign mercenaries](http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hundreds-columbian-mercenaries-fight-saudi-led-coalition-yemen-964433925) to fight on behalf of its armed forces, the failure to progress on fronts adjacent to the border, and the inability of Saudi forces to hold positions and villages, despite support from the Saudi Royal Air Force. Despite Saudi Arabia failures, it has yet to establish minimum requirements for its regular army, instead relying on a strategy of using outside agents, often armed militias with Wahhabi ideology, to complete missions. This factor, coupled with a failure to invest in domestic weapons production despite the availability of money and raw materials, has left the Saudi military heavily reliant on foreign aid to secure arms, making the country a hugely profitable market for the Western arms dealers.

#### Saad Gul indicates that unfortunately, ending arms sales doesn’t end private military contractor involvement. He argues empirically that:

Saad Gul (Law Clerk to The Hon. John C. Martin, Chief Judge, North Carolina Court of Appeals. JD Wake Forest University School of Law, BA Davidson College), The Secretary Will Deny All Knowledge of Your Actions: The Use of Private Military Contractors and the Implications for State and Political Accountability, 10 Lewis & Clark L. Rev. 287 (2006) https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/lewclr10&div=18&id=&page=

The use of innovative financial procedures to utilize PMC services in furtherance of U.S. foreign policy is particularly ominous, because Congress has often relied on its power of the purse to define the permissible parameters of the nation's policy, e.g. in Haiti, Somalia, the Balkans, and Rwanda." 6 Indeed, Congressional use of the appropriations power is one of the last meaningful constraints on virtually unbridled Presidential authority as Commander in Chief in the arena of military affairs-the utilization of financial smoke and mirrors to evade Congress effectively eviscerates this '17 power. The use of contractors to escape legal constraints is hardly a recent innovation. During the Vietnam era, a Pentagon official described one contractor, Vinnell, as "our own little army in Vietnam," explaining that "we used them to do things we either didn't have the manpower to do ourselves, or because of legal problems."'18 Worse still, the ostensibly private status of PMCs means that they can be used to skirt Congressional mandates; the Pentagon used them in the Balkans to stage an end run around the Congressionally imposed cap on U.S. troop deployments in the region. 19 Similarly, the United States has been able to evade statutory prohibitions on offering military assistance to certain nations by routing such aid through PMCs. I2° Congressional oversight becomes an even more distant prospect when PMC contracts are routed through a variety of channels, including the Commerce, Interior, and State Departments.' 21 For instance, many of CACI's contractors at Abu Ghraib were funded through a Department of the Interior Contract for Information Technology Services.' 22 With such bureaucratic sleights of hand, meaningful oversight is impossible. Even if technically legal, such actions serve to significantly dilute Congressional oversight of U.S. military activity around the globe.

#### Private military contractors, or mercenaries, are worse than the US arms sales for a couple reasons. First, they have zero accountability which magnifies civilian casualties. Sean Mcfate indicates that:

Sean Mcfate (senior fellow at the Atlantic Council and the author of the novel Deep Black.), 8-12-2016, "America's Addiction to Mercenaries," Atlantic, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/08/iraq-afghanistan-contractor-pentagon-obama/495731/> [mr.ghs]

Private military contractors perform tasks once thought to be inherently governmental, such as raising foreign armies, conducting intelligence analysis and trigger-pulling. During the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, they constituted about 15 percent of all contractors. But don’t let the numbers fool you. Their failures have an outsized impact on U.S. strategy. When a squad of Blackwater contractors killed 17 civilians at a Bagdad traffic circle in 2007, it provoked a firestorm in Iraq and at home, marking one of the nadirs of that war. Contractors also encourage mission creep, because contractors don't count as "boots on the ground." Congress does not consider them to be troops, and therefore contractors do not count again troop-level caps in places like Iraq. The U.S. government does not track contractor numbers in war zones. As a result, the government can put more people on the ground than it reports to the American people, encouraging mission creep and rendering contractors virtually invisible. For decades now, the centrality of contracting in American warfare—both on the battlefield and in support of those on the battlefield—has been growing. During World War II, about 10 percent of America’s armed forces were contracted. During the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, that proportion leapt to 50 percent. This big number signals a disturbing trend: the United States has developed a dependency on the private sector to wage war, a strategic vulnerability. Today, America can no longer go to war without the private sector. Why did this happen? During the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, policymakers assumed a quick and easy victory. As former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said in 2002, the Iraq War would take “five days or five weeks or five months, but it certainly isn't going to last any longer than that.” When these wars did not end in mere months, the all-volunteer force found it could not recruit enough volunteers to sustain two long wars. That left policymakers with three terrible options. First, withdraw and concede the fight to the terrorists (unthinkable). Second, institute a Vietnam-like draft to fill the ranks (political suicide). Third, bring in contractors to fill the ranks. Not surprisingly, both the Bush and Obama administrations opted for contractors. Today, 75 percent of U.S. forces in Afghanistan are contracted. Only about 10 percent of these contractors are armed, but this matters not. The greater point is that America is waging a war largely via contractors, and U.S. combat forces would be impotent without them. If this trend continues, we might see 80 or 90 percent of the force contracted in future wars. Contracting is big business, too. In the 2014 fiscal year, the Pentagon obligated $285 billion to federal contracts—more money than all other government agencies received, combined. That’s equal to 8 percent of federal spending, and three and a half times Britain’s entire defense budget. About 45 percent of those contracts were for services, including private military contractors. This means that contractors are making the ultimate sacrifice. Today, more contractors are killed in combat than soldiers—a stunning turnaround from the start of the wars Iraq and Afghanistan, when fewer than 10 percent of casualties were contractors. By 2010, more contractors were dying than troops. However, the real number of contractor deaths —versus the “official” tally—remains unknown. Even more troubling: Most of those fighting for the United States abroad aren’t even Americans. Private military companies are multinational corporations that recruit globally. When I worked in the industry, my colleagues came from almost every continent. According to a recent Pentagon report, just over 33 percent of private military contractors in Afghanistan are U.S. citizens. Many of the larger private military companies also hire local “subs” or sub-contractors, often invisible to U.S. government officials and reporters. In 2010, during the height of the wars, a Senate investigation found evidence that these “subs” were linked to murder, kidnapping, bribery, and anti-Coalition activities. Similarly, in a 2010 report titled “Warlord, Inc.,” the House of Representatives found that the Department of Defense had hired warlords for security services. What happens to these subs when the big contractor goes home? In some notable, alarming cases, they go into business for themselves, breeding mercenary markets in the wake of a U.S. intervention. For example, a U.S. Senate investigation in 2010 found that the British private military company ArmorGroup sub-contracted two Afghan military companies that it called “Mr. White” and “Mr. Pink” to provide a guard force. The investigation found evidence that they were linked to murder, kidnapping, bribery, and anti-coalition activities. Giving birth to such markets is just one of the many ways that contractors encourage dangerous policymaking. Unlike the Pentagon or CIA, private military companies [ they] do not report to Congress, circumventing democratic accountability of the armed forces. Worse, they shield themselves from inquiry by invoking the need to protect proprietary information and are not subject to Freedom of Information Act requests, unlike the military or intelligence community. This makes them ideal for dangerous missions requiring plausible deniability. Sometimes, even Congress can’t find out what these firms do.

#### McFate continues that:

Sean Mcfate (senior fellow at the Atlantic Council and the author of the novel Deep Black.), 8-12-2016, "America's Addiction to Mercenaries," Atlantic, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/08/iraq-afghanistan-contractor-pentagon-obama/495731/> [mr.ghs]

 This effectively lowers the barriers of entry into conflict, inviting moral hazard. Take, for example, Obama’s strategy to defeat the Islamic State, essentially a “light footprint” campaign that (theoretically) involves few ground troops. It eschews the Bush administration’s big and costly military presence overseas, and shuns the quagmire of “nation-building.” Instead, in theaters ranging from the Middle East to South Asia, it relies on precision strikes from U.S. aircraft, clandestine ground units, and local allies. However, you cannot hold ground with airplanes, special-forces raids, and unreliable partners. Terrorists will return once U.S. forces leave. This means you can never achieve victory, when your victory conditions are “deter” and “defeat” ISIS. In response, the Obama administration has quietly accelerated deployments. From an initial 274 troops sent to Iraq in 2014, the White House has crept up to 4,647 troops, the maximum allowed under the current troop cap. But these troops are only half the story. The U.S. government has surged another 4,970 contractors onto the ground. And a footprint of nearly 10,000 doesn’t look so light. Contractors, then, allow policymakers to wage war outside of the public eye. Their deaths rarely attract headlines the way those of fallen American soldiers do. And yet the consequences are no less far-reaching for being hidden. America’s reliance on contractors to fight its wars has launched a new breed of mercenary around the world. 2015 saw major mercenary activity in Yemen, Nigeria, Ukraine, Syria, and possibly Iraq. Mercenaries in these places are not new; what is new is the increased size and expanded scope of their work. For example, in Nigeria, they pushed out Boko Haram, an Islamic terrorist group, in a few months. The Nigerian military could not achieve this in six years. [as] No international laws exist to regulate the mercenary industry. What we’re left with: If anyone with enough money can wage war for any reason they want to, then new superpowers will emerge: the ultra-rich and multinational corporations. Oil companies and oligarchs should not have armies.

#### Second, private military contractors can operate any equipment giving a huge boost to the possibility of a fill-in. Zvi Bar-El wrote SIX DAYS AGO that PMCS :

Zvi Bar'El, 2-17-2019, "Yemen's war is a mercenary heaven. Are Israelis reaping the profits?," haaretz, https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-yemen-s-war-is-a-mercenary-heaven-are-israelis-reaping-the-profits-1.6938348, Date Accessed 2-23-2019 // JM

In September, London-based Al-Khaleej Online published a long article about Israel’s involvement in training Colombian and Nepalese combatants, who were recruited by the UAE for the war in Yemen. The report cites sources in a U.S. House Intelligence Committee who said the foreign fighers’ recruiter was Mohammed Dahlan, who was a member of Fatah’s central committee and head of intelligence in Gaza. Dahlan was ousted from Fatah in 2011 and later moved to the UAE, where he became the advisor of the crown prince and the liaison and mediator between the UAE security forces and Israel. The report also says that Israel set up special training bases in the Negev, where the mercenaries were trained by Israeli combatants. Dahlan occasionally visited those camps, in which the UAE flag was hoisted. The mercenaries later took part in the war on the port town Hodeidah and other fighting zones in Yemen. The site’s sources said Israel also sold bombs and missiles to Saudi Arabia, some of which are banned. Recently it was reported and later denied that Israel also sold Saudi Arabia combat drones and intends to sell it Iron Dome systems as well. Many reports have been written about Israeli companies like the NSO group, which is suspected of selling Saudi Arabia Pegasus spyware accused of helping trace and survey Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, or the AGT company owned by the Israeli businessman Mati Kochavi, which in 2007 won the $6 billion bid to set up surveillance and monitoring systems in Abu Dhabi. But what remains a mystery is to what extent Israeli technology served the fighting forces in Yemen. Another company, Spearhead Operations Group, which was set up by Israeli Avraham Golan and is registered in the United States, was responsible for assassinating Yemenite clergyman Anssaf Ali Mayo in December 2015. Mayo was one of the leaders of the Yemeni reform party, which is affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood. The latter is classified in the UAE as a terror organization. Golan confirmed to BuzzFeed in October that “there was a plan for targeted assassinations in Yemen. I ran it. We did it. The plan was under the UAE auspices as part of the Arab coalition.” Golan added that during the months his company was active in Yemen he was in charge of several “high profile” assassinations and that the United States needs a murder plan based on the model he set up. According to BuzzFeed, those who actually carried out the assassinations were apparently former combatants in top American commandos. Israelis aren’t the only ones selling military services to the UAE and Saudi Arabia to go to the war in Yemen. Private American companies, senior officers and ex-CIA agents found their bonanza in these two states, just as private companies made a huge fortune out of “military” services they provided the Iraqi government after the occupation. These services include active warfare and intelligence gathering as well as commanding mercenary units or combatant units from Saudi Arabia and UAE. For example, the former American general Stephen Toumajan is serving as the UAE’s commander of the Joint Aviation Command and was the chief of a combat helicopter unit that fought in Yemen. Toumajan isn’t the American security agencies’ subcontractor, he wears the UAE air force uniform and in interviews he speaks of himself as a general in the state’s army. Toumajan represents a new stage in the privatization of the war in Yemen and in other states in which the United States is involved but isn’t taking part in the battles. A foreign partnership in the armies of Arab states isn’t new. Pakistani pilots for example fly Saudi planes, the Presidential Guard commander in the UAE is Australian general Mike Hindmarsh. Companies from all over the world including Israel run advanced intelligence systems, so the term “mercenaries” has evolved from armed combatant units from poor countries who come to improve their standard of living to a role filled with extensive activities including setting up combat units, commanding them, [and] planning war moves, purchasing equipment and managing budgets. The difference between sending combatants who serve in the armies of foreign countries, like Iranian and Russian forces in Syria, or forces of the Western coalition fighting in Afghanistan, and mercenaries who are recruited privately, is blurry. Regular forces acting in foreign states are subjected to the laws of the state that sends them, compared to mercenaries, who act at the instructions of the recruiting state. But this is also the problem with employing them. These forces need a legal permit, which is given after a parliamentary debate or by legislation, and then the state can decide on the kind of fighting its forces will be involved in and the length of time they’ll stay on foreign soil. In contrast, mercenaries, whether combatants or in air conditioned high tech companies in Dubai or Riyadh, are subject only to the terms of their employment contract, unless they pass information to a foreign state without a permit. An example for this is the United States House of Representatives’ decision to ban the involvement of U.S. troops in the war in Yemen (although intelligence cooperation is still permitted). This is a declarative decision intended to convey to President Donald Trump and the Saudi crown prince that the U.S. no longer supports this war, which has generated one of the greatest humanitarian tragedies, despite its description as a struggle against Iran. The United States doesn’t have military forces that are active in the war in Yemen, but an “army” of mercenaries, which includes numerous Americans, may continue to act unhindered as long as it is financed by Arab states. The senior mercenaries have not ruled out the need for the cannon fodder recruited by the fighting states from the ever available stock in poor states. Many Yemenites have avoided joining their state’s army to fight the Houthi insurgents, they prefer to be mercenaries of the Saudi army for the same cause. Much of it could be due to wages as a soldier in the Yemeni army earns some $100 a month on average, whereas a mercenary’s monthly wage is $350-$500 plus some $130 for every attack. Columbian combatants earn three or four times what they would make in their army, while Afghan combatants who are recruited from the thousands of Afghan refugees in Iran to fight in Syria are assured a $250 wage each month. More importantly, they may be eligible for Iranian citizenship along with their families. The most expensive mercenaries are from elite American units like the Navy Seals, army rangers and the Marines. According to the silentprofessionals.org site, a professional with training as a sniper who gets a job in Afghanistan or Iraq can make some $544 a day plus perks and bonuses. Yemenites or Columbians cannot get this coveted post even if they are gifted snipers, as the key requirement is having an American citizenship. However this doesn’t mean private companies won’t agree to employ talented snipers from other states, after all, the supply and demand principle works in this market too. Mercenaries may be private people or companies that don’t represent governments, but often the states they come from are suspected of initiating or at least turning a blind eye to their activity. The Israeli Defense Ministry or Mossad may claim people who served in their ranks and are now private contractors of the UAE or South American states are not working in Israel’s name, and as long as they don’t break the laws of their host state there is no reason to put them on trial. But it is doubtful whether anyone would accept this argument when such a mercenary, whether an independent contractor or a private company, acts in foreign states in a way that serves Israel’s interests, such as the war against Iran. Thus there are those who argue that if Israel cannot allow anyone to pass information and technology directly to Saudi Arabia while being recruited, they can wait a few months until being discharged and then proceed privately, for big money. After all, it’s all for the same purpose – Israeli’s security or the region’s security or the world’s security.

## Contention 2 is the Ceasefire

#### Al Jazeera writes two weeks ago that

Al Jazeera, 2-11-2019, "Yemen food aid to feed millions at risk of rotting: UN," https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/02/yemen-food-aid-risk-rotting-190211174419940.html, Date Accessed 2-12-2019 // WS

Food aid in a warehouse on the front lines of [Yemen's war](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/yemen-civil-war-ali-abdullah-saleh-death-171204163618674.html) is at risk of rotting, leaving millions of Yemenis without access to life-saving sustenance, the UN said on Monday. The Red Sea Mills silos, located in the western port city of Hodeidah, are believed to contain enough grain to feed several million people. But the granary has remained off-limits to aid organisations for months. "The World Food Programme grain stored in the mills - enough to feed 3.7 million people for a month - has been inaccessible for over five months and is at risk of rotting," said a joint statement by the UN aid chief and special envoy for Yemen. "We emphasise that ensuring access to the mills is a shared responsibility among the parties to the conflict in Yemen." Hodeidah, and its food silos, have been in the hands of Yemen's [Houthi](https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/subjects/houthis.html) rebels since 2014, when the armed group staged a takeover of large swaths of Yemen's territory. The move prompted the military intervention of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and allies the following year on behalf of the embattled government, triggering what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. More than 10 million Yemenis are on the brink of starvation [and]. As many as 85,000 children in [Yemen](https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/yemen.html) may have starved to death over the past three years, the charity [Save the Children](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/yemen-85000-children-died-starvation-181121041742347.html) estimated.

#### Thankfully a recent ceasefire in the key port city of Hodeidah, which is the lifeline for aid in the region, has just been reached. The Guardian writes this week that

The Gaurdian, 2-17-2019, "Yemen and Houthi rebels agree to withdrawal deal," Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/17/yemen-and-houthi-rebels-agree-to-withdrawal-deal, Date Accessed 2-18-2019 // WS

Yemen’s government and Houthi rebels have agreed on the first phase of a withdrawal from the key city of Hodeidah, in a deal the UN described as important progress. The redeployment from Hodeidah is a critical part of a [ceasefire agreed in Sweden in December](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/13/time-running-out-to-turn-yemen-ceasefire-into-peace-says-hunt) that calls on the government and Houthis to move forces away from ports. The fragile truce deal marks the first step toward ending a devastating war that has pushed Yemen to the [brink of famine](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/oct/16/enormity-yemen-famine-initially-underestimated). Under the Stockholm agreement, the pullback was supposed to have taken place two weeks after the ceasefire went into force on 18 December, but that deadline was missed. The UN hopes that a de-escalation in Hodeidah will allow food and medical aid to reach millions in desperate need. The Red Sea port is the entry point for the bulk of imported goods and relief aid to [Yemen](https://www.theguardian.com/world/yemen), which the UN has described as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. A new round is planned within a week to finalise details on the second phase of redeployment, the UN statement said. The ceasefire and a Hodeidah pullback agreed in Stockholm have been hailed as a breakthrough toward ending Yemen’s nearly four-year war.

#### As a result of this new compromise the UN plans a 50% increase in aid. The Arab News explains two weeks ago that

Arab News, February 9, 2019, UN: Yemen’s warring parties reach preliminary pullout deal http://www.arabnews.com/node/1448811/middle-east, UN: Yemen’s warring parties reach preliminary pullout deal, date accessed 2-18-19 //WS

UNITED NATIONS: Yemen’s warring parties reached a preliminary compromise on a plan for the redeployment of opposing forces from the key port of Hodeidah, the United Nations said Thursday. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the preliminary agreement was reached by representatives of Yemen’s government and Houthi rebels meeting on a UN vessel in Hodeidah’s inner harbor during UN-mediated talks between Feb. 3-6. He said the head of the UN monitoring mission “tabled a proposal that proved acceptable, in principle … pending further consultations by the parties with their respective leaders.” Dujarric said he couldn’t give details, but he said the UN monitoring team expects to reconvene the warring parties “within the next week, with the aim of finalizing details for redeployments.” Retired Dutch Maj. Gen. Patrick Cammaert, the outgoing head of the UN operation monitoring the cease-fire and redeployment of forces from the Hodeidah area that both sides agreed to in Sweden in December, chaired this week’s initial meetings, Dujarric said. His replacement, Danish Lt. Gen. Michael Lollesgaard, attended the meetings and has now taken over. The agreement in Sweden was seen as a key step in attempts to end the conflict in Yemen, which began with the 2014 takeover of the capital Sanaa by the Iranian-backed Houthis. The fighting in the Arab world’s poorest country has taken a terrible toll on civilians, with thousands killed and a catastrophic humanitarian crisis under way. UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock said in a statement Thursday that the UN and its humanitarian partners are scaling up to reach 12 million people [in Yemen] with emergency food, a 50-percent increase over 2018 targetsHe said the Red Sea Mills in a government-controlled area of Hodeidah has enough grain to feed 3.7 million people for a month, but the UN has been unable to gain access since September while the grain possibly spoils in silos He deplored that last month two silos were hit by mortar shells and the resulting fire destroyed some grain — “probably enough to feed hundreds of thousands of people for a month. Lowcock said the Houthis have refused to authorize the United Nations to cross front lines into government-controlled areas to access the Red Sea Mills, citing security concerns Discussions are continuing with both sides and Lowcock implored the Houthis and their affiliates “to finalize an agreement and facilitate access to the mills in the coming days.”

#### Unfortunately ending arm sales removes this progress for 2 reasons. First is US leverage. Julian Borger of the Gaurdian explains this week that just the threat ending arm sales

Julian Borger, 1-15-2019, "Yemen conflict: Trump faces bipartisan move to end Saudi support," Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/15/yemen-conflict-trump-faces-bipartisan-move-to-end-saudi-support, Date Accessed 2-19-2019 // WS

“We are waiting for the shutdown to end, but we are ready to move pretty quickly,” a Democratic Senate staffer said. If the [ceasefire agreed last month](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/09/yemen-ceasefire-is-holding-but-10-million-face-famine-un-is-told) for Hodeidah and other Yemeni ports holds and humanitarian aid is allowed to flow freely to the 22 million Yemenis in desperate need, and if the Saudi regime shows more transparency over the Khashoggi murder, the legislation could be held back. But its backers say the threat of its passing was enough to force concessions from the Saudi-backed Yemeni government delegation at [these recent] ceasefire talks in Sweden. If passed, it will be the first time Congress has used a war powers resolution measure to limit the president’s power to take the country into a foreign conflict. “One cannot underestimate the historic impact of the House and Senate passing this,” Khanna said in an interview with the Guardian. He said that the former defence secretary James Mattis advised the Saudis to make progress in the Stockholm talks to avoid “further embarrassment from Congress”.

#### Unfortunately end arm sales takes away this critical leverage as Mike Conte explains at the beginning of this month that

MIKE CONTE, 2-6-2019, "US general shows Saudi coalition support after weapons report," WSLS, https://www.wsls.com/news/politics/us-general-shows-saudi-coalition-support-after-weapons-report, Date Accessed 2-18-2019 // WS

The top [United States](https://www.wsls.com/topic/United-States) military commander in the Middle East suggested Tuesday that America would continue to back its allies waging war in Yemen, despite new evidence of arms deal violations [uncovered by a CNN investigation](https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2019/02/middleeast/yemen-lost-us-arms/). Gen. Joseph Votel, the head of Central Command (CENTCOM), told a Senate hearing on Tuesday that withdrawing US support for the Saudi-led coalition in [Yemen](https://www.wsls.com/topic/Yemen) would remove the "leverage we have to continue to influence them" and could further endanger Americans in the region.

#### That’s why Derek Bisaccia writes in 2018 that without this continued influence

Derek Bisaccio, 10-23-2018, "Examining U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia," http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/feature/5/196962/us-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia%3A-policy-options.html, Date Accessed 1-30-2019 // WS

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

#### The second way ending arm sales dangers the recent ceasefire is by emboldening the Houthis, Saudi’s main opponent in the Yemen war. Only military pressure can get the Houthis to the negotiating table as Lyse Doucet explains in 2018

Lyse Doucet, 8-1-2018, "Ending Yemen’s never-ending war," BBC News, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45270225, Date Accessed 2-19-2019 // WS

But it also convinced the UAE, which took the lead on the Hudaydah offensive, that only a ratcheting up of military pressure would bring Houthi leaders to the negotiating table, ready to do a deal. Under greater threat, Houthi leaders had told Mr Griffiths they were prepared to hand over Hudaydah port to UN administration, a move they had resisted for years. Then the coalition shifted the goalposts. They demanded rebels withdraw from the city too.

#### Unfortunately, ending arm sales immediately weakens Saudi’s ability to keep pressure on the Houthis. That is why Phil Stewart explains that

Phil Stewart, 3-16-2018, "Mattis: Don't restrict U.S. support to Saudi-led forces in Yemen," U.S., https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-yemen-mattis/mattis-dont-restrict-u-s-support-to-saudi-led-forces-in-yemen-idUSKCN1GS00N, Date Accessed 2-19-2019 // WS

Mattis also warned that a withdrawal would embolden the Iran-aligned Houthi rebels, who have fired missiles at Saudi Arabia and targeted commercial and military vessels off Yemen’s coast. Lawmakers have argued for years that Congress has ceded too much authority over the military to the White House. Under the Constitution, Congress – not the president – has the authority to declare war. But divisions over how much control they should exert over the president have stymied efforts to pass new war authorizations.

#### Without this Saudi military pressure, the Houthi’s would have no incentive to continue the ceasefire, thus resulting in continued fighting and no aid reaching the 12 million starving Yemini people in need.

## Extra Cards

#### Existing weapons have a shelf life of 30 years, and there are so many alternative suppliers of basic weapons

**Yumar Jamshaid wrote today** (February 8, 2019) that, <https://www.urdupoint.com/en/world/review-watchdog-sounds-alarm-as-western-arm-548035.html>, REVIEW – Watchdog Sounds Alarm As Western Arms Allegedly Diverted To Unaccountable Yemen Militias

Hensmans went on to note that the problem of arms diversion was complicated by the fact that most **weapons “are very sturdy and can have a lifetime of more than 30 years**,” posing a threat of their later re-emergence in other conflict zones, as is the case with Kalashnikov or FAL assault rifles. **A kalashnikov costs only 25 US$ in Africa or the middle East. Bulgaria and other Balkan countries still produce them massively**,” he noted. **Even such a small country like Belgium has a powerful arms industry, which also benefits from supplies to the Gulf nations**, according to Hensmans. “[Belgium’s] FN Herstal produces small arms but a group such as CMI in Liege, Belgium, produces canons and turrets for tanks that are assembled in Canada and then exported to Saudi Arabia. That contract alone is worth 3.6 billion EUR for CMI. Now Saudi Arabia wants to install its own tank-producing factory. Their ambition is to make it one of the 20 largest in the world. Where will these weapons systems end up? There are enough arms all over the world; there is no need for more factories,” he stressed. YEMEN AS MAIN VICTIM OF UNTRACED ARMS SUPPLIES Dwelling on Yemen, Hensmans reiterated the watchdog’s findings that some of Western weapons ended up in hands of UAE-backed militias Security Belt, Shabwani elite forces and “The Giants.” “Minimi, the light machine guns (7.62 mm NATO) designed by Belgian FN Herstal are being used by an armed group in Yemen, known as the Giant Brigades. Minimi light machine guns have been found in the hands of this special forces unit of the Yemeni army, now under nobody’s control, but armed & trained by the United Arab Emirates. The country is known to equip militias with war material as part of the conflict in Yemen,” he said. According to Hensmans, **Yemen has long become a place dominated by UAE-backed militias, which are largely unaccountable but illegally receive a range of advanced weaponry, with “much of it sourced from Western countries, including the UK or Belgium.”**

#### As a result, the flow of life saving assistance to Yemen has been hampered in two ways. First, current food aid cannot be reached because of conflict zones as Al Jazeera writes this week that

Al Jazeera, 2-11-2019, "Yemen food aid to feed millions at risk of rotting: UN," https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/02/yemen-food-aid-risk-rotting-190211174419940.html, Date Accessed 2-12-2019 // WS

#### Food aid in a warehouse on the front lines of [Yemen's war](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/yemen-civil-war-ali-abdullah-saleh-death-171204163618674.html) is at risk of rotting, leaving millions of Yemenis without access to life-saving sustenance, the UN said on Monday. The Red Sea Mills silos, located in the western port city of Hodeidah, are believed to contain enough grain to feed several million people. But the granary has remained off-limits to aid organisations for months. "The World Food Programme grain stored in the mills - enough to feed 3.7 million people for a month - has been inaccessible for over five months and is at risk of rotting," said a joint statement by the UN aid chief and special envoy for Yemen. "We emphasise that ensuring access to the mills is a shared responsibility among the parties to the conflict in Yemen." Hodeidah, and its food silos, have been in the hands of Yemen's [Houthi](https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/subjects/houthis.html) rebels since 2014, when the armed group staged a takeover of large swaths of Yemen's territory

#### Fatija Belfakir corroborates in 2018 that

Fatiha Belfakir, 10-8-2018, "US Ambassador: Political Settlement Only Solution to Crisis in Yemen," VOA, https://www.voanews.com/a/us-ambassador-political-settlement-only-solution-to-crisis-in-yemen/4605443.html, Date Accessed 2-20-2019 // WS

"I believe ultimately that Yemenis themselves know that there must be a political solution,” Tueller said. Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak, the Yemeni Ambassador to the U.S, told VOA that while his government supports U.S. and U.N. efforts to find a political solution to the war, military pressure is needed. “We believe, up until now, that the only solution to the Yemeni conflict is the political solution.We believe also from our experience with the Houthis that they will not come to the negotiation table unless there is a certain level of military pressure [on them]," Bin Mubarak said.