

We affirm,

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

Our sole contention is the Saudi Strategy.

Saudi Arabia is stuck in a resource curse that is precipitating economic collapse. [Riegg '17 of Newsweek](#) explicates that 90% of Saudi Arabia's economy is dependent on oil, and due to rising domestic consumption and the decline of oil's importance globally, Saudi Arabia is on the path to economic failure. Indeed, [Riegg '16 of the Hill](#) quantifies that the Kingdom's exports have fallen by 75% since 2012. [Ahmed '15 of the Middle East Eye](#) corroborates that by 2030, Saudi Arabian oil exports will drop to zero, and as revenues fall, the kingdom's ability to constantly spend on social subsidies to limit domestic dissent will disappear, making their collapse inevitable.

With the looming collapse of their economy, Saudi Arabia is actively pivoting to their military for answers for two reasons.

First, to save the economy.

[Ahmed continues](#) that the Saudi government is actively intervening in the region to prolong its petro-dominance by fighting to control oil supply. [Riegg '17](#) confirms that Saudi Arabia is expanding militarily, hoping to save their economy through potential invasions into Iraq, Qatar, and Yemen to control new sources of oil. This is already coming to fruition as [Fenton '18 of the New Arab](#) writes that Saudi Arabia is already exploiting the Yemen War to build an oil pipeline across the country.

Second, to divert attention.

[The Economist '18](#) explains that having alienated the Saudi elite, the Crown Prince relies entirely on the support of the people, and with a deteriorating economy, the Prince will find it difficult to keep his constituency happy.

[Behravesch '17 of Lund University](#) furthers that because Prince Salman's public support is built around perceived strength from military ventures, he has further increased aggression in Yemen to divert domestic attention away from Saudi Arabia's economic and political problems. Indeed, [he](#) elaborates that the Kingdom's desire to shift attention from domestic problems ensure attempts to negotiate an end to the war always fail.

For these two reasons, [Keleman '18 of the London School of Economics](#) finds that Saudi Arabia has expanded in multiple conflicts across the region in hopes to unite its population against Iran as a common enemy and otherwise distract from rocky political conditions.

[Fenton '18 of the New Arab](#) continues that Saudi Arabia will never meaningfully commit to peace talks, instead opting for its own long-term, interventionist strategy in the region. He continues that even if ceasefires are successful, Saudi Arabia will inevitably intervene further in Yemen, as they have tried to control the country multiple times since the Kingdom's founding over 80 years ago.

The only hope to prevent this offensive is to cripple Saudi Arabia's capacity to commit acts of violence. Fortunately, cutting off American arms to Saudi Arabia does so.

[Hartung '18 of the Center for International Policy](#) explains that Saudi military systems rely on American spare parts for maintenance, and equipment from other exporters cannot operate alongside U.S. military technology. A bomb is only useful in so far as there is an operable plane or launcher to shoot it that soldiers know how to use.

[Guay '18 of Pennsylvania State University](#) corroborates that once a country is "locked in" to a specific weapons system, the cost to switch to a different supplier is prohibitively large for Saudi Arabia, as the switch would entail retraining military personnel on the new equipment.

This is particularly true in the context of Saudi Arabia's economic crisis: transferring to any alternative exporter would demand replacing all the base, U.S. tech in the Saudi arsenal, and revenues will simply be too low, too soon to do so.

Thus, [Riedel '18 of the Brookings Institution](#) finds that if the U.S. ended logistics support, the Saudi air force would be grounded immediately, and [the World Peace Foundation](#) explicates that the Saudi military could not operate effectively without U.S. arms.

The impact is an escalated Yemen. For example, [The Guardian](#) writes that in 2018, a single Saudi campaign on Hodeidah increased civilian casualties by 164%. And [McCarthy '18 of Forbes](#) finds that with U.S. weapons, Saudi operations have left the country's poorest without access to basic aid, leaving eight million people on the brink of starvation.

Thus, we affirm.

Cards!!!

Riegg '17 – hawks in Saudi Arabia will use military action to hedge against economic decline AND Saudi's economic reforms are likely to fail and there are no ways to grow the economy internally due to theocratic and educational barriers that force Saudi reliance on oil AND oil is on the decline which puts Saudi's economy into terminal decline AND forces Saudi Arabia to engage in conflict with Yemen, Iraq, and Qatar to take control of key oil reserves and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to push oil prices up and sustain Saudi's economy

Riegg, Ryan. "What is Saudi Arabia Going to Do With Its Arms Buildup?" Newsweek. March 2017.
<https://www.newsweek.com/what-saudi-arabia-going-do-its-arms-buildup-569277> //RJ

However, **Saudi Arabia's massive expansion of its military**—which has continued unabated for six years and involves increasing naval capabilities; troop movements in Aden, Yemen; and plans to train submarine crews in Malaysia—**indicates that hawks within Saudi Arabia may choose to use military action, particularly in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, as a hedge against domestic instability caused by the kingdom's economic decline. If Saudi Arabia's economic reforms** which include the initial public offering of its oil company (Aramco), Vision 2030 reforms and OPEC's production cuts, **all fail, which is likely, then hawks may push the kingdom toward actions that could spark a new regional war. To raise the standard of living of their citizens, all countries face a choice on whether to grow internally through production of new goods and services, or externally, through the conquest of other countries and territories.** The takfiri and theocratic form of Islam promoted by the conservative portions of Saudi Arabia's religious and political establishment is expansionist by nature. It glorifies conversion by violence and portrays all non-Muslims as inherently inferior. While not all members of the Saudi government support this form of Islam (and many actively fight against it), it is not an overstatement to say that those who wish for a more modern or tolerant form of Islam face an uphill battle in the kingdom. Many Saudi educational organizations still use textbooks that instruct Muslim students not to take Christians or Jews as friends and promote conspiracy theories that accuse Western charitable organizations (Rotary, Lions Club, etc.) of plotting to undermine Muslims. Meanwhile, the kingdom's religious establishment continues to command Muslims to "hate" Christians, Jews, "polytheists" and other "nonbelievers." More problematic than Saudi Arabia's religious glorification of violence is **the theocratic nature of the kingdom's government, which makes economic growth nearly impossible without violent external expansion.** Saudi Arabia is a theocracy. Religion and state are combined. Power is centralized. No other forms of faith are allowed. No other political parties are allowed. Individual choice in terms of what you can say, what you can watch and whom you can talk to (e.g., women and men cannot speak to each other without the presence of a guardian) is severely limited. Meanwhile, critical thinking in regards to religion is actively discouraged. **Because theocracy severely limits individual choice, it tends to be inhospitable to both creativity and science, both of which are crucial ingredients to economic growth. New products and services tend to be created only when you have a workforce that is free to explore ideas in a society that encourages science and creativity. Saudi Arabia, like much of the Arab world, is unable to retain scientists or educated workers. Thus, despite spending billions of dollars more on education than any other country in the Middle East and North Africa, the country's potential for long-term internal growth is severely hampered by a persistent brain drain alongside a chronic failure of performance in science and math.** Additionally, as written about more extensively elsewhere, **religious restrictions within Saudi Arabia make it nearly impossible for the kingdom to diversify or grow its non-oil economy. It is very difficult to grow an economy if women cannot drive to work or speak to men and half the labor force is stuck at home due to gender segregation rules.** Meanwhile, mandatory salat (prayer time) rules close all businesses between two and four times every workday for between 15 minutes to an hour each time. During the average Saudi workday, most businesses are closed roughly 10 to 45 percent of the time for either prayer or lunch. It is nearly impossible to have an efficient economy when businesses are closed so often. The result is that, **despite its many reform efforts over the years, nearly 90 percent of Saudi's export economy remains based on oil.** Thus, as discussed in "Why the Saudis May Be Preparing for a Real War," **due to Saudi Arabia's increasing consumption of energy, as well as a steady decline in the relative importance of oil in the world economy, it is unlikely that the economy will experience sustained growth in the near term. Consequently, hawks within Saudi Arabia's political establishment may have decided to grow their economy not internally but**

externally, through conquest and violent expansion. Accordingly, Saudi Arabia has dedicated 13 percent of its gross domestic product to its military for six years and has become the largest per capita purchaser of weapons in the world.

At first glance, despite Saudi Arabia's military buildup over the past six years, the threat of the Saudis directly attacking one of their neighbors may seem most unlikely. The U.S. maintains a substantial naval presence in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, supplemented by U.S. (and Japanese) military bases in Bahrain, etc.

Ostensibly, if Saudi Arabia invaded a neighbor, the U.S. military would insist that the kingdom desist.

However, if the economic situation in the kingdom gets bad enough, hawks within the Saudi establishment may be able to convince their more moderate counterparts to attack one of the kingdom's neighbors to stave off domestic discontent, especially if they can promote the idea across government that the U.S. would be unlikely to retaliate against the kingdom. As discussed in "Why the Saudis May be

Preparing for War," **it is likely that the kingdom's economic decline will continue.** Especially if its IPO of Aramco, Vision 2030 reforms and OPEC production cuts fail to live up to expectations. Thus, the probability of Saudi Arabia attacking a neighbor largely depends on four beliefs about the U.S. within the Saudi establishment: That the American people are too exhausted by 15 years of near-endless involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan to engage in another war in a country (Saudi Arabia) filled with adherents to the same form of Islam that inspired the Islamic State militant group (ISIS). That the U.S. military is too dispersed around the world and/or involved with containing Russia to engage in another war in the Middle East, making it especially unlikely that the U.S. would be willing to prosecute a successful war against Saudi Arabia since doing so would likely affect the Muslim holy sites of Mecca and Medina. Should the U.S. go to war with Saudi Arabia, the entire Muslim world might react violently in the event U.S. soldiers enter the Hijaz region, which would significantly bind the U.S. in terms of strategy and is not something the U.S. military leadership would wish to manage after four years of historically high tensions with Russia. That **the U.S.**

political elite lack backbone. For the past several years, the Saudis have funneled guns and weapons to ISIS and bombed the near-defenseless country of Yemen with impunity. Therefore, **the Saudis may believe that they can do whatever they want and the U.S. will not react, especially given** Barack Obama's failure to enforce his

"red line" in Syria and **speeches by Donald Trump indicating an isolationist worldview that would keep the U.S.**

out of the Middle East. That the U.S. is becoming a net energy exporter. Any event that raises oil and gas prices is partially in America's interest. If Saudi Arabia starts a war in the Middle East by invading a neighbor (Yemen, Qatar, Iraq, etc.), the biggest loser outside of the region will be Europe, which will have a significant quantity of its energy supply cut off. And, unless Europe wishes to increase its already substantial dependence on Russian oil and gas, it will have few options but to import more energy from the U.S. Thus, it is not entirely within America's interest to go to war with Saudi Arabia, regardless of the kingdom's actions. Even though the European Union is a historic ally of the U.S., it is not completely within America's interest to protect European energy supplies coming from the Middle East. Especially since Trump has indicated a dissatisfaction with, as he has put, Europe not paying its "part of the bill" on its defense. It is unclear to what extent the Saudi military and political establishment holds these four beliefs. If the Saudis do not believe the U.S. will crack down on the kingdom for invading a neighbor, **there may be little that would hold the kingdom back from doing so. The political, economic and**

religious history of the kingdom all push for external expansion through conquest and war over internal expansion through the production of goods and services. **Yemen is the likeliest target for invasion.** The country has

been bombarded by Saudi Arabia for two years now, and the Saudi propaganda machine has been mostly focused on Yemen's Houthi rebels since the beginning of the Yemeni civil war. However, **invading Yemen is unlikely to provide Saudi Arabia a significant economic boost, unless Saudi Arabia disrupts**

the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which the U.S. Energy Information Administration refers to as one of the seven major energy choke points in the world (3.8 million barrels of oil head to the West pass through the strait each day, along with the equivalent of 0.5-1 million barrels of natural gas). Should Saudi Arabia succeed in creating chaos and confusion in the strait through rocket attacks, its significantly expanded naval capabilities or by provoking the Houthis to attack ships in the strait, Europe will be by far the biggest loser, being deprived of over \$150 billion worth of oil and natural gas per year, making the Europeans more dependent on Russia, Norway, the U.S. and Saudi for their energy needs. **If the strait is disrupted,**

oil and gas prices will spike and the Saudi economy will profit significantly, especially since the Saudis last year quietly started expanding their East-West pipeline. Thus, **should the strait get cut off, the only practical method for** nearly all of the Gulf states to export energy to the West will be across Saudi

Arabia and/or through its newly expanded East-West pipeline. Saudi Arabia often claims it is the Houthis who are threatening the strait, but the facts suggest otherwise. The Houthis have occupied multiple locations in the strait over the past two years that would have allowed them to significantly disrupt shipping, but the strait has largely remained open, mostly because shutting it down would severely affect the Houthis' ally, Iran,

which ships millions of barrels of oil and natural gas to Europe through the strait each month. **By comparison, Iranian and Pakistani vessels have been attacked by Saudi Arabia and/or its allies in Yemen on at least two occasions.** Meanwhile, there is little to no

evidence that the majority of attacks on non-Saudi coalition vessels during the past two years have been carried out by Houthis. **Beyond Yemen, Saudi Arabia could target southern and eastern portions of Iraq** (i.e., parts of Al Anbar and Al Muthana), **over which it maintained significant tribal influence before Iraq's government shifted control to Shiite hands.** In terms of specific locations in

Iraq, it is doubtful that Saudi Arabia would invade Iraq all the way to Iran's border. Doing so would invite a direct war with Iran and would lead Saudi Arabia to having to absorb an even greater number of Shiites, which the Saudis would not want. Rather, in terms of costs and benefits, **it is likelier that Saudi Arabia could instead attempt**

to disrupt the Iraq Strategic Pipeline through a few well-targeted bombs or "terrorist" operations that

would raise the value of Saudi oil at relatively low cost to the Saudis. Having a militant organization blow up pumping stations in Al Muthana or Al Anbar may seem far-fetched, but **it would not be the first time such operations have been used in Iraq effectively.** The Mosul-Haifa pipeline was blown up both by Arab gangs and the Jewish Irgun several times during the 1930s and the 1940s. Moreover, **hawks in Saudi Arabia have spent the past five years funding the militant organization Nusra Front, which,** despite its claims of wanting to overthrow the Syrian regime, **has spent more time taking over portions of Al Anbar in Iraq** than trying to fight Assad.

Meanwhile, **guns funneled to ISIS from Saudi Arabia have led to significant oil supply disruptions in northern Iraq that,** according to Forbes, **have substantially benefited the Saudi regime.** However, **in the event that Saudi Arabia did invade Iraq, it** would presumably take over portions of Al Muthana and Al Anbar, which are not predominantly Shiite, are sparsely populated and **would provide Saudi Arabia** two major benefits: **Control over the oil fields in Abu Khaima, Samawa, Salman and Diwan. Permanent disruption/control of the Iraq Strategic Pipeline. Should Saudi Arabia disrupt both the Iraq Strategic Pipeline and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Saudi Arabia will have a near monopoly on the transport of Arabian oil and gas to Europe.** Most Arabian energy producers will be obliged to export energy either across Saudi Arabia or via far more limited and costly African and Iranian routes.

Beyond Iraq and Yemen, **should the Saudi economic situation get bad enough, the country could also attack Qatar.** Qatar holds three times as much natural gas as Saudi Arabia, and, more important, **the demand for natural gas** (which burns cleaner than oil) **is quickly increasing in Europe, where natural gas imports increased by 17 percent in 2015.** While the least likely of the three scenarios, an attack on Qatar is still a possibility. **The growth of natural gas from Qatar and Iran is the greatest threat to Saudi regional power today.** Should Iranian relations with the West improve, should natural gas continue to displace oil and **should Saudi Arabia's economy continue its decline, then the Saudis might attack Qatar as a last resort** to stop Qatari natural gas from **undermining Saudi oil.**

Riegg '16 – exports down to ¼ of what it was at the end of 2012 and the youth bulge is a major threat; high levels of youth unemployment lead to revolutions like the Arab Spring

Riegg, Ryan. "Why the Saudis may be preparing for a real war." The Hill. December 2016.

[//RJ">https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/311671-why-the-al-sauds-may-be-preparing-for-a-real-war //RJ](https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/311671-why-the-al-sauds-may-be-preparing-for-a-real-war)

To understand why Mr. Aluwaisheg was so concerned about Saudi energy consumption, or why hawks within the Saudi political establishment may be preparing for war, it's important to understand just how badly the Saudi economy is doing right now. The above chart is the value of Saudi exports over the last five years, with **exports projected to be nearly a quarter of what they were in 2012 by the end of the year. The last time that exports were this low was during Saudi's financial crisis in 2009. However, back then, the country was 23 percent smaller.** (26 million people then vs. 32 million people now.) In other words, **the Saudis currently have far less money coming in, but far more mouths to feed. This downward trend in Saudi's economy is not part of some normal or temporary cycle. It's endemic of a much larger issue that threatens the Saudi state.** Namely, energy consumption. The Saudi economy isn't at risk because it is running out of oil, it is at risk because **the Saudi domestic consumption of energy** (i.e. oil) **will soon exceed their export of energy** (i.e. they will soon consume over 50 percent of the energy they produce). In normal economies, rising energy consumption isn't a problem. In fact, it's often a sign of positive economic growth. China, for instance, historically consumes more energy every year. But that's because they use that energy to produce more manufactured products for export. As pointed out by Mr. Aluwaisheg during his opening remarks, Saudi's increase in energy consumption is not the result of producing more value-added goods for sale abroad. Rather, it is the unfortunate result of decades of government-subsidized consumption. The consequence of people moving from the desert into A/C controlled houses, with big fridges and cars. The result is that **up to 90 percent of Saudi's exports are still from oil & gas. All Saudi exports is, basically, oil. If more is consumed at home, there is less to export, and the country makes less money as a whole. Saudi has tried, multiple times, to diversity & fix its economy** (particularly to deal with their youth bulge) **but has failed partially due to religious restrictions** that keep half the country's workforce (i.e. women) stuck at home. The result is that **Saudi is starting to fail economically.** It's canceling \$20 billion of public projects, eliminating energy subsidies (e.g. gas, etc.) for its people, and its Princes are starting to stash their money in places like Panama and multi-billion dollar funds in other countries. For the country to save itself, it should have started diversifying its economy 10 years ago. Not now. And senior members of the political establishment are understandably concerned about reaching a "J-Curve" point of revolution as a result. The J-Curve is when a state has a period of sustained economic growth, followed by a sudden downturn. The J-Curve theory is **that revolutions start, not because the economy or living conditions are terrible for a long time** (or revolutions would be occurring constantly) **but when you have a long period of growth, where people start to believe that things will get better** (and take out larger mortgages, loans, etc.) **only to have their expectations dashed when the economy suddenly drops and they can no longer afford the things they have bought.** (If you graph this trend, it looks like a "J" - long growth, sharp downturn - hence the name "J-Curve.") **In short, the idea is that people get upset when they expect life to get better, but life gets worse instead. Which is exactly what is happening in Saudi. People have gotten used to growth, and now exports are dropping to a quarter of what they were a mere four years ago.** Moreover, **the country faces a huge problem from its youth bulge.** Specifically, **nearly half the population is under the age of 25. Thus, over the next 5-10 years, an increasing number of young Saudis will enter the workforce. However, since the Kingdom has been unable to diversify or grow its real economy, many of these workers will be unable to find jobs.** Meanwhile, **the Kingdom already has a youth unemployment rate of 28 percent. Young people often get angry when left jobless for long periods. And youth anger can lead to revolutions like the Arab Spring.**

MEE '18 – Vision 2030 will inevitably fail because corruption and the failed education system ensure that quick-fix plans like this never work

Middle East Eye Correspondant. "Saudi's economy: Why Vision 2030 will fail." Middle East Eye. August 2017. Last Updated Summer 2018. [//RJ](https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/saudis-economy-why-vision-2030-will-fail)

This is the story of a country - a country that's built on oil. Modern Saudi Arabia has been a single resource economy since the discovery of black gold in 1938. Its successive governments have introduced 10 development plans so far, the first in 1970, the latest in 2015. Their single strategic goal? To achieve economic diversification away from the kingdom's over-dependence on oil. But at least nine of those plans have failed miserably in realising that objective. The kingdom has yet to build any serious industrial infrastructure, beyond some basic petrochemical, plastic and food processing plants. The results from the latest – and 10th - development plan, the National Transformation Plan (NTP), remain to be seen.

It is a five-year vision, running from 2015 till 2020, that forms the first phase of the much bigger Vision 2030, the Saudi government's long-term diversification strategy.

Middle East Eye Correspondant. "Saudi's economy: Why Vision 2030 will fail." Middle East Eye. August 2017. Last Updated Summer 2018. [//RJ](https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/saudis-economy-why-vision-2030-will-fail)

Saudi Arabia, due to the nature of its political system, has always resorted to what it perceives as easy options. For instance, the Ministry of Labour's (MoL) programme, Nitaqat, forces the private sector to hire Saudi nationals. Private firms face severe consequences if they under-employ Saudis, amounting to an effective freeze on their businesses' operations with the withdrawal of their licences. This is a classic example of the government transferring the responsibility of its failures back to society. **The unemployability of Saudi students is a direct result of the inadequate Saudi education system: they are even banned from joining private international schools that teach Western curricula in addition to Arabic and Islamic subjects.** There is no threat from these schools to Saudi's Arabic and Islamic identity because they teach associated subjects: rather the problem, as perceived by the authorities, is political, the fear that these curricula will develop independent thinking among their students. **The result is a private sector paying the price for Riyadh's failure to strike a balance between the modern economic need for an adequately skilled workforce and centralised political interests.** It means that many businesses hire Saudi youth in non-existent jobs, where many are paid for literally doing nothing. Some only show up at the end of each month to collect their salaries, then disappear again. To use Mohammed bin Salman's own words, "quick-fix" is the way the Saudi government conducts its business. The Saudi Public Investment Fund announced in August 2017 the Red Sea resort project, an international leisure destination on the western coast of the holy land (yes I meant to call it that). A conservative and traditional society has been told that its government wants to create a resort where the rules of the land do not apply – including the segregation of the sexes and the "Islamic" dress code - just a few hundred kilometers from the most sacred sites in Islam. In the brochure, it is claimed that the project will create 35,000 jobs and generate an annual income of SAR15b (\$4b). But there is no mention of how much will be spent to achieve this – and so we cannot determine whether the project is good value for money or not. Secondly, the project is an ethical and political problem; an enforced, top-bottom imposition of alien values. It is not the outcome of a natural cultural evolution within society but a royal decision that, overnight, transmutes from strict, empty-headed, religious fanaticism. This is insulting to a significant proportion of Saudi society who have bought into official religious propaganda over the decades. One can only conclude that **no real economic diversification is achievable under the current form of Saudi governance, let alone in a post-oil world. Riyadh's failure to moderate its grip on power is simply incompatible with this objective. Corruption over-inflates the cost of all projects and sucks in all surpluses. Political decentralisation and anti-corruption measures are the only way forward if the new government of Mohammed bin Salman is serious about real change. But real change is only attainable through quality education and freedom of thought and expression. And the Saudi education system, as it stands, only adds to the unemployment rate in the country.**

Economist '18 – reforms are failing; jobs aren't being created, FDI is declining, and the economy is still entirely reliant on oil

The Economist. "Saudi Arabia's economic reforms are not attracting investors." 18 Dec. 2018.

[//RJ">https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/12/22/saudi-arabias-economic-reforms-are-not-attracting-investors //RJ](https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/12/22/saudi-arabias-economic-reforms-are-not-attracting-investors)

This suggests "Vision 2030", the kingdom's ambitious plan to diversify its economy, is working. It aims to create jobs, attract investment and develop industries, such as tourism (see article). For decades oil-rich Gulf states have made similar promises, only to backtrack when the price of oil rises. Muhammad bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's powerful crown prince, has kept his country on course better than his predecessors. **But the progress is illusory. Dig past the headline numbers and, so far, the results of Prince Muhammad's reforms are disappointing.** Take **the stockmarket**. It **looks healthy** in part **because the government is secretly propping it up by placing huge buy orders to counter sell-offs following recent political crises,** according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The gdp figures are also misleading. **The economy remains yoked to oil. Higher prices for the black stuff, notwithstanding a sharp fall in recent months, are boosting all sectors.** But for an economy with rapid population growth coming out of recession, the performance is hardly stellar. Three years ago gdp growth stood at 4%. Prince Muhammad wants foreign investors to think that Saudi Arabia is a safe bet. But his capricious policies, from the locking-up of wealthy Saudis in 2017 to pointless diplomatic feuds with Canada and Germany, are scaring them off. **Foreign direct investment fell to \$1.4bn (0.2% of gdp) in 2017, from \$7.5bn the year before.** An investment conference in Riyadh in October was overshadowed by the grisly murder of Jamal Khashoggi, an exiled Saudi journalist, in a Saudi consulate in Turkey. **Rich Saudis are trying to move their money abroad: \$80bn left the country last year.** There have been steps to improve the investment climate, including a new law to bring order to Saudi bankruptcy procedures. Projects once dominated by the state are now planned as public-private partnerships. The housing ministry, for example, wants private firms to stump up most of the estimated \$100bn required to build 1m affordable homes. More than 1.5m Saudis are on a waiting list for subsidised housing. When he courts investors, though, Prince Muhammad focuses on state-directed mega-projects like Neom, a futuristic \$500bn city staffed by robots on the north-western coast. Little has been built. On December 10th he broke ground on Spark, a \$1.6bn "energy city" in the east that is meant to create 100,000 jobs. Such schemes rarely work. The King Abdullah Financial District, a \$10bn project in Riyadh, still has more buildings than banks. Rising oil revenues and austerity measures, such as cuts to subsidies and a new 5% value-added tax, have helped drastically reduce the budget deficit. The government has duly increased public spending, the lifeblood of the economy. Saudis are buying more than they did during the recession. But many still feel pinched. Retail sales are sluggish, especially for big-ticket items. The number of retail jobs has fallen by 177,000 since 2017, negating the government's efforts to create opportunities for Saudis by banning foreigners from many sales jobs. **Jobs are Saudi Arabia's most immediate headache. It needs to create 1.2m of them by 2022 to meet its target of 9% unemployment for Saudi citizens.** To free up work for them, it is discouraging the hiring of foreigners. Since January 2018 firms have been charged 400 rials (\$107) per month for each foreign worker, with a discount if they employ more Saudi nationals than expatriates. The levy will double by 2020. Migrants pay another fee for each of their dependents. **At first glance these charges seem to be working. Almost 1m foreign workers have left the kingdom since the start of 2017. But Saudis are not replacing many of them.** **Construction has been disproportionately affected. It employs 45% of the expats and accounts for 60% of the exodus. The number of Saudis working in construction, though, has also fallen.** Overall, **since January 2017,** the number of Saudis in work has grown by less than 100,000; **the unemployment rate has increased by 0.2 percentage points, to 12.9%. Jobs once held by migrants are not being filled because they no longer exist.** "You have these expats with low skills, low wages, and you can easily not renew their contracts," says Abdullah al-Hassan, a government economist. **Young Saudis are reluctant to work with their hands**—and anyway firms cannot afford them. A low-skilled foreign worker takes home around 1,500 rials each month. The de facto minimum wage for Saudi citizens is 3,000 rials. The pay gap is much narrower for skilled jobs and there is a pool of talent eager to do such work: 56% of Saudi jobseekers hold at least a bachelor's degree. Officials have therefore discussed putting the migrant fees on a progressive scale, linked to income. Though many of them are unemployed, young Saudis, who make up a majority of the population, still speak enthusiastically about Prince Muhammad. **Having alienated the kingdom's clerics and other princes, he relies more on their support than past Saudi rulers did.** His bold (some say rash) style is popular with them, but it worries investors. **Without foreign money the prince will find it difficult to keep all of those young Saudis happy.**

Behraves '17 – Saudi Arabia will never end its assault on Yemen because MBS always has a diversionary incentive to A. boost his popularity and B. divert attention from the high-level political schisms and economic problems that Saudi Arabia is grappling with Behraves, Maysam. “Why Saudi Arabia can’t let Yemen go.” Lund University. July 2017. [//RJ](https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/why-saudi-arabia-cant-let-yemen-go)

Given these formidable challenges, the continuation of the Saudi-led military campaign is puzzling. **Why, after all, do the Saudis refuse to end their intervention in Yemen? Why don't they make a final effort to conquer Sanaa and declare victory? Or let go of Yemen altogether?** The fact is that **the Saudi war in Yemen is driven by much more than territorial security reasons or simply the aspiration to “contain” Iran. It is, to a considerable extent, an “affective”, emotionally driven campaign rooted in** at least three significant political-psychological factors: 1) **revival of nationalism at home**, 2) **masculinism in foreign policy making**, and 3) **protection of regional status**. **The military action against the Houthis** – which subscribe to the Zaidi branch of Shia Islam almost unknown outside of Yemen – **has arguably sharpened the sense of nationalism in Saudi Arabia, enhancing the popularity of its leaders, in particular the defence minister, Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), who has marshalled the campaign from the onset. Interestingly, MBS's recent promotion from deputy crown prince to crown prince would not be so convenient without his military adventures in Yemen and their impact on the Saudi national perception of him as a patriotic war hero and a determined defender of the realm. Another pertinent advantage of the intervention was its diversionary effect. It redirected public attention from the economic problems and high-level political schisms that Saudi Arabia has been grappling with since King Salman acceded to the throne in January 2015.** It is little wonder that the coalition campaign in Yemen started only around two months later. Saudi foreign policy represents one of the most masculinist and patriarchal in the international community. A masculinist foreign policy may be characterised by tendencies that are conventionally associated with masculinism and male dominance such as hawkishness, aggressiveness, coerciveness, proneness to violence, compromise aversion and so on. In her groundbreaking book *A Most Masculine State*, Madawi al-Rasheed, a visiting professor at the London School of Economics, probes the political, religious and historical roots of patriarchy in the Saudi society and demonstrates how it has affected the lives of women and their struggle for recognition, emancipation and equality. It is equally evident in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy which usually manifests itself in its aversion to diplomacy and diplomatic solutions to conflicts, hasty recourse to aggressive measures without exhausting all non-military options, and obstinate insistence on policies whose ineffectiveness has been proven. The sudden decision to intervene in Yemen encapsulates all these tendencies quite evidently. Other examples of Riyadh's rigid patriarchal foreign policy orientation are its denunciation of political negotiations with Iran over bilateral tensions and the abrupt diplomatic and transport boycott of Qatar, a Sunni sheikhdom and former Saudi ally in the Middle East. Along parallel lines, Saudi Arabia prompted a diplomatic row with Sweden in early 2015 over a speech the Swedish feminist foreign minister Margot Wallstrom's had been invited to give at an Arab League summit in Cairo on 9 March. Saudis blocked the speech and when Sweden announced the long-anticipated termination of an arms deal with the kingdom a day later, they recalled their ambassador to Stockholm, citing Sweden's “flagrant interference” in their internal affairs, and further on mobilised the 22-member Arab League and the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in vocal condemnation of the Swedish government. I argued back then that the Saudi reaction would probably have been different, had the ultimately undelivered speech belonged to a male politician hailing from another country such as the United States. While obviously unrelated to the Yemen war, this episode is indicative of broad tendencies in the official Saudi worldview that make it extraordinarily prone to aggressive and coercive policies. The timing of Saudi's military campaign, launched right in the thick of nuclear negotiations between Iran and world powers, is critical to understand the kingdom's motives. Betraying Saudi perceptions of its regional decline in the face of a resurgent rival, the intervention was meant, among other things, to send the Obama administration a signal that Saudi Arabia would not accommodate US overtures to Iran, and more significantly, the shifting balance of power in the Middle East. In other words, the Yemen intervention was part of Saudi attempts, since the beginning of King Salman's reign, to preserve their regional status and claims to leadership in the Muslim world, a position that has been consistently challenged over the past few years by the failure of hardline Saudi policies. For one, Riyadh's export and dissemination of Wahhabism as a means to maximise its influence abroad has helped cultivate such terrorist groups as al-Qaeda and Islamic State, which have not spared Saudi interests in their terror campaign. The perniciousness of the Wahhabi ideology has also served to tarnish the Saudi image in the region and more widely in the international community. The Saudi-led campaign to isolate and ostracise Qatar seems to be the latest instance of this passive-aggressive approach to reclaiming status and securing recognition. **It seems reasonable to argue that the Saudi Arabia's continuation of the military campaign in Yemen - against all the odds and despite its degeneration into an attritional “frozen” conflict - is less driven by “hard” national security concerns as it is by “soft” psychological factors and emotional gains, such as the boost of nationalism, surge in leadership popularity, diversion of public opinion from domestic problems, and projection of a powerful image abroad. The implications of such an argument are grim for the future of the Yemeni civil war. It suggests that the Saudi intervention will persist unabated until and unless those inherently elusive and long-term objectives are fulfilled.**

Fenton-Harvey '18 – peace talks fail because SA won't abide because of a lack of international impunity; Saudi has long-term oil ambitions in Yemen to build a pipeline

Fenton-Harvey, Jonathan. "Yemen needs more than peace talks and ceasefires." The New Arab. 5 December 2018. [//RJ">https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2018/12/5/yemen-needs-more-than-peace-talks-and-cessfires //RJ](https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2018/12/5/yemen-needs-more-than-peace-talks-and-cessfires)

The Trump administration, Saudi Arabia's biggest arms supplier, is clearly not serious about peace-making in Yemen either. Not only did they veto the UK-backed ceasefire resolution last month, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently defended Saudi-US ties, calling a US Senate resolution to block weapons sales to Saudi Arabia "poorly timed". Even President Trump audaciously justified continued arms sales because Russia and China would apparently sell them to the Saudis anyway. Even if they did reduce some arms sales, the US is more concerned about favourable ties with Riyadh. **Even if a ceasefire were passed, or peace talks were completed, it is likely that Saudi Arabia and the UAE will not abide, as they enjoy so much international impunity. The coalition previously ignored severe UN warnings when launching its assault on Hodeida in June. Even with the prospect of peace talks and the ceasefire resolution, fighting inside Hodeida still rages on, showing that warring factions are determined to gain leverage over each other, therefore undermining peace talks.** Yemeni hospitals still receive injured civilians, with Hodeida hospitals unable to take new patients, as they are surrounded by fighting. The Houthis have previously rejected UN-led peace efforts, claiming they were too favourable towards the coalition, and are likely to approach these current talks with scepticism. Furthermore, **the international community, especially Western backers of the coalition, have not addressed the potential long-term influence of Saudi Arabia and the UAE in Yemen - which could have detrimental effects in the country even if a peace deal is forged. Saudi Arabia is supposedly looking to exploit Yemen's crisis,** having looked to build an oil-port in the south-eastern Mahra province. Western officials have reportedly discussed in private that **Saudi Arabia is aiming to build a pipeline in Yemen, through the Hadramawt province towards the Aden port.** Even Yemen's Oil and Minerals Ministry has noticed this; in September they reportedly slammed Saudi Arabia's "looting" of Yemeni oil. **Saudi Arabia has deliberately bombed Yemen's food production and agriculture, seemingly to keep Yemen weak, dependent on Saudi Arabia's patronage, and to prevent it having independence.** Meanwhile, UAE-backed militias in the south, including southern separatists and Al-Qaeda-aligned militants, threaten any peace deal. Aiming to essentially colonise southern Yemen, Abu Dhabi desires a friendly southern-state to secure its own influence in the port of Aden, giving it improved access to international trade. **All this sets the foundations for further conflict, while potentially further depriving ordinary southern Yemenis. Future international interference in Yemen from both the coalition forces and their backers will push Yemen into an even more fragile position, regardless of any peace deal.** As the war has destroyed much of the country, civilians are often left in desperate circumstances with horrific humanitarian suffering, while the enabling of powerful militant factions such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) allow gunmen to exploit the chaos. While AQAP lost territory between 2016 and 2017 after a US-backed UAE crackdown, it still has an estimated 6,000-7,000 fighters, and could easily appeal to disenfranchised Yemenis in dire conditions. **Along with AQAP, the influential Southern Transitional Council (STC) and a wide range of tribal factions have not been included in any peace negotiations, showing the current talks are limited. Humanitarian suffering will undoubtedly continue.** Countless Yemenis have been forced to go without salaries. Food is available - to an extent - yet the main problem lies in Yemenis being able to afford it. The collapse of vital state institutions, including hospitals - half of which are not functioning - and sanitation facilities, have allowed a wide range of diseases, including cholera, to spread. As Matthew Tueller, US ambassador to Yemen, correctly argues: "The real answer to the humanitarian crisis lies in bringing about an end to the conflict in a way that will restore the institutions of the state." A combined international effort to restore Yemen's state is essential to prevent future instability and humanitarian suffering. The international role in the conflict needs to be addressed harshly. Activists including Campaign Against the Arms Trade in the UK have a court case against British arms sales to the coalition set to be heard next April, while in the US, Senate and Congressional support for ending America's support for Saudi Arabia is evidently increasing, heralded by figures such as Bernie Sanders. **Even if the conflict were to be halted soon, Saudi Arabia and the UAE could in the future intervene in Yemen if Western impunity does not end. After all, Riyadh has tried to control Yemen since the kingdom's founding in 1932, and has tried numerous times to destabilise the country, including supporting a southern split in 1994 after Yemen's 1990 unification. A simple ceasefire or**

peace agreement in this conflict will not prevent any future Saudi expeditions in the country, which will only perpetuate Yemen's instability.

Keleman '18 – Saudi Arabia is ignoring Iranian efforts for dialogue and is deliberately exacerbating tensions with Iran as a tactic of diversion

Keleman, Barbara. "Saudi Arabia from Within: Diversionary Policy of Iranian Containment?" London School of Economics and Political Science. July 2018. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/07/05/saudi-arabia-from-within-diversionary-policy-of-iranian-containment/> //RJ

One of the important aspects of the diversionary theory of war is the significance it places on domestic issues when explaining a country's foreign policy. It claims that **leaders, confronted with domestic opposition over economic, societal and political issues, might try to divert the population's attention from domestic matters to the international arena by means of war or conflict, which enables them to survive politically while simultaneously maintain stability at home.** This 'scapegoat' hypothesis focuses on examining belligerent foreign policy from the perspective of leaders whom are trying to solidify their domestic political power. **Saudi Arabia is currently experiencing the biggest social and economic transformation in past decades,** pioneered through MBS's 'Vision 2030'. Reasons for this initiative, as much as diversification being an economic priority since the 1970s, are simply summarised as structural challenges caused by the unsustainable rentier nature of the Saudi economy. **This not only requires a plethora of economic changes, but also changes in societal rules, predominantly associated with Islam.** While popular backlash, such as that experienced during the 1979 Iranian Revolution is highly unlikely, changes in society and policy might lead to certain degrees of destabilisation. In fact, the history of vigorous opposition from Saudi conservative circles on hot topics like women's rights is quite extensive. **Thus, one of the biggest challenges for the current Saudi leadership will be to mitigate any kind of instability caused by any of Saudi Arabia's three societal groups: clerics, citizens, and the royal family.** This means that if MBS wants to keep Saudi Arabia stable while transforming it as per 'Vision 2030', the country needs to be domestically strong and united. A lot has been written on the sectarian nature of the current conflicts in the Middle East and sectarianisation as a tool for governments to paralyse strong opposition. While Saudi Arabia's role during the Arab Spring has been often discussed in relations to sectarian conflict between Sunni Kingdom and Shia Republic, its current behaviour is often misrepresented as driven purely by Shia-Sunni animus. The Kingdom, which has embarked on the aggressive policy of Iranian containment through proxies in the region, seems to be more interested in different aspect of the conflict. The unifying principle behind its policy of targeting different groups is the group in question's sympathy towards Iran, which often correlates with sectarian preference. Nonetheless, sympathy towards Iran is rather divorced from the sectarian profiling of 'Sunni vs Shia'. Saudi Arabia and Iran are currently fighting via proxies on two fronts, Yemen and Syria, while standing on opposite ends vis-à-vis the Qatar diplomatic rift. Despite this having roots in the 2011 Arab Spring, it is only since 2016 that the Kingdom has cut its ties with Iran, taking a more assertive containment stance and stepping up its rhetoric. After international isolation and under an arms embargo from both the US and the UN (since 2006), Iran has been lacking a major security guarantor, a role the US has played in the case of Saudi Arabia. In order to make up for this vulnerability, Iran focuses on asymmetric military capabilities – extending its network of partners and engaging via proxies through what it calls the 'axis of resistance' (Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas). Iranian fighting through the axis of resistance, which diverts fighting to other countries, is strategically important, given its outdated conventional military capabilities. The war in Yemen has caused serious financial pressure on the Kingdom, given the costs of bombing, ground incursions, and billions of dollars in humanitarian aid given to Yemen. In fact it pushed Saudi Arabia to allocate more than 25 percent of its total budget on military spending, ultimately impacting on its foreign reserves. The rising cost of the intervention, accompanied by falling oil prices, forced it to sell \$1.2 billion of holdings in European equities. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has declared its increasing willingness to send troops to Syria. **This begs the question as to why Saudi Arabia would invest such a high number of resources in multiple conflicts in the region, while simultaneously undergoing deep shifts and reforms at home.** (The ambitious project Vision 2030 requires at least \$4 trillion of investment according to McKinsey.) **While there are legitimate reasons for Saudi concerns over Iranian activities in the region, Saudi Arabia's current foreign policy does not seem proportionate to the threat, hinting at a hidden agenda of interventionism and aggression. Saudi Arabia is deliberately exacerbating tensions with Iran, while Iran has tried to ease them by proposing dialogue with the Kingdom. This strategy reflects Saudi Arabia's ongoing social and domestic political reforms. Saudi Arabia is thus trying to reassert its leadership in the region, while uniting its population in the fight against the common enemy – Iran. By evoking the possibility of Saudi annihilation, the leadership engages in hostile rhetoric that evokes fear domestically, while temporarily distracting it from the domestic reforms that are disrupting traditional cultural principles.** Whether Saudi Arabia's foreign policy will indeed escalate into diversionary war is yet to be seen.

Beaumont, Peter. "Huge spike in Yemen Violence as civilian deaths rise by 164% in four months." The Guardian. Sept. 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/sep/26/huge-spike-in-yemen-violence-as-civilian-deaths-rise-by-164-in-four-months-hodeidah> //RJ

Civilian deaths in Yemen have surged dramatically since June after the Saudi-led coalition began an offensive to take the key port city of Hodeidah from Houthi rebels. According to the figures, collected by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project (Acled), **civilian deaths in the Yemeni conflict have increased by 164% in the four months since the Hodeidah offensive started, claiming the lives of about 166 people a month.** The group's analysis suggests Hodeidah has become the most violent frontline in the four-year conflict. In recent months, about one-third of the total conflict-related fatalities have been recorded in the governorate, reflecting the bitterness of the struggle for the key port and its surrounding environs.

Niall McCarthy, Forbes, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2018/11/21/how-the-u-s-fueled-the-saudi-war-in-yemen-infographic/#31ddae701c68>

In his statement, Trump asserted that the Saudis are planning \$450 billion of investments in the U.S. economy, of which \$110 billion is part of an arms package. Both figures were debunked by the Washington Post and New York Times who claim the arms deal is much smaller with both countries refusing to substantiate such a massive investment in the U.S. economy. Trump consistently makes an economic argument about maintaining ties with Riyadh citing job creation as the primary reason for doing business with the kingdom. Even though the Khashoggi murder has rightfully attracted international condemnation, **U.S. weaponry has fueled the conflict in Yemen for years without much scrutiny, leaving eight million people on the brink of starvation.** The U.S. recently said that it will stop refueling Saudi warplanes but air raids are still using western aircraft and munitions. In fact, two-thirds of the 365 combat-capable aircraft in the Saudi inventory are of U.S. origin including 171 F-15s. Meanwhile, the Saudi land forces possess over 3,000 U.S. supplied armored vehicles.

Hartung, William. "U.S. Military Support for Saudi Arabia and the War in Yemen." Center for International Policy. November 2018.

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ba8a1_5e9019d625e84087af647e6cb91ea3e2.pdf //RJ

In terms of Saudi Arabia's immediate ability to continue its military intervention in Yemen, the most important weapons are those already in the Saudi arsenal or part of signed deals for equipment that is now in the pipeline. These systems rely on U.S.-supplied spare parts and maintenance, which gives Washington considerable leverage over Riyadh with respect to its ability to continue to carry out military operations. The preponderance of U.S. equipment used by Saudi forces also makes it difficult for another supplier like Russia or China to replace the United States as a major supplier to Riyadh. **It would take decades for the Kingdom to wean itself from dependence on U.S. equipment, training and support, and new equipment might not be easily interoperable with U.S.-supplied systems.** Saudi Arabia could buy a Russian or Chinese system here or there to send a political message, but they could not easily replace the role of sales and support from the United States, along with the United Kingdom, as the major bulwarks of its military capability. **More than two-thirds of Saudi Arabia's estimated 365 combat capable aircraft came from the United States**, including 171 F-15 combat aircraft; 5 E-3A early warning and control aircraft; 9 KC-130 refueling tankers; and 30 C-130H Hercules transport planes. Of the 171 F-15's, 90 are F-15S fighter/ground attack aircraft. These U.S.-supplied planes have played a central role in the Saudi-led bombing campaign in Yemen, along with 69 Tornado aircraft supplied by the United Kingdom and 71 Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft supplied by a consortium consisting of the U.K., Germany, Italy, and Spain.¹⁵ An October 2010 offer of 84 additional F-15S's is still in process, with the first aircraft delivered in December of 2016. That deal also included upgrades of 70 F-15s already in the Saudi arsenal. The Saudi armed forces also have 47 Apache attack helicopters, with 35 allotted to the Royal Saudi Land Forces and 12 allotted to the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG). In October 2010, the U.S. offered Saudi Arabia another 70 Apaches, some of which are believed to have been delivered, although the quantities transferred so far are unclear. The U.S. has also offered the Saudis 9 Black Hawk transport helicopters and 20 C-130J transport planes; the delivery status of these systems is also not clear at this time. The Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) refuses to provide information on deliveries of U.S. equipment to foreign purchasers, referring inquiries to the purchasing government. Thus far, the government of Saudi Arabia has declined to respond to requests about the timing of deliveries of these tanks or any other U.S.-supplied equipment.

Guay, Terrence. "Arm sales to Saudi Arabia give Trump all the leverage he needs in Khashoggi affair." Pennsylvania State University. October 2018. <https://theconversation.com/arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia-give-trump-all-the-leverage-he-needs-in-khashoggi-affair-104998> //RJ

While it's true that Russia and China are indeed major exporters of armaments, the claim that U.S. weapons can easily be replaced by other suppliers is not – at least not in the short term. First, once a country is "locked in" to a specific kind of weapons system, such as planes, tanks or naval vessels, the cost to switch to a different supplier can be huge. Military personnel must be retrained on new equipment, spare parts need to be replaced, and operational changes may be necessary. After being so reliant on U.S. weapons systems for decades, the transition costs to buy from another country could be prohibitive even for oil-rich Saudi Arabia. The second problem with Trump's argument is that armaments from Russia, China or elsewhere are simply not as sophisticated as U.S. weapons, which is why they are usually cheaper – though the quality gap is quickly decreasing. To maintain its military superiority in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia has opted to purchase virtually all of its weapons from American and European companies. That is why the U.S. has significant leverage in this aspect of the relationship. Any Saudi threat to retaliate against a ban on U.S. arms sales by buying weapons from countries that have not raised concerns about the Khashoggi disappearance would not be credible. And is probably why, despite worries in the White House, such a threat has not yet been made.

Riedel '18 – if London/Washington halts flow of logistics, RSAF is grounded

Riedel, Bruce. "After Khashoggi, US arms sales to the Saudis are essential leverage." The Brookings Institution. October 2018. [//RJ](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/10/10/after-khashoggi-us-arms-sales-to-the-saudis-are-essential-leverage/?fbclid=IwAR2P4Jr2yBTNgFCkvdhEFeBY8ik5Z32twWgP97_LB-5xy-hnghtCIDWC5oI)

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. Under President Obama, Saudi Arabia spent well over \$110 billion in U.S. weapons, including for aircraft, helicopters, and air defense missiles. These deals were the largest in American history. Saudi commentators routinely decried Obama for failing to protect Saudi interests, but the kingdom loved his arms deals. But the kingdom has not bought any new arms platform during the Trump administration. Only one has even been seriously discussed: A \$15 billion deal for THAAD, terminal high altitude area defense missiles, has gotten the most attention and preliminary approval from Congress, but the Saudis let pass a September deadline for the deal with Lockheed Martin. The Saudis certainly need more air defenses with the pro-Iran Zaydi Shiite Houthi rebels in Yemen firing ballistic missiles at Saudi cities. The three and a half year-old Saudi war in Yemen is hugely expensive. There are no public figures from the Saudi government about the war's costs, but a conservative estimate would be at least \$50 billion per year. **Maintenance costs**

for aircraft and warships go up dramatically when they are constantly in combat operations. The Royal

Saudi Navy has been blockading Yemen for over 40 months. The RSAF has conducted thousands of air strikes. **The war is draining the**

kingdom's coffers. And responsibility for the war is on Mohammed bin Salman, who as defense minister has driven Riyadh into this quagmire. Shaking the arms relationship is by far the most important way to clip his wings.

Bazzi, Mohamed. "The United States Could End the War in Yemen If It Wanted To." The Atlantic. Sept. 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/09/iran-yemen-saudi-arabia/571465/> //RJ

While the Saudis are quick to blame Iran for the war, several researchers, including Thomas Juneau, a professor at the University of Ottawa and a former analyst at Canada's Department of National Defense, have shown that **the Houthis did not receive significant support from Tehran before the Saudi intervention in 2015. Iran has stepped up military assistance to the Houthis since the war, and Hezbollah has begun sending military advisers to train the Yemeni rebels.** But the costs of this assistance fall far short of those incurred by Saudi Arabia and its allies. For Iran, the Yemen conflict is a low-cost way to bleed its regional rival.

Ahmed, Nafeez. "The collapse of Saudi Arabia is inevitable." Middle East Eye. September 2015. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/collapse-saudi-arabia-inevitable?fbclid=IwAR1FTOwjZek-zNNLhiwCNLBbOzvvH201duDB9zF1FnocCm5iPXNWr2ZxP2Q> //RJ

Like many countries in the region before it, **Saudi Arabia is on the brink of a perfect storm** of interconnected challenges **that, if history is anything to judge by, will be the monarchy's undoing well within the next decade.** The biggest elephant in the room is oil. **Saudi Arabia's primary source of revenues, of course, is oil exports.** For the last few years, the kingdom has pumped at record levels to sustain production, keeping oil prices low, undermining competing oil producers around the world who cannot afford to stay in business at such tiny profit margins, and paving the way for Saudi petro-dominance. But Saudi Arabia's spare capacity to pump like crazy can only last so long. A new peer-reviewed study in the Journal of Petroleum Science and Engineering anticipates that **Saudi Arabia will experience a peak in its oil production, followed by inexorable decline, in 2028** – that's just 13 years away. This could well underestimate the extent of the problem. According to the Export Land Model (ELM) created by Texas petroleum geologist Jeffrey J Brown and Dr Sam Foucher, **the key issue is not oil production alone, but the capacity to translate production into exports against rising rates of domestic consumption.** Brown and Foucher showed that the inflection point to watch out for is when an oil producer can no longer increase the quantity of oil sales abroad because of the need to meet rising domestic energy demand. In 2008, they found that **Saudi net oil exports had already begun declining as of 2006.** They forecast that **this trend would continue.** They were right. **From 2005 to 2015, Saudi net exports have experienced an annual decline rate of 1.4 percent,** within the range predicted by Brown and Foucher. A report by Citigroup recently predicted that **net exports would plummet to zero in the next 15 years.** This means that **Saudi state revenues, 80 percent of which come from oil sales, are heading downwards, terminally.** Saudi Arabia is the region's biggest energy consumer, domestic demand having increased by 7.5 percent over the last five years – driven largely by population growth. The total Saudi population is estimated to grow from 29 million people today to 37 million by 2030. As demographic expansion absorbs Saudi Arabia's energy production, the next decade is therefore likely to see the country's oil exporting capacity ever more constrained. Renewable energy is one avenue which Saudi Arabia has tried to invest in to wean domestic demand off oil dependence, hoping to free up capacity for oil sales abroad, thus maintaining revenues. But earlier this year, the strain on the kingdom's finances began to show when it announced an eight-year delay to its \$109 billion solar programme, which was supposed to produce a third of the nation's electricity by 2032. State revenues also have been hit through blowback from the kingdom's own short-sighted strategy to undermine competing oil producers. As I previously reported, Saudi Arabia has maintained high production levels precisely to keep global oil prices low, making new ventures unprofitable for rivals such as the US shale gas industry and other OPEC producers. The Saudi treasury has not escaped the fall-out from the resulting oil profit squeeze – but the idea was that the kingdom's significant financial reserves would allow it to weather the storm until its rivals are forced out of the market, unable to cope with the chronic lack of profitability. That hasn't quite happened yet. In the meantime, Saudi Arabia's considerable reserves are being depleted at unprecedented levels, dropping from their August 2014 peak of \$737 billion to \$672bn in May – falling by about \$12bn a month. At this rate, by late 2018, the kingdom's reserves could deplete as low as \$200bn, an eventuality that would likely be anticipated by markets much earlier, triggering capital flight. To make up for this prospect, King Salman's approach has been to accelerate borrowing. What happens when over the next few years reserves deplete, debt increases, while oil revenues remain strained? As with autocratic regimes like Egypt, Syria and Yemen – all of which are facing various degrees of domestic unrest – **one of the first expenditures to slash in hard times will be lavish domestic subsidies.** In the former countries, **successive subsidy reductions**

responding to the impacts of rocketing food and oil prices fed directly into the grievances that generated the “Arab Spring” uprisings. Saudi Arabia’s oil wealth, and its unique ability to maintain generous subsidies for oil, housing, food and other consumer items, **plays a major role in fending off that risk of civil unrest**. Energy subsidies alone make up about a fifth of Saudi’s gross domestic product. **As revenues are increasingly strained, the kingdom’s capacity to keep a lid on rising domestic dissent will falter**, as has already happened in countries across the region. About a quarter of the Saudi population lives in poverty. Unemployment is at about 12 percent, and affects mostly young people – 30 percent of whom are unemployed. Climate change is pitched to heighten the country’s economic problems, especially in relation to food and water. Like many countries in the region, Saudi Arabia is already experiencing the effects of climate change in the form of stronger warming temperatures in the interior, and vast areas of rainfall deficits in the north. By 2040, average temperatures are expected to be higher than the global average, and could increase by as much as 4 degrees Celsius, while rain reductions could worsen. This would be accompanied by more extreme weather events, like the 2010 Jeddah flooding caused by a year’s worth of rain occurring within the course of just four hours. The combination could dramatically impact agricultural productivity, which is already facing challenges from overgrazing and unsustainable industrial agricultural practices leading to accelerated desertification. In any case, 80 percent of Saudi Arabia’s food requirements are purchased through heavily subsidised imports, meaning that without the protection of those subsidies, the country would be heavily impacted by fluctuations in global food prices. “Saudi Arabia is particularly vulnerable to climate change as most of its ecosystems are sensitive, its renewable water resources are limited and its economy remains highly dependent on fossil fuel exports, while significant demographic pressures continue to affect the government’s ability to provide for the needs of its population,” concluded a UN Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO) report in 2010. The kingdom is one of the most water scarce in the world, at 98 cubic metres per inhabitant per year. Most water withdrawal is from groundwater, 57 percent of which is non-renewable, and 88 percent of which goes to agriculture. In addition, desalination plants meet about 70 percent of the kingdom’s domestic water supplies. But desalination is very energy intensive, accounting for more than half of domestic oil consumption. As oil exports run down, along with state revenues, while domestic consumption increases, the kingdom’s ability to use desalination to meet its water needs will decrease. **In Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Egypt, civil unrest and all-out war can be traced back to the devastating impact of declining state power** in the context of climate-induced droughts, agricultural decline, and rapid oil depletion. **Yet the Saudi government has decided that rather than learning lessons from the hubris of its neighbours, it won’t wait for war to come home – but will readily export war in the region in a madcap bid to extend its geopolitical hegemony and prolong its petro-dominance**. Unfortunately, these actions are symptomatic of the fundamental delusion that has prevented all these regimes from responding rationally to the Crisis of Civilization that is unravelling the ground from beneath their feet. That delusion consists of an unwavering, fundamentalist faith: that more business-as-usual will solve the problems created by business-as-usual. Like many of its neighbours, such deep-rooted structural realities mean that **Saudi Arabia is indeed on the brink of protracted state failure, a process likely to take-off in the next few years, becoming truly obvious well within a decade**.

Ahmed '15 – net importer by 2030

Ahmed, Nafeez. “The US-Saudi war with OPEC to prolong oil’s dying empire.” Middle East Eye. May 2015. [//RJ">https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/us-saudi-war-opec-prolong-oils-dying-empire //RJ](https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/us-saudi-war-opec-prolong-oils-dying-empire)

Therefore, Saudi Arabia’s accelerated supply output to keep prices low cannot last for long. In 2012, a Citigroup [report](#) predicted that **more and more of Saudi oil production would be allocated to meeting rapidly rising domestic electricity demand, forcing Saudi Arabia to increasingly reduce its exports. By 2030, within just 15 years, the kingdom’s exports would drop to zero, making it a net importer**. The report thus showed that Saudi Arabia’s capacity to maintain its high level of exports onto global markets is likely to end well before then in coming years. Control of oil underpins US hegemony. But the death of the oil empire is inevitable. Committed to playing god in world affairs, the US-Saudi oil weapon strategy is a last ditch effort to breath life into a doomed system of geopolitical domination premised on fossil fuels.

The situation will only get worse. [Riegg '17 of Newsweek](#) writes that as Saudi Arabia's economy gets worse, the government will launch a full-on invasion of Yemen to seize the Bab el-Mandeb strait to force other Gulf nations to transport oil through Saudi territory, thus spiking oil prices globally and saving the Kingdom's petro-economy. This strategy is showing already; [Fenton '18 of the New Arab](#) writes that Saudi Arabia is exploiting the Yemen War to build an oil pipeline across the country.