

Opportunities and Threats  
of Artificial Intelligence

Qatari Forces  
Seek Advanced Training

Integrating Missile Defense  
in the Middle East

# UNIPATH

**SECURITY  
THROUGH  
INNOVATION**



A Doha beachfront displays a sculpture by Iraqi calligrapher Sabah al-Arbili in honor of Qatar's founding family. AFP/GETTY IMAGES





**A Kyrgyz archer demonstrates her skill at the Salbuurun hunting festival near Lake Issyk-Kul.**

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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Regional security is increasingly dependent upon adoption of innovations in technology, training and organization.  
UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION

## UNIPATH

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## KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE

We live in an era where new technologies are transforming international competition. Although the United States continues to invest in technologies such as unmanned aerial systems and undersea and surface drones, we hold no monopoly on these capabilities.

Militias and violent extremist organizations operating in the region are acquiring — and in some cases manufacturing — equipment and weapons that can do great harm without endangering their operators.

Possession of these easily obtained and inexpensive weapons could determine who prevails in a conflict. In recent wars like the one in Ukraine, we see relatively cheap drones sinking costly warships.

The United States and our partners are taking a proactive approach by embracing modern military innovations that enhance regional security for a greater return on investment.

Until my appointment as Deputy Commander of U.S. Central Command, I commanded the U.S. 5th Fleet based out of Bahrain. The waters our naval forces patrol, stretching from the Suez Canal to the northern Arabian Gulf, are critical conduits for a large percentage of global trade. It is 8,000 kilometers from the Suez Canal, around the Arabian Peninsula, to the Northern Arabian Gulf.

Given that vast distance, it is simply not practical nor affordable to build so many ships to cover so large an area. So, we have turned to technological innovation. Although unmanned aerial vehicles have been around for close to 30 years and unmanned underwater vehicles for nearly 10 years, unmanned surface vessels just now are reaching technological maturation, and so these surface drones have become our latest focus.

These uncrewed floating platforms extend our vision over the horizon, their sensors and cameras delivering millions of bits of data that are sorted for relevance by artificial intelligence systems.



Yet these machines are only as good as the people who operate them. In 2021, U.S. Navy Central Command created Task Force 59 as its first task force dedicated to unmanned and artificial intelligence. As of early 2024, this task force had conducted more than 34 exercises to train personnel in cutting edge maritime technology. Operators of these unmanned systems have been gaining knowledge and experience at a furious rate.

Other Central Command components have also focused on unmanned systems tailored to their needs. For example, the U.S. Air Force's Task Force 99 is considering the use of aerial drones from nontraditional sources such as those it can digitally print for about \$3,000 apiece.

The U.S. Army's Task Force 39 is testing robotic unmanned ground systems that can safely supply troops in the field. Special Operations Force's Task Force 179 is investigating the use of disposable swarming attack drones to multiply combat effectiveness.

The implementation of these innovations, both defensive and offensive, remains a work in progress, but affords enormous opportunity to act with speed and effect.

These platforms also provide an opportunity to expand partnerships in unique ways. Jordan, for example, has been a major hub for unmanned operations for more than two years. The Jordanian Robotics Operation Center (J-ROC) is a shining example of partnership at its best, with the U.S. and the Jordanian militaries serving side by side as we advance cutting edge capability.

As we look to the future, each of us — the U.S. and its partners, allies and friends — should continue to adopt these technologies in line with our unique security situations.

**Vice Adm. Brad Cooper**

Deputy Commander of U.S. Central Command



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# COOPERATIVE MISSILE DEFENSE IN THE ARABIAN GULF

**A shared early warning system would protect against aerial threats from state and nonstate actors**

MAJ. GEN. KHALED ALSHRIAAN, COMMANDER, KUWAIT AIR DEFENSE FORCE

**Integrated air and missile defense** (IAMD) is essential in peacetime and conflict and is the ideal solution to counter emerging and future aerial threats. It achieves integration and interoperability among all defensive systems to protect vital and strategic areas from aerial threats.

The development of air threats using unmanned aerial systems (UAS), cruise missiles (CM), and tactical ballistic missiles (TBM) is occurring rapidly and is being used widely and effectively by various actors.

UAS improve tactical and technical parameters as well as reduce radar and thermal signatures and may grow in significance as artificial intelligence (AI) plays a greater role.

On the other hand, small commercial drones are also being used extensively on battlefields after their capabilities have been upgraded to carry lethal weapons. This type of drone is low cost and easy to obtain from commercial markets.

In terms of CMs, it is anticipated that future developments will result in increased range and the continuation of their ability to maneuver at low altitudes and high speeds. Cruise missiles are capable of operating at subsonic, supersonic and hypersonic speeds.

Hypersonic cruise missiles are considered highly advanced weaponry. This is due to their ability to change trajectory throughout the flight at speeds of Mach 7 or more. Their low radar cross section makes them practically undetectable and their maneuverability during the entire flight path reduces the possibility of radar detection.

Also, the dispersal of TBMs in large numbers and



**Maj. Gen. Khaled Alshriaan**

their possession by various threat sources constitute a dangerous development at all times and everywhere because these missiles benefit from speed and reach. Therefore, early warning systems and high combat readiness should be maintained 24/7 for quick response.

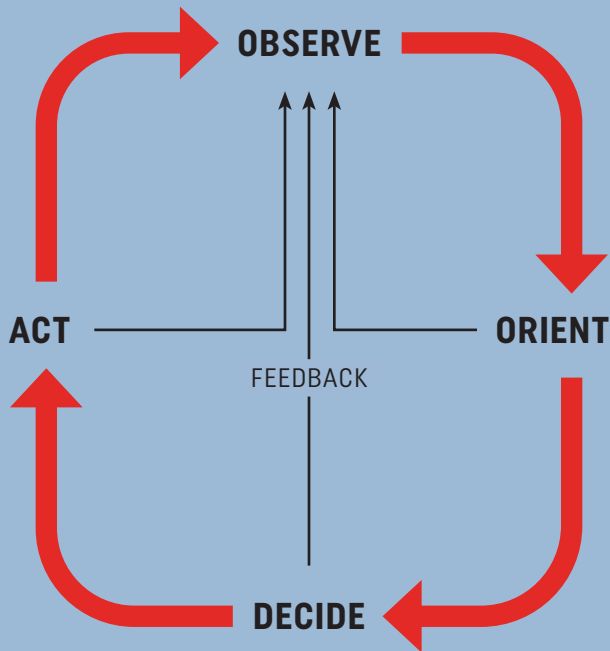
To counter the aerial threats effectively, the early warning system should provide sufficient time

to the command and control system to make the correct decisions at the appropriate moment, because in recent times, air threats depend on exploiting certain advantages, the most important of which is the stealth factor using low-flying UAS or cruise missiles with very small radar cross sections and maneuverability to reduce detection and achieve surprise.

The concept of IAMD is considered extremely important to achieve effective regional air defense, integrating and harmonizing early warning, command and control, and air defense systems. Therefore, for any air defense to be effective, the following should be achieved:

First, develop robust early warning systems that can detect all types of air threats, especially targets with very small radar

## The OODA Loop



If we apply the OODA loop to IAMD decision-making and we can act to confront the air threat at the right time and place, we can defeat the air threat. But if we react once the aerial threat is well advanced, we will suffer setbacks.







cross sections (slow, low and small) and detect them at the appropriate times so that air defense systems can repel and destroy the threats before they achieve their goals.

Second, an effective, advanced command and control center should be compatible and integrated with early warning sensors and air defense weapons systems with secure communications that meet all cybersecurity requirements. The command and control center must be able to work as part of national and regional networks. It must integrate with a Gulf Cooperation Council early warning system as well as those of allied forces. Continuous training involving realistic simulations should hone the skills of the staff at these command and control centers to ensure rapid decision making.

Third, we must develop an integrated air defense umbrella capable of destroying all types and sources of threats no matter their altitude, speed or course. Planning must focus on 360-degree air defenses capable of repelling swarm attacks and maintaining combat readiness of personnel and equipment by raising the level of performance through the use of artificial intelligence. To ensure the security of computer systems, we need a cybersecurity

**Maj. Gen. Khaled Alshriaan attends Eagle Resolve 22 in the United States with then-U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Bradley Swanson.** SGT. LEO JENKINS/U.S. ARMY

policy that evolves as threats develop and is compatible at the national and regional levels.

IAMD still faces challenges on both policy and technical issues. These must be overcome. First, clear national policies must be established with a long-term plan that specifies how, who, where and when. National policies must be harmonized at the regional level to create a joint policy.

On the other hand, technical challenges must be resolved as soon as possible because aerial threats are developing rapidly. IAMD must be updated to match those threats as quickly as possible.

Col. John Boyd of the United States Air Force developed a decision-making model called the OODA loop that contains four steps (observe, orient, decide, act).

If we apply the OODA loop to IAMD decision-making and we can act to confront the air threat at the right time and place, we can defeat the air threat. But if we react once the aerial threat is well advanced, we will suffer setbacks.

That's why IAMD provides observation by the early warning systems, orientation and decision making at the command and control center, and action by air defense weapons systems. Integration and interoperability at all these levels will help us defeat threats from the air. ♦

**A Royal Saudi Air Force K-3 Tanker flies with Saudi and U.S. F-15Cs. The training highlighted the ability of multinational partners to operate on similar platforms and weapon systems.**

ROYAL SAUDI AIR FORCE



UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION

# YEMEN'S STRUGGLE *for* STABILITY

Iranian-backed militias are smuggling weapons, threatening Red Sea shipping and devastating Yemeni society

MAJ. GEN. MOHAMMED ZAYED IBRAHIM, YEMENI DEFENSE ATTACHE TO THE UNITED STATES

One of the most important meetings of the Manama Forum in November 2023 was a special session dealing with the dynamics of the Red Sea crisis, which has significantly rippled through the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Yemen. In fact, conflicts that arise locally often cross borders, as has been the case with Syria, Yemen, Libya and Somalia.

These conflicts have negative consequences, particularly in the Red Sea. They have exacerbated illegal immigration and weapons smuggling, as well as terrorism conducted by al-Qaida and Daesh.

The Red Sea is vital to Arabic-speaking regions. This region traces its history back to ancient civilizations and helped birth the three Abrahamic religions. Seven Arabic-speaking countries surround the eastern and western sides of the Red Sea, namely Jordan, Saudi Arabia,

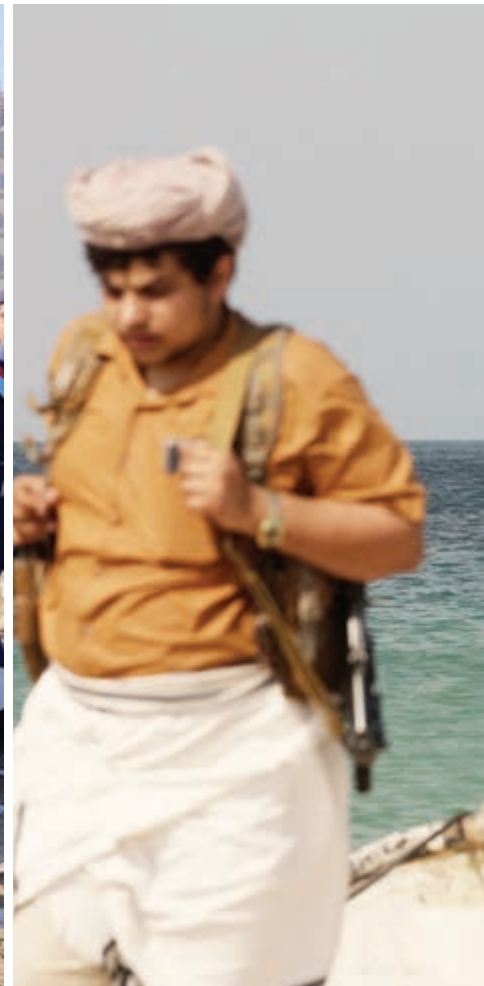


**Maj. Gen. Mohammed Zayed Ibrahim, Yemeni Defense Attache to the United States**

Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan and Egypt, in addition to my country of Yemen. These countries occupy about 90% of the Red Sea's coasts and ports.

International policy should govern this strategic corridor. The Red Sea's unique geopolitical importance distinguishes it from other international waterways. It constitutes a strategic meeting point, especially with its central location among the three continents of the Old World (Asia, Africa and Europe). And it constitutes a strategic nautical link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean.

In addition, several strategic islands control straits and choke points. Ensuring the security of Yemen is an important consideration within the Arab-African national security thematic framework. This affects the balance of power.



**Yemeni troops parade in Marib province.**

AFF/GETTY IMAGES

What is happening in Yemen has repercussions for the security of the Red Sea. Since the Houthi militias took control of the western coast of Yemen, the risks affecting freedom of maritime navigation, especially in the Red Sea, have increased. These militias also threaten the security of the region, especially after they seized control of the port of Hodeidah, the largest port on Yemen's western coast.

In this respect, Iran's support of the Houthi militias' presence in the Red Sea represents an important fulcrum in Iran's strategy and increased its fervor and determination to control such critical international waterways.

Iran has sought to employ pressure to advance its nuclear project, including threatening global trade routes to further its interests.

To achieve Iranian ambitions, this malign state supplies the Houthi militias with bomb-laden boats, naval mines and drone aircraft, also provides training to increase the lethality of Houthi attacks.

The Houthis recent acquisition of Iranian self-propelled boats, which are remotely controlled for repeated launches, turned the Red Sea into a combat zone.

Houthi terrorism in the Red Sea, whose Bab el-Mandeb strait is among the busiest shipping corridors in the world, has suppressed global trade.

These are clear facts. United States forces have stopped several ships carrying ammunition and weapons destined for the Houthi militias. To limit armaments resupplying Houthi militias and allowing them to threaten and attack ships crossing the Red Sea, we believe in halting any military support from reaching Houthi militias. This will also help avert a war that could enflame the entire region.

It would also help relieve the pain and suffering of the Yemeni people. Unfortunately, a decade has passed with the ugliest forms of humiliation and suffering, and our tragedy continues to deepen.

The common Yemeni experience is one of societal misery exacerbated by some of the highest unemployment in the world. There are few job opportunities and little social life for millions of residents. The cities are devoid of services and their residents unable to secure their needs.

Rising costs, including for vital transportation and fuel, are compounded by the collapse of exchange rates. Cities are crowded with displaced people, and the arrival of illegal immigrants increases



**The international cargo ship Galaxy Leader that was hijacked by the Houthis is anchored off the coast of Yemen. The multinational crew disappeared for months after the seizure in November 2023.** REUTERS

**Yemeni children forced to attend a Houthi-sponsored summer camp in May 2024 are indoctrinated into the group's militant ideology.** REUTERS



the risk that terrorist fighters may hide among them. This has created a reality that is difficult to overcome. Reform cannot counterbalance the extent of the massive and unprecedented disruption in the composition of the population. And successful solutions remain elusive.

The International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) predicted worsening hunger crisis in some Yemeni governorates occupied by Houthi militias, because the United Nations stopped providing these areas with food assistance.

In fact, a report from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network indicated that the World Food Program ceased food distribution in December 2023 to areas in northern Yemen under Houthi control. That will surely lead to a deterioration in food security in 2024.

The report expressed concern that populations of Houthi-controlled areas will become critically malnourished, meaning at least 1 in every 3 families will suffer from a severe shortage of food and medicine, increasing the death toll.

Besides, the International Food Safety Authorities Network indicated that millions of families in Houthi-controlled rural governorates do not have alternative sources of safe food that would compensate for losing international food assistance. This not only doubles the deficit toward providing food security, but also compels these governorates to take extreme measures to confront looming starvation and disease. ◆

# QATAR'S MILITARY SEEKS ADVANCED TRAINING

*The U.S. Army shares innovations with Qataris  
at the National Training Center*

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UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY U.S. ARMY CENTRAL

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During the February 2024 visit of the Qatari Land Forces delegation to the National Training Center (NTC) Fort Irwin in California, where the rugged terrain is considered a realistic environment to train for tank and infantry battles, Unipath interviewed Lt. Col. Mohammed Al Kuwari. He talked about the center's capabilities and ways to develop the skills of friendly forces there.

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The Qatari military delegation visits a U.S. Army team at the NTC

**UNIPATH:** What is your opinion of the U.S. Army National Training Center?

**LT. COL. AL KUWARI:** On our first visit to the U.S. Army National Training Center, which is considered one of the best training centers in the world with its integrated system of facilities and latest technologies, we found that it provides trainees with real-life combat experience in an environment that reflects conditions on the battlefield, from fighting in rugged terrain to populated cities as well as armored battles in open terrain and mountainous regions.

**UNIPATH:** How can the technologies and expertise of the National Training Center help to develop the skills of the Qatar Armed Forces?

**AL KUWARI:** The U.S. Army has immense capabilities as well as the resources to acquire and develop new technologies that help to detect enemy locations and direct precise strikes, in addition to protecting its own forces from hostile fire. It also possesses advanced combat training technologies. Every Soldier and vehicle is equipped with advanced sensors that tell the training commander and supervisors the location of the forces, the degree of injury suffered by every Soldier and the damage caused to every piece of military hardware on the battlefield. This tells them whether the forces succeeded or failed in their given objectives and identifies any mistakes platoon or company commanders made so that they may be avoided in the future. Such advanced technologies are vital for evaluating the performance of forces and developing their capabilities. Of course, we can benefit from these technologies by sending several trainees, whether commissioned or noncommissioned officers, on an ongoing basis so that they can gain field experience and become acquainted with new training techniques and technologies and the potential for employing them in the training centers of our own armed forces.

**UNIPATH:** How can a partnership with U.S. forces benefit joint training and exercises?

**AL KUWARI:** A partnership with American forces in the field of training and exercises is of utmost importance to the Qatari army. We have a long-term relationship with the U.S. military, and joint training and exercises have benefitted us immensely in gaining experience and employing new technologies in combat. The American military has fought many wars in different terrains and difficult conditions such as World War II, Vietnam, and the global war on terror. This is a vast amount of field experience that allows them to share expertise with us.

**UNIPATH:** Are you considering sending units from the Qatari army to train at the center?

**AL KUWARI:** After our first visit and after familiarizing ourselves with the facilities and training methods at the National Training Center, sending successive groups of personnel from the Qatari army to train in this important facility will be a priority for us. We hope to participate at the company level so that they can train with peers in the U.S. Army and share expertise and tactics. This center covers 2,600 square kilometers of difficult terrain. This allows participants to gain experience in adapting to combat conditions, building defenses and fortifications after liberating an area, and holding fighting positions for days before advancing toward other objectives or repelling enemy attacks. The center also encourages field commanders to think carefully when planning and when securing supply routes for distances ranging from 50 to 100 kilometers. It also teaches combat without reliance upon modern technologies. This in itself is a big challenge that gives commanders the ability to fight effectively under any conditions. We will gain experience and share our experience with them on combat doctrine, training methods, fighting in desert environments, protecting vital installations and coastal defense. ♦


Qatari troops sample some of the field training available at the National Training Center.



# THE COSTS AND BENEFITS of Artificial Intelligence

UNIPATH STAFF





**Militaries are adopting information technologies that improve troop performance but generate new dangers for global security**

**N**aval forces keep watch on international shipping lanes from the Red Sea to the Arabian Gulf with a widespread network of floating, flying and underwater sensors.

These valuable eyes on the water, which hunt for smugglers, terrorists and other criminals, collect millions of images. Sorting such a vast volume of data tests the skills of Soldiers and Sailors.

A new partner on the battlefield — artificial intelligence (AI) — is providing the sorting and sifting power to overcome what would otherwise be analytical overload.

Depending on parameters set by their human programmers, AI systems can winnow the millions of images into a few hundred that represent potential maritime threats. That allows militaries to use ships and aircraft more effectively and efficiently.



**Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, deputy commander of U.S. Central Command, oversaw the creation of unmanned maritime sensor networks powered by AI when he served as head of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet.**

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL SECURITY INSTITUTE

“We’re able to move at speeds that were previously unimaginable,” said U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, deputy commander of U.S. Central Command.

Like commercially available electrical power generation in the 19th century, AI is a general-purpose technology that can be harnessed for potentially thousands of applications. The ability to sift large amounts of data faster than the human brain is among the military benefits of AI systems.

But regional and global adversaries enlist AI as well, most prominently in disinformation campaigns designed to destabilize societies and weaken their resolve to defend themselves. Manipulated audio and video, some using synthesized voices and images, are becoming harder to distinguish from the real thing.

The disruptive power of AI as it relates to global strategic competition was the theme of a conference at the University of South Florida in the United States in March 2024. Sponsored by the Global and National Security Institute, U.S. military commanders, AI experts and academics gathered to discuss AI’s role in international security.

#### **ADVANTAGES OF AI**

The goal of AI — the ability of computers to learn based on fresh data and experiences — is smarter decision-making for its human users.

**Like commercially available electrical power generation in the 19th century, AI is a general-purpose technology that can be harnessed for potentially thousands of applications.**

In that regard, it has also found uses beyond defensive applications such as naval operations in the Red Sea. Its ability to sift through reams of intelligence reports, for example, can help militaries select targets more precisely.

Experts agreed on criteria to assess AI’s usefulness for militaries. Does it save time? Does it make a Soldier’s job safer? Does it provide better results?

“That is the only measure of success,” Schuyler Moore, chief technology officer at U.S. Central Command, noted at the conference.

Military leaders cautioned that unleashing AI to operate autonomously is a mistake. To avoid tragic errors, human operators must remain in the loop. AI still doesn’t make complex decisions. In that sense, it’s a dumb technology, only as good as the people who programmed it. Its usefulness is more for quantifying data, less so for evaluating the quality of that data. When it comes to ballistic missile defense, an AI miscalculation could have disastrous consequences.

Reliance on a flood of AI data during battles could lead to hasty, reactive decisions when patient strategic thinking is required, said Dr. Peter Bovet Emanuel of the Swedish Defense University’s Centre for Special Operations Research.

AI models are useful tools to predict adversaries’ intentions, but adversaries often try to operate outside these models in a game

of competitive one-upmanship, so military officers stress the need for human intuition to detect when AI systems provide faulty or misleading results.

### AI DISINFORMATION

AI's ability to synthesize language, images and audio can have large repercussions for national and international security. Some countries have tried to further their aggressive aims by simulating the images and voices of rival military commanders to weaken resistance among opposing troops.

On an even larger scale, AI-generated cognitive campaigns featuring floods of fake information could destroy a country's will to defend itself before the shooting has even begun. With advances in technology, fake news articles created with AI are often nearly impossible to detect. Presidents of nations have been among the victims.

"We are going to see a lot more examples of this," said Dr. Todd Helmus, a behavioral scientist who has worked with the U.S. military to study militants and radicals in the Middle East and South and Central Asia.

Policing malign uses of AI is difficult. Most AI innovations in image and audio manipulation come from content creators who may not be linked to any national government.

In the wrong hands, artificially created media could become "weapons of digital mass destabilization," said Dr. Vilma Luoma-aho, a Finnish

**AI-generated  
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expert in the field of AI manipulation.

Helmus described a world in which unsavory adversaries churn out unlimited streams of false content with automated AI. The U.S. and its partners need to contradict the worst of this fake information, but there are limits to that type of defense. Experts urged countries to focus on teaching students critical thinking skills. That would allow individuals to assess the inevitable streams of computer-generated fakery.

"Detection is not going to save us," Helmus said.

### PREDICTIVE POWER OF AI

Another strong military use of AI is war-gaming, predicting threats and how to counter them. AI's ability to collect and sort data in every language allows military planners to create simulations and scenarios in a fraction of the time it once took.

AI helps war-gamers forecast distant threats and prioritize them in order of importance. "Five or six months is too long to design scenarios," said Walter Kulzy, a senior operations research scientist at Johns Hopkins University in the U.S.

Here are steps in AI-assisted war-gaming:

1. **Collect information** that challenges the status quo. These "signals" and "disrupters" are clustered into trends.
2. **Generate stories** based on these trends and forecast alternative outcomes.
3. **Project future impacts** tailored to the needs of whatever organization is seeking the forecasts.
4. **Assess courses of actions** in response to trends and threats.
5. **Ensure informed decision-making**, whether it be designing war-gaming scenarios, acquiring new weapons and defensive systems, or enlarging or reducing military forces.

As with other uses of AI in the security field, a system is only as good as its human oversight. A good AI system will be evidence-based, allowing military planners to trace information back to its source to check for reliability. Such a system should also generate sufficient scenarios to mimic the complexity of the world.

"Humans are more important than hardware," said Gen. Bryan Fenton, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command. ♦



# SAUDI OFFICERS Specialize in Electronic Warfare

THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF TRAINING PREPARE TROOPS FOR THE DEMANDS OF MODERN WARFARE

UNIPATH STAFF



**Saudi officers hold certificates at graduation from an electronic warfare program at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, in March 2024.**

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

**A**s adversaries become more capable and threats more complex, enhancing electronic warfare capabilities is increasingly critical to regional security.

Boosting Saudi Arabia’s electronic warfare capabilities, 13 Royal Saudi Air Force officers completed a 3 ½-year electronic warfare training program at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, in March 2024.

During a ceremony attended by senior U.S. Air Force and Saudi military leaders, the Saudi officers received Electronic Warfare Officer training certificates. The U.S. Air Force noted that these students are among the best-trained electronic warfare and cyber experts in the world.

The program consists of 4,400 hours of instruction, covering four phases, 34 courses, and many simulations and exercises.

“We are very proud of you, and on behalf of His Royal Highness for the Saudi Air Force Commander, I congratulate you. ... We are looking forward to you resuming your duties and missions,” said Maj. Gen. Fahad Al-Julaihim, Royal Saudi Air Force Deputy Director for Training.

Electronic warfare encompasses a wide array of activities, such as the use of the electromagnetic spectrum in military conflicts, jamming enemy communications, intercepting signals and frequency-hopping to prevent enemy forces from listening to communication.

“You are the beneficiaries of a one-of-a-kind training course tailored specifically to support the Royal Saudi Air

Force,” said Col. Casey Pombert, U.S. Air Force Security Assistance and Training Squadron commander. “I wish each of you great success in all your future endeavors.”

Although the line between the two continues to blur, electronic warfare differs from cyberwarfare because the former targets hardware and signals while the latter targets software and data.

Electronic warfare mainly focuses on the use of the electromagnetic spectrum — like radio waves — to detect, intercept, and jam enemy communications and radar signals. It’s often enlisted against adversarial drones to scramble their navigation.

Cyberwarfare refers to digital attacks to target computer systems, networks and digital infrastructure.

The U.S. defense and military relationship with Saudi Arabia is formidable. It involves military training programs, bilateral and joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, defense technology, and arms sale.

And the two countries cooperate closely to address regional and global security challenges such as terrorism, piracy, and trafficking in humans, weapons and narcotics.

In May 2024, the Native Fury exercise demonstrated the ability of U.S., Saudi and Emirati forces to move an amphibious convoy 1,900 kilometers across the Arabian Peninsula, offering reassurance in case maritime shipping lanes are ever disrupted. ♦ Sources: Defense-arab.com, U.S. Department of Defense



## SENIOR LEADER PROFILE



# *A Forceful Voice Against Violent Extremists*

Chief of Army Staff Gen. Syed Asim Munir upholds  
Pakistani security through turbulent times

PAKISTAN ARMED FORCES



**G**en. Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), shall be commemorated as a leader whose foremost commitment resides in the security, stability and prosperity of Pakistan. Since his assumption of command in November 2022, Gen. Asim Munir has charted a course that has spanned from resolute military actions against extremist outfits to astute military diplomacy.

Gen. Asim Munir graduated from the 17th Officers Training Course, Mangla, and was awarded the coveted Sword of Honour. Commissioned in the 23rd Frontier Force Regiment, he has held esteemed positions across a spectrum of operational and command assignments.

*“There is no option for these terrorists except to submit to the writ of the state of Pakistan before they are decimated, if they persist on their wrong path.”*

He has had the honor to serve as Director General of Inter-Services Intelligence, Director General of Military Intelligence, and Commander, Force Command Northern Areas. Before taking charge, he was performing duties of Quartermaster General at the General Headquarters. Since assuming his official duties, Gen. Asim Munir has grappled with myriad challenges, encompassing grave security threats, burgeoning extremism and the relentless onslaught of hybrid warfare.



**Gen. Asim Munir meets with troops.**

INTER-SERVICES PUBLIC RELATIONS, PAKISTAN

Gen. Asim Munir has taken decisive action against Tehrik-i Taliban Pakistan (TTP) within Pakistan, known as Fitna al Khawarij. Under his leadership, through July 2024, 22,409 intelligence-based operations have been conducted against terrorists and their facilitators. They eliminated 398 terrorists, including 31 high-value targets.

Speaking to a jirga in Peshawar on August 7, 2023, the general said: “There is no option for these terrorists except to submit to the writ of the state of Pakistan before they are decimated, if they persist on their wrong path.”

He further stated: “Pakistan will spare no effort to dismantle terrorist networks and protect its citizens at all costs.”

Pakistan is also confronted with a formidable challenge in the form of fifth-generation warfare, a complex blend of conventional and unconventional tactics aimed at the implosion of societal structures. Gen. Asim Munir has expressed his resolve that the Pakistan Armed Forces, with the support of the nation, are fully prepared to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the motherland against the full spectrum of threats.

Pakistan’s sovereignty was challenged on January 16, 2024, when Iran carried out a series of missile and drone strikes within Pakistan’s Balochistan province resulting in the deaths of two innocent children. To express its resolve and redeem its stature, on January 18, Pakistan conducted a meticulously planned and precisely targeted series of military strikes based on credible intelligence against terrorist hideouts in the Sistan-o-Baluchistan province of Iran. This operation, codenamed Marg Bar Sarmachar, resulted in the elimination of several terrorists.

Gen. Asim Munir recognizes that an important way to curb extremist proclivities among youth is through employment and business opportunities. With this backdrop, the Army is assisting the government in the functioning of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI) to attract foreign investment and ensure food security.

Gen. Asim Munir’s proactive efforts in forging economic partnerships, including with the Arabian Gulf states and the United States, are fostering confidence within the business community and encouraging their active participation in national progress.

Gen. Asim Munir strongly supports greater tolerance and religious harmony. Condemning the Jaranwala incident, where a mob vandalized and torched several churches and scores of houses after two





**Gen. Asim Munir meets U.S. Central Command Commander Gen. Michael “Erik” Kurilla in Tampa, Florida, in December 2023.**

INTER-SERVICES PUBLIC RELATIONS, PAKISTAN

men living there were accused of desecrating the Holy Quran, he declared: “There is no space for such incidents of intolerance and extreme behavior by any segment of the society against anyone, particularly against minorities.”

When Assistant Superintendent of Police Shehribano Naqvi saved a woman from a crowd that was hurling blasphemy charges at her, the female officer was extolled by Gen. Asim Munir for her bravery and was honored in his office.

Military diplomacy is an important facet of the COAS’s vision. In December 2023, Gen. Asim Munir visited the U.S., marking a pivotal moment in Pakistan’s expanding military and diplomatic relations with the U.S. In the midst of swiftly changing global dynamics, this visit was both symbolic and practical, with high-profile engagements that highlighted the multifaceted nature of Pakistan-U.S. relations.

Also in 2023, Pakistan conducted joint military exercises with Malaysian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian and Emirati Armed Forces. Similarly, at the closing ceremony of 7th Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) training exercise in which 15 teams, including those from the U.S., Turkiye and Saudi Arabia participated, he reiterated the significance of PATS in

promoting team spirit and enhancing readiness in the face of evolving threats, particularly in the fight against terrorism.

He lauded the bond the Pakistan Army developed with other armies as a clear example of military diplomacy. Under his leadership, the Pakistan Army serves not only as the guardian of the nation’s borders but also extends its support during calamities such as floods and earthquakes. Additionally, the Army’s role in facilitating nationwide elections stands as a notable contribution to the nation.

Gen. Asim Munir’s tenure as the Chief of the Army Staff has been characterized by determined action against extremism, proactive measures to address security challenges and a commitment to fostering socioeconomic stability.

Gen. Asim Munir’s approach to military diplomacy has not only strengthened Pakistan’s relations with key global partners but has also underscored the nation’s role in promoting regional peace and stability. As Pakistan navigates through intricate geopolitical dynamics and internal challenges, Gen. Asim Munir works to guide the Army and nation toward a future marked with professionalism, resilience, prosperity and unity.



## Kuwait Defends the Arabian Gulf

UNIPATH STAFF

Demonstrating robust military-to-military relations, the Kuwait Armed Forces and the U.S. military conducted a bilateral maritime drill code-named Eager Defender 24 (ED24) in Kuwait and the North Arabian Gulf in January and February 2024.

The Kuwait Naval Force, Kuwait Coast Guard, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command joined forces in the drill that was led by U.S. Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (TF 51/5).

Naval forces from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom, as well as observers from the Gulf Cooperation Council, also took part in the exercise, according to the Kuwait News Agency.

A 10-day joint exercise, ED24 focused on strengthening maritime security; visit, board, search and seizure; harbor security; unmanned systems operations; small unit naval infantry tactics; and joint command and control operations. It culminated with a combined multinational amphibious landing.

ED24 helped troops acquire skills to increase interoperability, address security threats and reinforce partnerships in the region.

“This joint naval exercise demonstrates the level of

cooperation and commitment of the participating forces from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to their allies in friendly countries, led by the United States and the United Kingdom,” said Assistant Director of ED24 Kuwaiti Navy Brig. Gen. Mohammed Al-Arifi.

“Exercise Eager Defender is a unique opportunity to raise the level of integration and cooperation capabilities among the participating militaries, which enhances the collective capability to address diverse security challenges in the region.”

In April 2024, Kuwait celebrated the 20th anniversary of its designation by the U.S. as a major non-NATO ally. Under U.S. law, that status provides foreign partners with benefits in economic and security cooperation. Brig. Gen. Matthew Reid, commander of TF 51/5, called Eager Defender a testament to the enduring partnership between Kuwait and the U.S.

“Exercise Eager Defender 24 highlights our shared commitment to regional security and the preservation of peace. ... By working together, the Kuwait Armed Forces and U.S. military are strengthening our capabilities and preparedness,” Brig. Gen. Reid said.

Sources: Kuwait News Agency, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. Department of State



Forces take part in Eager Defender at Muhammad Al Ahmed Naval Base, Kuwait, in February 2024. U.S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT



## Tajikistan and U.S. Improve Health Security

UNIPATH STAFF

A partnership between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Tajik Ministry of Health and Social Protection marked a significant milestone in their efforts to combat pandemics like COVID-19 in Tajikistan.

Since March 2020, USAID's Health System Sustainability Project has played a critical role in helping the Tajik Health Ministry improve the national laboratory system and implement the National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan.

The USAID initiative rolled out across 25 of Tajikistan's 62 districts. During the past three years, USAID has supplied 10 laboratories in Tajikistan with essential equipment, including incubators for disease detection, 50 refrigerators, and a medical waste incinerator. Also, the project has trained 138 laboratory personnel on biosafety, biosecurity and quality management systems.

Although the program focused initially on COVID-19, the training and equipment could prove valuable in the fight against future outbreaks of disease in the country.

In addition, 3,800 Tajik health care workers were trained in data collection and infection prevention and control. Through its support of the government's vaccination campaigns, the project significantly raised vaccination rates in the Sughd and Khatlon regions.

These efforts resulted in vaccination rates of 99% for first and second doses and 98% for initial booster doses among the targeted adult population.

Representatives of USAID and the Tajik Health Ministry discussed these achievements in COVID-19 prevention during a meeting in Dushanbe in February 2024.

"I am very proud of our successful cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, which is making important and innovative changes to the healthcare system of Tajikistan," said Peter Riley, USAID mission director, at the project's closing ceremony.

Sources: ASIA-Plus, U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan

**A lab researcher uses anti-COVID equipment provided to Tajikistan by USAID.** USAID

## UAE Earns Global Recognition for Police Proficiency

UNIPATH STAFF

**B**uilding the capabilities of its security forces, the United Arab Emirates held a marksmanship competition for hundreds of officers from the Abu Dhabi Police Department in March 2024.

The fifth edition of the Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Al Nahyan Shooting Competition was at the Al Wathba-Al Haffar shooting range in Abu Dhabi.

Nearly 200 commissioned and noncommissioned officers, men and women representing seven Abu Dhabi Police Department sections, competed in the four-day competition.

Brig. Gen. Hussein Mohammed Al Qahtani, director of the marksmanship and field applications section, noted that marksmanship is one of the most important skills police need to maintain security.

At another competition in neighboring Dubai called the UAE SWAT Challenge, the Dubai Police Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT), clinched the top two spots in February 2024.

Hosted annually by Dubai, the five-day SWAT Challenge draws teams from around the world. Eighty-seven teams from 48 countries, including five female teams, competed in this iteration.

Teams compete in tactics, assaults, officer rescue, scaling towers and obstacle courses. The competition aims to bolster international partnerships, cooperation, and the exchange of tactics and skills among participants.

The UAE's commitment to police training has helped earn it top ranking in the Middle East and North Africa region on the Rule of Law Index published by the World Justice Project. The UAE ranked 10th globally, surpassing countries such as Germany, Canada and Austria.

The Rule of Law Index evaluates the status of many of the human rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It measures factors that endanger public order and security such as traditional crimes and political violence.

Sources: Al Bayan, Gulf Today, Abu Dhabi Police Department



# Jordan Enlists Partners in Counternarcotics Efforts

UNIPATH STAFF

In its continuing battle with drug smugglers, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has received support and solidarity from neighboring Arab governments that recognize the kingdom's success in opposing the narcotics trade.

In March 2024, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) convened a joint ministerial council between its member states and Jordan to aid Jordan's counternarcotics efforts.

Chaired by Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, the meeting drew foreign ministers of the GCC member states, including His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Representing Jordan was Dr. Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Secretary-General of GCC Jasem Mohamed Al Budaiwi underscored the strength of GCC-Jordan mutual relations, expressing its support for Jordan in all measures taken to combat

terrorism and illicit activities, including drug trafficking.

Also, the interior ministers of Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria agreed, at the conclusion of a meeting in Amman in February 2024, to establish a joint communications cell to combat cross-border drug smuggling among the four countries.

According to Jordanian Interior Minister Mazen Al-Faraya, the communications cell consists of liaison officers to share expertise, training, capabilities, and most importantly, information about shipments suspected of carrying narcotics leaving any of those countries, their final destination, smuggling routes, networks and cross-border connections.

"We all realized that there is a big problem, which is the drug plague, and

that all our societies suffer from such plague, so we agreed today that without a joint coordination effort by our combined countries, there will be no results that we seek," Al-Faraya said. "We also agreed to follow up on these meetings at the ministerial and technical levels."

Stepping up a campaign against drug dealers, the Royal Jordanian Air Force conducted strikes inside Syria in January 2024 against suspected farms and hideouts of Iran-linked drug smugglers, according to Reuters. The strikes targeted the towns of Shaab and Arman and a farm near the village of Malah in Sweida province near the Jordanian-Syrian border.

In May 2024, the Jordan Armed Forces repulsed armed smugglers attempting to transport narcotics over the border in Jordan's Eastern Military District.

"The Jordanian Armed Forces are harnessing all capabilities to strike with an iron fist anyone who dares to tamper with Jordanian national security," the military said in a statement.

Sources: Jordan Armed Forces, Gulf Cooperation Council, Reuters, Alhurra



Jordanian troops fly a reconnaissance drone at a post overlooking the Syrian border. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



# Egypt Works to Strengthen Maritime Security

UNIPATH STAFF

**D**emonstrating Egypt’s commitment to maritime security, Commander of Egyptian Naval Forces Rear Adm. Ashraf Ibrahim Atwa discussed ways to support European Maritime Operations in the northwest Indian Ocean and Red Sea in April 2024.

Rear Adm. Ashraf met with Rear Adm. Vasileios Gryparis, Operation Commander of Aspides, the European Union naval mission in the Red Sea established in response to Houthi attacks on shipping in late 2023.

As of April 2024, seven countries contributed to the European naval operations off the coast of Yemen in the Red Sea.

The two commanders discussed promoting global cooperation and partnership, shoring up stability and security in the Middle East, and safeguarding maritime security in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Adm. Ashraf accompanied his guests on a tour that included inspecting Egyptian ships to display their readiness, capabilities, cutting-edge equipment and well-trained Sailors.

A month earlier, Vice Adm. Emmanuel Slaars, commander of French naval force deployed in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, also met with Rear Adm. Ashraf. One big topic was cooperation between Egyptian and French naval forces to stop states and nonstate actors from smuggling and other illegal activities.

Egypt’s participation in regional maritime security extends to Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), which it joined in April 2021. Covering 3.2 million square miles of international waters, CMF operates several task forces that patrol some



**Commander of the Egyptian Naval Forces Rear Adm. Ashraf Ibrahim Atwa, right, hosts Commander of the European Maritime Operation Aspides Rear Adm. Vasileios Gryparis.** EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

of the world’s most critical shipping lanes, including the Suez Canal, Bab el-Mandeb and Straits of Hormuz.

To strengthen maritime security in the Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden, CMF established Combined Task Force 153 in April 2022.

Houthi attacks on international shipping — using weapons and technology supplied by Iran — have damaged Egypt’s economy. As of March 2024, Suez Canal revenue, accounting for 2% of the country’s national gross domestic product, recorded declines of up to 50%, according to Egypt’s Ministry of Finance.

Sources: Egyptian State Information Service, Egyptian Armed Forces, Alhurra, Combined Maritime Forces, Atlantic Council, U.S. Navy, Container News

## Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan Cooperate on Aerial Search and Rescue

UNIPATH STAFF

To improve disaster response in the Central Asian region, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan ratified a joint agreement to cooperate on aerial search and rescue missions that could cross borders.

In February 2024, the Kazakh Parliament passed a law titled “On the ratification of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic on cooperation in aviation search and rescue.”

“The goals of the agreement are to strengthen cooperation between the search and rescue services of the two countries, share information on aircraft accidents, and take measures to search for crashed

aircraft, passengers and crews, conduct joint exercises of search and rescue services of both sides, and the exchange of information and experience,” Kazakh Minister of Transportation Marat Karabayev said.

Search and rescue operations comply with standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The signatories of the agreement will also conduct joint search and rescue drills and share information and expertise. In addition, the agreement encourages mutual assistance upon request from either party during search and rescue missions.

Sources: Vlast.kz, Inform.kz, Trend.az



## Kazakhstan, Arizona National Guard Mark 30-year Partnership

UNIPATH STAFF

Kazakh Ambassador to the United States Yerzhan Ashikbayev, along with singers from Kazakhconcert, visited Phoenix, Arizona, to mark the 30-year partnership between Kazakhstan and the Arizona National Guard under the U.S. State Partnership Program (SPP).

As part of the program, Kazakh and United States officials participated in cultural events, public exhibitions and a concert in Phoenix between November 30 and December 3, 2023. During his speech, Ambassador Ashikbayev expressed gratitude for 30 years of successful partnership that contributed to strengthening relations

between Kazakhstan and the Arizona National Guard.

Commander of the Arizona National Guard Gen. Kerry Muehlenbeck praised the growing partnership with Kazakhstan, noting that the country was among inaugural 13 international partners under the SPP program.

Ambassador Ashikbayev also held meetings with the Arizona governor, the speaker of the State House of Representatives and U.S. businessmen. They discussed the prospects for deeper cooperation in a number of areas. Ambassador Ashikbayev announced the opening of the Honorary Consulate

**A Kazakh special forces Soldier deftly reassembles a weapon during a skills demonstration at the Arizona National Guard 2024 Best Warrior Competition.**

ARIZONA U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

of Kazakhstan in Arizona, aiming to broaden political, economic, cultural and humanitarian connections with the state.

Kazakh and U.S. officials issued proclamations on the occasion of the partnership's 30th anniversary. These documents recognize the successful cooperation between Kazakhstan and the U.S. across a range of issues, including professional education, economic ties and trade. Sources: Inform.kz, Gov.kz



## HOUTHIS RISK ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER IN THE RED SEA

UNIPATH STAFF

**I**llegal Houthi attacks in the Red Sea have not only spread insecurity in the region but also threaten to create an environmental crisis for neighboring countries.

On September 2, 2024, the Iran-backed Houthis attacked two crude oil tankers, the Blue Lagoon I and the Amjad, with two ballistic missiles and an uncrewed aerial system, hitting both vessels.

Two weeks earlier, the Houthis attacked the Delta Sounion, setting it on fire, but the salvage operations on that vessel were deemed unsafe and called off on September 4, according to the World Cargo News website. Together, the vessels were carrying more than 3 million gallons of crude oil.

In February, the terrorist group struck the ship Rubymar in the Red Sea. As the ship began to sink, the crew escaped to Djibouti, leaving behind 21,000 metric tons of ammonium phosphate sulfate fertilizer.

Although Yemeni Foreign Minister Ahmed bin Mubarak warned about environmental harm from the release of the chemicals, Rubymar sank in the Red Sea in March 2024.

Other environmental disasters have been narrowly averted. In January 2024, the tanker M/T Pollux, carrying crude oil, was struck by a missile from the Houthis. The crew managed to save the damaged ship before any oil could gush into the sea.

The U.S. Department of State has designated Ansarallah, commonly referred to as the Houthis, as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist group.

Since November 2023, the Houthis have launched unprecedented attacks against international maritime vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, as well as military forces positioned in the area to help assure the safety and security of commercial shipping.

The State Department designation was carefully crafted to include provisions for humanitarian aid. According to the U.N., more than 18.2 million people — half the Yemeni population — require humanitarian aid amid economic crisis, starvation and displacement.

Sources: USCENTCOM, Reuters, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Treasury

**An international team takes water samples near the Rubymar, a cargo ship full of fertilizer illegally sunk by a Houthi missile off the coast of Yemen.** AFP/GETTY IMAGES





# Iraqi Security Forces Commit to Eradicating Daesh Remnants

UNIPATH STAFF

In a preemptive operation code-named “Promise of Truth,” the Iraqi Armed Forces eliminated several Daesh operatives in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, and Salah al-Din governorates in March 2024.

At least 10 terrorists were killed, including the wali (the historical Islamic word for governor) of Al-Jazeera and Al-Baaj, two of his assistants, as well as two others in Rawa district killed in an airstrike.

Iraq ordered the strikes after intelligence confirmed Daesh was plotting attacks during Ramadan.

By intensifying attacks during religious celebrations, the terrorist group tries to inspire supporters

and terrorize citizens to turn them against their government and security forces.

Since its territorial defeat in December 2017 by the Iraqi Armed Forces backed by a U.S.-led global coalition, Daesh has sought to regroup while launching sporadic low-intensity attacks on military and civilian targets. Iraqi Security Forces continue to pursue Daesh remnants, following them to their desert and mountain hideouts.

In January 2024, the U.N. Secretary-General’s 18th biannual report on Daesh stated: “The group’s capabilities in its core areas of Iraq and Syria remain degraded, but that it has continued to operate as a low-intensity insurgency in remote and rural areas, with an estimated combined strength of between 3,000 and 5,000 fighters in these countries.”

Sources: The United Nations, Alhurra, Al Sharq Al Awsat

**Iraqi Armed Forces march on Grand Festivities Square in Baghdad during an Army Day parade in January 2024.** AFP/GETTY IMAGES







# Pakistan, U.S. Conduct Major Naval Exercise

U.S. NAVAL FORCES CENTRAL COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Naval forces from Pakistan and the United States completed the four-day bilateral training exercise Inspired Union 2024 in Karachi in May 2024.

Inspired Union focused on maritime interdiction operations; explosive ordinance disposal; mine countermeasure tactics, techniques and procedures; and harbor security. The exercise created opportunities for improving readiness, enhancing maritime security and stability and promoting freedom of navigation in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations.

“Exercises like Inspired Union continue to improve our readiness and interoperability in the maritime domain,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Robert Porter, commodore of Task Force 52. “Pakistan is an important partner, and we are honored by their hospitality both during this exercise and the lead-up to it. We look forward to future opportunities to work with an important partner like Pakistan.”

A U.S. Coast Guard maritime engagement team, a U.S. Marine Corps fleet anti-terrorism security team, a civil affairs team, and an expeditionary mine countermeasures and diving team, took part in Inspired Union.

As a major bilateral exercise, Inspired Union fosters collaboration between Pakistan and the U.S. Armed Forces to uphold the rules-based international order that supports



**A Pakistani Navy Diver uses handheld sonar with an instructor from the U.S. Navy at Inspired Union 24, an exercise held between Pakistan and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command in Karachi.**

SGT. JULIO HERNANDEZ/U.S. ARMY

the free flow of commerce in strategically important waterways of the region.

The U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses nearly 2.5 million square miles and includes the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Suez Canal and Bab al-Mandeb.

# Turkmenistan Pursues Nuclear Security Agreement

UNIPATH STAFF

**T**urkmenistan formally joined an international convention meant to ensure security and safety in the event of a nuclear or radiological disaster.

In a ceremony at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Austria, Turkmen government officials presented signed documents that bound the country to the terms of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.

These conventions were adopted in 1986 and stipulate that countries



**Resident Representative of Turkmenistan to the IAEA Hemra Amannazarov, left, hands over Turkmenistan's Instrument of Accession during a visit to Vienna.** IAEA

quickly and effectively share information and assist each other during a nuclear or radiation incident that could threaten public health and the environment across borders.

This accession marks another step toward enhancing cooperation between Turkmenistan and the IAEA. Since joining the IAEA in 2016, Turkmen government officials had been meeting with representatives in Vienna to discuss issues of international standards on nuclear and radiation safety. Rich in natural gas, Turkmenistan generates no electricity from nuclear reactors.

They also agreed on measures to modernize national legislation on nuclear matters in line with global standards.

Sources: Arzuw News, OECD, IAEA, Sng.fm, Turkmenistan.ru



## NATO Reaffirms Security Partnership with Uzbekistan

UNIPATH STAFF

**A** NATO delegation visited Uzbekistan to reaffirm the alliance's partnership with Tashkent in the wake of changing security dynamics in the region.

Director-General of the NATO International Military Staff Lt. Gen. Janusz Adamczyk highlighted NATO's ongoing engagement and cooperation with Uzbekistan, including the country's ongoing participation in the Partnership for Peace initiative.

"NATO remains committed to maintaining robust political dialogue and practical cooperation with Uzbekistan. This partnership is vital to promoting security and stability in the region and highlights our commitment to addressing common challenges as well as fostering positive developments in the Central Asia region," Lt. Gen. Adamczyk said.

Lt. Gen. Adamczyk started his visit to Uzbekistan by meeting Deputy Minister of Defense for Educational and Ideological Affairs Maj. Gen. Hamdam Karshiev. At the Academy of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the director-general lectured on NATO's global outreach and cooperative frameworks. He commended Uzbekistan for recognizing the value of working together since the 1990s to tackle common challenges and protect shared security and mutual values.

Traveling to the outskirts of the capital, the NATO general and his delegation toured the Chimyon Mountain Training Centre, one of the Uzbekistan's five mountain training facilities. The Uzbek commander described how 300 troops spend a year engaged in specialized training at the center.

The visit to the Uzbek Armed Forces Partnership for Peace Training Centre further emphasized Uzbekistan's ongoing engagement through Partnership for Peace.

In a sign of the expanded relationship, NATO military specialists trained Uzbek Army cadets in April 2024. According to Uzbekistan's Ministry of Defense, NATO experts conducted a "training session on a number of subjects" at a specialist Army training center. Sources: Uzbek Ministry of Defense, NATO



## Qatar Emiri Naval Forces Contribute to Maritime Defense Industry

UNIPATH STAFF

Qatar hosted the eighth Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition & Conference (DIMDEX) in March 2024 to highlight ways to protect shipping in the region.

The biennial event, held over three days, is a platform for industry professionals and military and government officials to showcase products, exchange ideas, and discuss challenges and opportunities in the realm of maritime defense.

Two hundred companies showcased their products in nine pavilions occupied by countries such as Qatar, the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, France and Germany. Countries also displayed warships and submarines at Hamad Port in the Arabian Gulf.

Representative from Qatar's Navy, Air Force, Air Defense, Ground Forces and military colleges also attended.

DIMDEX 2024 added a conference called "Prospects for Economic Growth in Light of Security Challenges and Their Global Impact." Attendees discussed pressing international challenges pertinent to maritime security, including piracy, smuggling, human trafficking, port security, shipping lanes and the security of underwater communication cables.

Qatar Emiri Naval Forces (QANF) is seeking to boost its capability to safeguard the country's maritime interests and coastline. QANF operate a flotilla of naval vessels, patrol boats, corvettes and support vessels equipped with modern navigation, weapons and communications systems.

Staff Maj. Gen. Abdullah Hassan Al Sulaiti, commander of QANF, said DIMDEX has continuously raised its profile since it was inaugurated in 2008 and serves Qatar's aspirations and ambitions to be a security leader.

Qatar enjoys robust defense partnerships with the United States and has hosted U.S. Central Command's forward headquarters at Al Udeid Air Base since 2009.

Sources: Al Raya, Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace, Al Jazeera, Qatar News Agency

**A model of a Qatari fighter jet is displayed during DIMDEX 2024 at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha.** AFP/GETTY IMAGES



# Bahrain, U.S. Partnership Scales New Heights

UNIPATH STAFF

**In** March 2024, the U.S. State Department approved a potential deal worth \$2.2 billion to sell 50 M1 Abrams battle tanks and other equipment to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

“This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the security of a major non-NATO ally that is an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East,” the United States Defense Security Cooperation Agency noted in a news release.

The visit of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa to Washington in September 2023 culminated in the U.S. launching the Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement (C-SIPA) with Bahrain.

C-SIPA promotes cooperation across a range of areas such as defense and security, science, technology, and trade.

Partnership between Bahrain and U.S. dates to 1971, when diplomatic relations between the

two nations were established after Bahrain’s independence from the United Kingdom. Since 1995, Bahrain has hosted the U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and participates in U.S.-led military coalitions.

The country is also a staunch member of the Gulf Cooperation Council and receives support from its partner states in time of adversity.

Bahrain is an integral member of international counterterrorism efforts. It supported the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. It’s also a key member of Combined Maritime Forces to combat terrorism, piracy and smuggling at sea.

Most recently, it publicly backed the U.S. in Operation Prosperity Guardian to protect against Houthi attacks near Yemen in the Red Sea.

Sources: ashraq.com, U.S. State Department, the White House, Breaking Defense

Royal Bahrain Naval Force ship Abdulrahman Al Fadhel sails near a U.S. Navy drone during an exercise in the Arabian Gulf. AFP/GETTY IMAGES





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