

Saudi Arabia Ascendant

Leadership Changes in Saudi Arabia: What Implications for the Kingdom, the Region and the U.S.?



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Rayburn House Office Building | Room B-369
National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Washington DC, May 22, 2015



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FOR SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Saudi Arabia's New Leadership

- The transition from the late King Abdullah to Crown Prince Salman (now King Salman) unfolded smoothly and as planned.
- The historical milestone was the generational shift that occurred with the appointment by the new Monarch of a third generation royal from the main line of succession, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, as the Deputy Crown Prince.
- Recently, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef has become the new Crown Prince, and hence the first to assume this position from the third generation of the royal family.
- King Salman's son, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has become the new Deputy Crown Prince.

Saudi Geopolitical Realities 1/2

- Custodianship of Makkah and Madinah, Islam's two holiest sites.
- The leading country in the Arab world (Arabs comprise a vast majority of the inhabitants of the MENA region).
- G-20 member as the economic engine and most important financial power in the MENA region. Net foreign assets at about \$850 billion.
- OPEC's de facto leader as the world's largest petroleum producer & exporter and holder of largest reserves and spare capacity.
- Sunni state in a world where Muslims are overwhelmingly of this denomination. About 90% of Muslims are Sunnis.

Saudi Geopolitical Realities 2/2

- One of the largest foreign aid programs in the world -- and by far the largest in the MENA region -- at \$20 to \$25 billion per year.
- Exceptional and historical strategic partnerships with the US, France, Pakistan and Britain.
- Massive emerging economic relationships with China, India and Japan.
- Main adversary to remain Russia over the short to medium term.
- Two sets of distinct permanent enemies –
 - Sunni | ISIS and Al Qaeda affiliated groups.
 - Shia | Iran and ALL Iranian affiliated movements in the Arab world.

King Salman's Main Strategic Priorities

- Defend the homeland.
- Succeed in counterterrorism efforts.
- Bolster the defense of partner and allied states.
- Prevail in sustained power projection missions.
- Deter the spread of weapons of mass destruction.
- Re-energize and streamline local governance.
- Strengthen and radically restructure the national security, defense, foreign policy and energy establishments.

Saudi Land & Sea Borders



A Regional Catastrophic Situation

- IRAQ: Complete internal collapse as state has ceased to exist as a central governing authority.
ISIS and Iranian Shia affiliated groups filling the void.
- SYRIA: Complete internal collapse as state has ceased to exist as a central governing authority.
ISIS, Al Qaeda and Iranian affiliated groups filling the void.
- YEMEN: Complete internal collapse as state has ceased to exist as a central governing authority.
Al Qaeda and Iranian affiliated groups filling the void.
- LIBYA: Complete internal collapse as state has ceased to exist as a central governing authority.
Al Qaeda and now beginning ISIS affiliated groups filling the void.

Saudi-led Bloc of Regional States

(Yemen War Case Study)

- Saudi Arabia has created a permanent bloc of like-minded states to ensure security, stability and roll back Iranian presence in certain Arab countries.
- Members from the Arab world include current GCC states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the UAE, and Qatar, with the addition of Jordan, Morocco and Egypt.
- The “nominal” governments of Yemen, Libya and the Palestinian Authority are also permanent members of this new bloc.
- The Yemen war against the Houthis is the first case of this new coalition of regional states launching major military operations to safeguard their own security imperatives.
- This “new model” is a precursor to future military interventions in other conflicts within the Arab world.

RSLF (Army)

Minimum Capabilities Required



Table 3 – RSLF (Army) Minimum Capabilities Required

Weapons Systems	Suggested Capabilities	Estimated Capabilities in 2011-2012
Combat Ready Personnel	300,000	200,000 to 225,000
Main Battle Tanks	2,500	1,000 to 1,200
Armored Personnel Carrier	4,000	3,000 to 3,500
Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicles	3,000	1,500 to 2,000
Reconnaissance Vehicles	500	250 to 300
Multiple Role Helicopters	250	50 to 75
Transport Helicopters	150	50 to 60
Electronic Warfare	5	NA

SANG (National Guard)

Minimum Capabilities Required



Table 4 – SANG (National Guard) Minimum Capabilities Required

Weapons Systems	Suggested Capabilities	Estimated Capabilities in 2011-2012
Combat Ready Personnel	200,000	100,000 to 125,000
Main Battle Tanks (New Force)	500	NA
Armored Personnel Carrier	4,000	2,000 to 2,500
Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicles	5,000	2,500 to 3,000
Reconnaissance Vehicles	250	NA
Multiple Role Helicopters (New Force)	200	NA
Transport Helicopters (New Force)	50	NA

RSADF (Air Defense) & SMF (Strategic Missile Forces)

Minimum Capabilities Required



**Table 5 – RSADF (Air Defense) & SMF (Strategic Missile Forces)
Minimum Capabilities Required**

Weapons Systems	Suggested Capabilities	Estimated Capabilities in 2011-2012
Combat Ready Personnel	40,000	25,000 to 30,000
Guns	4,000	2,000 to 2,500
Air Defense Systems	5,000	2,500 to 3,000
Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM)	250	50 to 75
Inter Mediate Ballistic Missiles (IRBM)	50	NA
Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM)	20	NA

RSNF (Navy)

Minimum Capabilities Required



Table 6 – RSNF (Navy) Minimum Capabilities Required

Weapons Systems	Suggested Capabilities	Estimated Capabilities in 2011-2012
Combat Ready Personnel	50,000	25,000 to 30,000
Patrol and Coastal Combatants	150	50 to 75
Destroyers	10	NA
Frigates	20	7 to 10
Amphibious	75	10 to 15
Logistical/Support/Supply	50	20 to 25
Mine Countermeasures	20	5 to 8
Submarines	9	NA
Electronic Warfare	10	NA
Multiple Role Helicopters	100	30 to 40
Transport Helicopters	60	20 to 30

Re-Emphasize the “FAHD LINE” Doctrine

Main KSA Onshore & Offshore Oil Fields

Map 4 – Main Saudi Onshore & Offshore Oil Fields



OIL AND GAS FIELDS OF THE CENTRAL AND NORTH-WESTERN GULF - AN INTRODUCTORY MAP.

This is intended to show the position of Qatar, with its Dukhan Field, in relation to adjacent oil fields. It is the easternmost of the Arabian Anticlinal Fields. It differs from the huge Gwahar Field in its smaller size and steeper limbs. It is broadly similar in terms of the late Jurassic reservoirs and the anhydrite seal or cap. In fact, most of Qatar has the structure of a gentle N-plunging anticline, on the scale of the Gwahar field, but there is no closure to the south and thus it is not a trap for oil or gas. The Dukhan structure is separate. This map is based on old data and does not show the latest fields. Ian West © 2012. (map redrawn, with modifications and additions, after Atlas of the Oceans, 1977)

RSAF (Air Force)

Minimum Capabilities Required



Table 7 – RSAF (Air Force) Minimum Capabilities Required

Weapons Systems	Suggested Capabilities	Estimated Capabilities in 2011-2012
Combat Ready Personnel	40,000	20,000 to 25,000
High Quality Combat Aircrafts (HQCA)	500*	250 to 275
Transportation	150	50 to 75
Refueling	30	5 to 10
Multiple Role Helicopters	200	100 to 125
Transport Helicopters	50	20 to 25
Electronic Warfare Planes	50	15 to 20

*4.5 Generation Minimum to Qualify for HQCA, including the three HQCA platforms in the RSAF arsenal - Eurofighter Typhoon, F-15 Saudi Advanced, Upgraded Tornados – and a potential new fourth one.

Marines (Part of RSNF)

Minimum Capabilities Required



Table 8 – Marines (Part of RSNF) Minimum Capabilities Required

Weapons Systems	Suggested Capabilities	Estimated Capabilities in 2011-2012
Combat Ready Personnel	10,000	2,000 to 4,000
Armored Personnel Carriers	400	100 to 150
Reconnaissance Vehicles	50	10 to 20
Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicles	200	50 to 100
Multiple Role Helicopters	25	NA
Transportation Helicopters	10	NA
Amphibious	25	NA

World's Sunnis and Shias

