



NATIONAL DEFENCE

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Mohammed bin Zayed:

The UAE, the first country in the region, announces a strategic initiative to achieve climate neutrality by year 2050



A Critical Look at the UAE's Climate Agenda: Politics or Pragmatism?

The UAE's Youth Climate Action and Environmental Public Diplomacy



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The slogan chosen for the Year of Sustainability, 'Today for Tomorrow', embodies the UAE's approach, objectives and vision in the field of sustainability and its responsibility in facing challenges. Through our work, efforts, and initiatives today, we are seeking a better tomorrow for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren, to reflect a positive legacy for future generations, as our fathers, grandfathers and ancestors left us.

His Highness, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan,
President of the State (May Allah protect him)

”

Editorial

Major General Staff
Salim bin Harmal Al Shamsi
Commandant, National Defence College



At the outset, through this issue of the annual magazine of the National Defence College, I would like to thank all those who contributed to writing this issue and commend the importance of this magazine. The magazine is a significant part of the academic year of the College, as it is the outcome of collaborative efforts of distinguished writers who have enriched this issue with outstanding articles that cover critical areas and offer thought-provoking ideas and diverse themes.

As the magazine completes its tenth journey this year, it has developed a fresh approach and a modern vision with regard to content and layout, while maintaining the essence of introducing various issues that are commensurate with current events, developments, changes, and with what is prominent in contemporary issues, cutting-edge ideas, and local, regional and international trends.

In this issue, the magazine sheds light on the year declared by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates - may Allah protect him - in January 2023, as the “Year of Sustainability” in the United Arab Emirates under the slogan “Today for Tomorrow”. The slogan is being targeted through various initiatives, events, and activities focused on spreading awareness of environmental sustainability issues, encouraging community participation in achieving sustainable development, and supporting national strategies towards building a more thriving and prosperous future.

The magazine’s articles are varied in presenting distinct matters as the authors address topics such as national issues and institutional roles of partners within the scope of their competence and responsibilities. Additionally, the magazine presents scientific articles that enrich the readers’ minds with new insights in the realm of science, and keep abreast of fast-changing world events that urgently require our attention.

The National Defence Magazine annually plays its indispensable role as a scientific and cultural compass of strategic research with a vital dimension. Owing to the specialized scientific articles written by decision-makers and thinkers, the magazine enhances that abundant vein of knowledge. Furthermore, it succeeds, adjusts and keeps pace with change because it selects articles that accurately reflect the expertise of its authors, as it supports those articles with specialized scientific sources and references that preserve intellectual property and publishing rights.

In conclusion, I extend my thanks and appreciation to everyone who has contributed and continues to contribute to this magazine with the sum of their knowledge and experience. My thanks go in particular to the members of the editorial committee for their continuous participation which reflects their academic roles and dedication to sharing scientific achievements.

Similarly, I would like to thank the participants of the 10th cohort of the National Defence Course who contributed their valuable articles in their magazine “National Defence Magazine”, entitled “From Them to Them”.

I bestow grateful thanks for all the efforts exerted in pursuit of attaining excellence and offer my best wishes to all of you to be successful in your onward journey and may you be guided to serve the best interests of the United Arab Emirates.

Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah Almighty.



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Cover

The UAE, the first country in the region, announces a strategic initiative to achieve climate neutrality by year 2050

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Verily, these decisions and special decrees reinforce the blessed federal long-lived efforts, the foundations of which were laid by the founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (May Allah rest his soul!), and are sponsored by His Highness, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the State (May Allah protect him!), with his unlimited devotion and dedication, to say nothing of the greatness of the trust of responsibility in a sincere way, and based on his insightful visions for the sake of making the people of the United Arab Emirates enjoy a comprehensive development renaissance and prosperity.

Statement of the Federal National Council

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Editor-in-Chief

The successive achievements and qualitative leaps achieved by the United Arab Emirates are only a reflection of the vision of its insightful leadership, which always seeks to take it to the forefront and the first ranks at all levels.

**Brigadier General
Mohammed Saeed Al Jabri
Editor-in-Chief**



The successive achievements and qualitative leaps achieved by the United Arab Emirates are only a reflection of the vision of its insightful leadership, which always seeks to take it to the forefront and the first ranks at all levels.

Within the course of time, from the beginnings of its foundation to the era of empowerment, pursuing the progress leading to the new era, the human being has been - and still is - the focus of its interest and the essence of its comprehensive development. The ultimate goal and objective of this nation is the human being on whom the nation is based.

Today, the UAE is a model of this interest through which it seeks to develop, modernize, keep pace and achieve proactivity, as the historical decisions of the UAE have always had latent importance, as these decisions always reflect the depth and strength of the relationship between the leadership and the people. Verily, the supreme decision issued by his Highness, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces - may Allah protect him! - by appointing his Highness, Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, as Vice President of the State, and his Highness, Sheikh Hazaa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and his Highness, Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan, as deputy rulers of Abu Dhabi, and his Highness, Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, has reflected a new dimension to the next phase of development, progress and keeping pace, based on what has been achieved and pursuit to work for the future with full confidence without tiredness, boredom or pause.

The role played by the UAE - today - in consolidating relations with the giants of the arena and unifying Arab efforts as well as close ranks to face various challenges is not a hidden effort or one that can be ignored. It has always been seeking, since its founding to this day, to combine efforts and push all initiatives forward for the sake of peace and stability in the region as well as keeping its security and ensuring safety in cooperation with all parties by various means and methods.

Out of this standpoint, which the UAE adopts as an approach for its regional and international practices, the National Defense College (NDC) seeks, within its set mission to prepare and qualify military and civilian leaders, to raise the capabilities of its students to identify and assess national, regional and international security challenges, as well as their understanding of the foundations and requirements for managing and investing state resources for protecting the supreme national interests.

And if the wise leadership declares this year to be the year of sustainability, which falls under the slogan “Today for tomorrow”, then they will present to the world the UAE’s integrated and inspiring experience that embodies its relentless efforts in promoting sustainability, preserving the environment and mobilizing international cooperation to confront climate change to protect the planet from the various threats it faces.

The National Defense Journal, through the articles and opinions it presents on its pages - representing the opinion of its authors - seeks to anticipate the future with that academic scientific feed that benefits the reader and the student on an equal footing. In its tenth issue for the academic year 2022-2023, the journal highlights many topics which coincide with the data of the recent timing and its latest developments, such as its prominent treatment of the year of sustainability, in addition to the diversity of articles in presentation, context, and anticipating tomorrow in its minute details.

Moreover, the National Defense Journal has not overlooked the academic articles that shed light on strategic, diplomatic and economic perspectives, as well as the articles related to the concepts of leadership, defense and security in its various aspects.

As it is issued today, it highlights, to its interested readers, a rich collection of articles that are characterized by their academic and analytical depth, according to a presentation that deals with the theories recognized in international and strategic relations as well as wielding of the comprehensive powers of the state, in addition to strategic leadership, risk analysis and decision-making, which is what it relies on. The National Defense College adopts this approach within its academic curriculum.

Is military strategy useful or just an improbable quest for certainty?

Major General Mike Hindmarsh
Commander UAE Presidential Guard



Strategies are all-pervasive from developing plans to meet our New Year resolution to lose weight or get stronger, to determining ways to better balance work with family time, to improving our employment status and retirement wealth, to saving up to build our dream home - strategies are everywhere.

Anything we regard as a personal or collective objective can form a strategy to achieve this goal. After all, without a plan we cannot expect to achieve anything with certainty. Strategies in essence are broad designs towards reaching an 'objective', or an 'end', using military terminology. It is about considering actions in advance to achieve goals. At another level, there are political, business and of course, military strategies. Military strategies, like all strategies involve a series of steps taken to best realize an objective. Strategies are not plans. Plans are the phased measures of a strategy that imply certainty and detail, they are specific, closely analyzed steps taken within the context of a broader military strategy. They operationalize strategies. Strategies, on the other hand, are broad arrows on a map, the blueprint or rough roadmap which suggest but do not articulate in detail the preferred way and best route to take to reach a goal or an end.

For example, in the 2015-2019 Yemen campaign, the UAE's strategic goal was to return political legitimacy and broad stability to Yemen by defeating and dismantling the control and influence of the rebel Houthi Movement (Ansar Allah), as well as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The first key step towards fulfilling that strategic goal was to provide a secure foothold back into Yemen for the exiled Yemen legitimate government, from which to mount subsequent operations. This involved liberating Aden, an operation planned in detail and successfully executed as the first step or first phase of a broader strategy.

But just how effective are long-term strategies in the military context? Are they really useful in helping us achieve a stated enduring goal? Many would suggest that implementing a strategy in the way that you want to achieve the results that you desire is fanciful. Why is this so? The problem is that setting distant goals and expecting to achieve them is beset with challenges. Strategies do not exist in controlled environments. Adopting strategies, especially military strategies, generally means that there are elements in play that aim to disrupt the achievement of your objectives; after all, if there were no challenges you would not need a strategy. The reason you believe you need a strategy is because you recognize that there is no clear and unchecked path to realizing your goal. Therefore you need to devise the best way to negotiate these challenges. That is your strategy.

Let us probe a little deeper. It is clear that the unpredictability of human affairs; the certainty of chance events; the impact of opponents, allies and even of friends; the politics of domestic and international audiences and the sheer vagaries of fortune can all interfere with the achievement of strategic goals. The expectation that strategies move from one stage to the next in an orderly fashion to achieve a distant goal or objective is an idealistic 'perfect world' fantasy. It is a bit like life—you cannot plan everything because no matter how perfect your plan is, life has a way to rearrange it. There is a whole set of factors that no strategy can anticipate or accommodate in advance.

A military strategist in composing a strategy relies on the choices of others without really knowing what those choices are likely to be. This is why a strategist's selection of assumptions is so important. A strategist must anticipate, almost guess what the likely reactions of an opponent or even an ally, will be. It is rare to get it totally right. To actually shape or convince or force an adversary to act contrary to their own intentions in order to allow you to meet your purposes is essentially what a good strategy is seeking to achieve. Alas, it will rarely happen in the way you want it to. There are just too many variables in play.

So does this mean we should not bother with long term strategies and just look to build versatility to confront whatever appears in front of us? A type of formal and deliberate 'crisis management' approach perhaps? Or do we build a hydra-like strategy up front with multiple branches, hoping to account for the inevitable discontinuities that threaten to drag us away from our preferred strategy? There are many theories in circulation that would suggest approaches such as these are the more practical and better account for reality. However, if you look at strategy as just a means of getting to the next stage successfully and intact, and accept that the steps beyond will probably need to be adjusted to meet changing circumstances, then your strategy will likely prove more practical and durable. Understandably, this approach may be interpreted as removing the need to have a clear long-term goal to aim for, and suggests that just 'muddling along' roughly in the 'right' direction may be adequate. However, military operations without specific goals or clear ends are too loose and invite chaos and disaster. There must be an ultimate and clear objective to enable focus and coherence, but the means and ways to achieve it must take into account the likelihood that initial plans will require adjustment, and then those steps that follow will most likely also need to be modified. Ultimately, if the plan to reach a strategic end or goal does not work, it is best to either change the plan or adjust the goal, but you cannot function without a goal. To do so would see you stumbling directionless into the abyss.

Using the Yemen example again, the UAE senior strategic leadership understood this feature of strategic thinking by focusing all its efforts initially on those

aspects that it could control without getting too far ahead of itself, whilst all the while keeping in mind the ultimate goal. It realized that evolving and changing circumstances would force adjustment as well as shed better light on which path to take. This is precisely what occurred. Some of these adjustments were influenced by how the adversaries responded, others by how allies acted and prioritized their support; still others through the actions and pressures of international players such as the United Nations and other international non-government organizations. The strategic intent remained clear, but the ways and means to achieve it were adjusted to meet the evolving and prevailing circumstances. Operationally, the liberation of Aden in the first half of 2015 led later that year to the clearance of the strategically vital location of Marib; then in 2016 to the ousting of AQAP from Mukalla, Shabwah and Abyan; next to the securing of Bab Al Mandab and finally to the clearance of the southern Red Sea and the encirclement of Hodeida in 2017 – 2019. However, at the time in 2015 the opening overall strategy did not envisage following this particular operational sequence. There was a broad goal to return Yemen to a condition of stability, but the strategic path towards achieving it remained unclear at the beginning. This path was gradually illuminated and constructed over time, wending its way through a maze of opportunities and obstacles shaped by the actions, reactions, attitudes, and policies of a multitude of diverse players and circumstances. This was a practical and pragmatic approach which met in every instance with operational success, although strategically the ultimate goal was never reached, despite it being a close run thing.

In conclusion, military strategies are necessary and useful, provided they are not overly prescriptive nor slavishly followed. They are a 'lighthouse on the horizon' towards which we must sail, but the route taken to get there will be beset with challenges and will vary depending upon the vagaries of the weather, the winds and the waves. Given such turbulence and unpredictability, military strategists must improvise and adapt to meet the ever-changing operational and strategic circumstances they confront. For a military strategist, the stakes are real and to doggedly stick to the same script or strategy is to invite failure in a world where assuming certainty in anything is a mistake.



The Emerging Era of Strategic Competition: A Regional Outlook

The signs of an emerging new order have become clearer as the changes in the distribution of power at a global level have opened the door for competing influences and security competition among the major powers such as the United States, China, and Russia. Increasing competition and rivalry between the major global powers have emerged as a defining feature of political processes across the globe, including the Middle East.

Amb. Grigol Mgaloblishvili
Faculty, UAE NDC



There is a wider consensus among policy makers and security analysts that “inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern” and that “we are facing increased global disorder”. The growing fear of escalating strategic competition among global powers and uncertainty that this intense rivalry may entail for smaller actors

have dominated policy discussions in recent months and years. Within all this uncertainty, however, one thing is clear – the end of the American unipolar moment creates a power vacuum that various global and regional actors seek to fill. As Steven Cook succinctly put it, “the Middle East is now up for grabs among a variety of regional powers and external

actors” which considerably exacerbates security risks and makes the region less secure. Under current circumstances, small states such as the UAE will face enormous challenges in navigating the uncharted waters of disrupted geo-political realities. Given the notable impact of great power rivalry on regional security in general, and the UAE in particular, this paper will focus on answering the following questions that are highly relevant for fashioning UAE’s response to the unfolding strategic shift: “How do we define the phenomenon of ‘strategic competition?’” “What impact does it have on global security?” And “How does it alter the current regional context?”

An important point to start the discussion is to clarify what can be qualified as ‘strategic competition’ and how to measure its intensity. At the most basic level, there are two criteria that are required to classify strategic competition between the major actors, namely, “states must regard one another as both ‘competitive’ and ‘threatening.” In academic discourse, however, we note the divergence of opinion whether the existence of military disputes and the relative symmetry between actors’ capabilities are necessary preconditions for qualifying rising tensions as ‘strategic competition’. In this context, a recent RAND article offers a comprehensive list of factors that should be considered for qualifying the intensity of rivalry as a ‘strategic competition’. Namely, to count as strategic competitors, states must have respectively: a perception of mutual hostility; somewhat comparable amounts of national power; an expectation of potential conflict; actual or perceived contention over specific policy issues and some history of conflict. Identifying the components that may constitute ‘strategic competition’ as an important precondition to set the stage for discussing its impact on global and regional security. In other words, clarifying the scale and intensity of rivalry is critically important to assess what forms the growing political, economic, and military confrontation may take between major global powers.

The escalation of rivalry between the global actors bears all the aforementioned characteristics of ‘strategic competition’ that consequently shape the contours of an emerging new world order. Especially since the start of the Russian war against Ukraine, the echoes of the Cold War have become louder. According to the Global Trends Report published by the United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence, in coming years “the intensity of competition for global influence is likely to reach its highest level since the Cold War.” The rationale of this argument rests on an assumption that in an emerging multipolar system, no state will have the ability to position itself as a dominant power across all regions and domains and so this will lead to mounting competition due to broader actors’ divergent interests, governance models, and ideologies.

The key question in this context is whether existing international institutions and norms can adapt to this evolving world order. There is growing concern that the escalation of great power competition will put considerable pressure on the current international system and, hence, will exacerbate global security risks on three different levels: First, accelerating power shifts will further weaken the key international institutions as the emerging global powers “believe the current system is biased in favor of the West.” Disagreements are likely to intensify over the role and legitimacy of the Western-led international institutions raising doubts about their ability to respond effectively to emerging crises and challenges. The legitimacy of current international institutions may further decline as China continues to form alternative international arrangements, such as the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and so on. Second, the weakening of international institutions will likely lead to erosion of the norms and rules that underpin the international order. The most unsettling development in this context is a gradual attrition of international arms control and disarmament agreements. The frequent violations of these norms have become a new normal, as we have witnessed the multiple use of chemical weapons, attempted development of unsanctioned nuclear



programs, and adoption of nuclear blackmailing discourse by global actors. Third, in this highly competitive global environment, where international rules are being eroded and intergovernmental institutions weakened, the risks of inter-state military conflicts will rise. Although “major power militaries are likely to seek to avoid high-intensity conflict and particularly full-scale war because of the prohibitive cost in resources and lives, the risk of such conflicts breaking out through miscalculation or unwillingness to compromise on core issues is likely to increase”. In essence, the emerging new order that is marked by escalating tensions and rivalry between major powers will considerably heighten the risks of military confrontation both at global and regional levels.

The escalation of great power competition adds new dynamics to the security environment and power configuration in the Middle East. The perceived US disengagement from the region has created a power vacuum to further escalate rivalry among the global actors. A case in point is that “external actors have seized the opportunity to exercise power in a region that was previously an area of exclusive American dominance”. A clear illustration of this changing geo-political dynamic was China’s recent diplomatic initiative to broker a deal between two regional arch rivals – Saudi Arabia and Iran. A few years ago, Russia managed to sideline the US from Syrian peace talks by seizing the diplomatic initiative and launching the ‘Astana Process’. These developments clearly illustrate the changes in the region’s power configuration manifested in the rising influence of China and Russia. Another notable effect that escalation of great power rivalry has had on the Middle East is to deepen regional fragmentation. Although all sides have been careful to avoid direct military conflicts with each other, the increased rivalry for influence over political

and economic processes, have turned the already fragmented region into a global powers' diplomatic battlefield. The further fragmentation of the region, coupled with escalating rivalry among global actors have considerably increased the security risks of not only stalling the prospects of resolving long-standing regional conflicts, but also renewing direct military confrontation between the regional actors.

The UAE's response to navigate through these turbulent waters of escalating strategic rivalry has been to expand scope for political maneuver by pursuing a multi-vector foreign policy. The rationale of this policy choice for the UAE is to balance its traditionally close relationship with the United States with the potential benefits it sees in cooperation with other suitors such as China and Russia. The further escalation of strategic competition, however, may considerably constrict the Emirates' room for maneuver as great powers would likely harden their stance towards their smaller allies. Thus, exploring the new policy options of contending with these geopolitical shifts acquires distinct importance as its relevance is unlikely to recede in the coming months and years.



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Non-traditional security and UAE's National Security Agenda

Dr. Joshua Snider
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For much of the 20th century, the practice and analysis of national security have been statist in orientation, in the sense that 'the state' has been the subject and object of protection and that the biggest threat facing states is other states.

In the Cold War period, particularly in the West, national security policy was dominated by military and intelligence bureaucracies in which the hierarchy of national security threats and challenges priorities placed 'high politics' issues associated with state-based threats ahead of 'low politics' issues, i.e. social, economic and development policy.

During the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century, driven by a mix of post-Cold War geopolitics and dynamics associated with globalisation, there has been a noticeable shift in the tectonics of national security policy, where issues that were previously perceived as low politics rose to the apex of national security policy.¹ For example, the mass movement of people within and across borders; the impact of climate change; food insecurity; under-development/poverty (economic security), and the health security issues associated with global pandemics are all perceived by national security policy makers to be on an equal strategic footing with (traditional) state-based threats. Now,

in our emerging era of global multi-polarity and its inherent instability, many states confront dual challenges similar to traditional threats associated with navigating complex great power competition



and alignment strategy, and non-traditional security threats and challenges. Notwithstanding the realities of the former, for many, especially smaller states in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa, states' national security agendas are more preoccupied with non-traditional issues than the 'high politics' of countering state-based threats.

This article examines the conceptual origins of Non-traditional Security (NTS), ways of understanding NTS and what this means in the context of the UAE's national security agenda. It argues that rather than justifying the preponderance of security threats/challenges as a binary choice between traditional or NTS (with potentially dire consequences for resource allocation in either sector), policy elites will need to balance the demands of responding to both NTS challenges while maintaining readiness to counter traditional (state-based) threats.



Defining non-traditional security

The term 'non-traditional security' is frequently used but rarely defined. Most definitions focus on distinct and observable differences between traditional and non-traditional security threats/challenges and the extent to which these require different thinking and solutions.² Traditional security problems are typically understood as statist in nature, whose resolution involves the application of force or the threat of the use of force. This includes both inter and intra-state conflict. Military bureaucracies are the peak managers of traditional security problems, particularly at the inter-state level. Non-traditional challenges on the other hand, can disrupt life, be existential in nature, and originate from structural dynamics within or between states or environmental factors, and thus do not stem from a particular political/security competition between states. And as previously mentioned, potential solutions do not involve the application of force. The management of NTS challenges falls to a complex array of state and non-state actors, and in many states civil society organisations and NGOs.³

NTS challenges comprise food, energy, environmental, economic, and health security.⁴ We also note gender and societal security (identity security) as emerging areas of interest and worthy of increased policy and scholarly focus. Furthermore,

"The management of NTS challenges falls to a complex array of state and non-state actors, and in many states civil society organisations and NGOs."

sectors such as migration, transnational organised crime, and religio-political extremism constitute aspects of insecurity in other NTS sectors. Here, trajectories of irregular mass migration, smuggling (by transnational criminal networks), and the appeal of extremist ideology often follow a breakdown in other spheres, most notably in economic security. Concurrently, a complex and symbiotic relationship exists between traditional security threats (in the form of inter and intra-state conflict) and mass precarity, which drives crises across all NTS sectors. Equally, in the context of weak states, competition for scarce resources, i.e. water and food, can lead to a breakdown in social cohesion and ultimately to armed conflict, either within or between states.

Within the MENA region, we see NTS challenges at all levels and its impact on national security policy planning. The recent COVID-19 pandemic and the so-called Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 are both cases that highlight the salience of non-

traditional challenges and their impact on national security policymaking. The pandemic set off multiple NTS crises across the food, economic and migration spheres. The so-called Arab Spring protests were, in the first instance, driven in various states by economic insecurity, food scarcity, and mass dissatisfaction with poor governance and endemic kleptocracy. The inability of states to deliver economic and food security caused levels of resentment which in some cases (i.e. in Syria and Libya) devolved into open conflict. The 2019-2022 Covid-19 pandemic was in the first instance a public health crisis, which not only brought the concept of 'health security' to the apex of national security discussion, but also showed the complex inter-linkages between NTS spheres and the relative fragility of global economic interdependence.

The NTS Agenda and what it means for policymakers

For policymakers, the increased relevance of NTS challenges and the extent to which many of these NTS sectors are now at the apex of national security policy, represents a distinct shift in how states previously operated. In this sense, the emergence of the NTS agenda has impacted on how states strategise, institutionalise, and operationalise responses to security threats and challenges, particularly for small and middle powers. The institutionalisation of national security policy, often via national security bureaucracies, was previously in the military domain—focusing on external threats, but now includes a myriad of new institutional voices, particularly from 'low politics' social and economic policy bureaucracies. This shift has also impacted national security strategy development—in terms of 'whole of government' national security strategy documents that not

only articulate how states will respond to external state-based threats but also how they will use their resources (i.e., instruments of national power) to address a myriad of internal, developmental and trans-national challenges. Migration and economic and environmental issues are now frequently mentioned as core NTS challenges in many strategy documents.

On a wider level within national security policy communities, the recognition of NTS considerations reflects how states understand the concept of instruments of national power and the process through which these instruments are used to counter emerging non-traditional threats. Frequently used statist paradigms such as the 'DIME model' are robust and accurately



show how a state might counter other states, i.e. through diplomatic, information, military, and economic instruments, but offer little guidance as to how to apply these instruments to a vast array of NTS challenges. Moreover, some have argued that this model is 'military-centric', overlooking the extent to which small and middle powers tend to focus on non-military instruments. States in the Global South are more preoccupied with economic development than with repelling external invasion. Thus, several

models have been proposed which articulate a more nuanced understanding of instruments of national power. These include DIME-FIL - DIME + Finance, Intelligence, and Law Enforcement. The PESTEL model further reorients the instruments to include Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal instruments. Here, the national security strategies of many states in the Indo-Pacific, including the Philippines, Indonesia, and Australia, use the PESTEL model as it offers instruments that speak more precisely to NTS challenges that do not involve the application of force.

The UAE context?

The UAE understands the nature of NTS challenges and has institutionalised appropriate responses. This forward-thinking reflects the practicalities of the country's geographic location, core environmental vulnerability, and the vision of the country's leadership. The country's leadership is aware that the region's most significant long-term challenges fall into the non-traditional category and have wisely articulated measured responses both domestically and abroad as a national priority. The UAE was one of the first states to establish dedicated ministries responsible for issues within the NTS remit, including food, water, and climate change. In addition, the 'Ten Principles of the Next 50 Years' speaks directly to the importance of embedding NTS challenges in the state's national security agenda.⁵ For example, Principle Two places

the achievement of economic security at the forefront of the UAE's national security policy agenda. Principle Nine focuses on the UAE's role as a robust leader in providing development and humanitarian assistance.

The region's security landscape is evolving rapidly and clearly the UAE's national security landscape includes concerns about traditional (stated-based) actors as well as an emerging array of non-traditional security issues. The challenge is to think smartly about how to prioritise institutional and economic resources to meet a complex range of traditional and non-traditional threats and challenges. As part of this process, the UAE and its national security policy might re-consider how it conceptualises its instruments of national power, particularly in an era where the most complex security challenges are not likely to involve the application of force.



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UAE's Economic Vision, the World's Economy, and COP28

Ahead of the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in November 2023, this article addresses climate policymaking in light of the global economic situation.

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It contends that in a global system confronted with a myriad of complex threats and challenges for the decades to come, the UAE's economic model and its vision 'Towards the Next 50' provide important guidelines that the world should not neglect in the search for policies and solutions on the future of climate change, peace, and human development. Today, we face the dual imperative of tackling climate change and making economic progress to advance human development around the world. As stressed in April this year by UAE President His Highness Sheikh

Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, "sustainable economic development and climate action are closely linked and essential to ensuring a better quality of life for all".

COP28 will take place in a country that has already proven successful in integrating climate change and human development imperatives into its long-term development visions and strategies. Understanding the challenges of our time when it celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2021, the UAE underscored, in the 'Ten Principles of the Next 50 Years' and its guidance

towards the coming half century, the need to “completely focus on building the best and most dynamic economy in the world, with economic development positioned as the supreme national interest.” Earlier this year, in January 2023, the UAE president told the world that the UAE is committed to fulfilling its role as a global convener and will continue to support action and innovation in the field of sustainability.

This 2023 U.N. Climate Change Conference will coincide with the third and final step of the first Global Stocktake, which must be completed every five years. The Global Stocktake is established under Article 14 of the Paris Agreement with the aim of assessing the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Paris Agreement and its long-term goals. COP28 President-Designate, H.E. Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, said that the UAE will work to keep the 1.5 C global warming target alive and make sure that the world responds to the stocktake with a clear plan of action that includes steps that need to be taken to close the gaps in progress.



H.E. Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, COP28 President-Designate, UAE Special Envoy for Climate Change, and Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology.

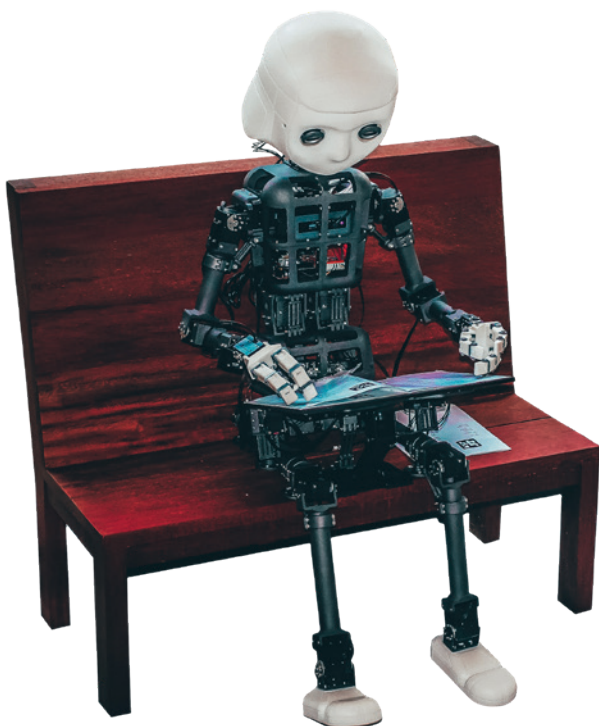
The reality of climate change and the urgency for action have never been so pressing. However, the solutions we require right now must take into account a wide range of complex issues, such as global debt, wars, inflation, and other factors. All of these issues complicate the climate change crisis. The current context requires pragmatism, not ideology. It is difficult to conceive the fight against

climate change without full consideration of this statement by H.E. Dr. Al Jaber: “We need to reverse emissions while moving economies forward, enabling an inclusive and just transition that leaves no one behind. That’s why we are determined to make COP28 a COP for all and a COP of action”. In this regard, he has also highlighted the role of the UAE in building bridges to advance international efforts that will support the Global South and countries that are most vulnerable.



A global economic disaster is happening before the climate catastrophe

The rapid development of a severe stagflationary debt crisis, which is already underway, is now preceding the impending climate catastrophe, as Nouriel Roubini warned. Indeed, there are far too many unsettlingly conceivable economic challenges, such as the currency, debt, and employment crises that threaten to bring about an almost certain economic catastrophe. The world economy, which was decelerating prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, has been suffering ever since and is now marching toward the debt crisis of our lifetimes as a result of today's rampant inflation. Global public and private debt totaled more than 350 percent of global GDP by the end of 2021. The pension systems, for which even the richest countries are unable to fulfill all the promises made to the soaring ranks of senior citizens, represent another aspect of the debt crisis. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the top 20 economies will have staggering unfunded or underfunded government pension liabilities totaling \$78 trillion (Financial Times, October 12, 2022). On the horizon, there is nothing that can stop stagflation, which is the painful mix of slow growth and rising prices. It will be worse than what happened in the 1970s.



The world economy, which was decelerating prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, has been suffering ever since and is now marching toward the debt crisis of our lifetimes as a result of today's rampant inflation.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will hasten automation, bring about a last transformation in the labor sector, and increase societal divides. With ever-smarter AI applications outstripping human capacity, we may have unwittingly unleashed the most destructive weapon of all time. This revolution will eliminate large portions of white-collar jobs and could result in widespread technological unemployment.

There will be further currency crises and subsequent economic turmoil. The European Monetary Union may yet disintegrate as a result of the financial fragility of Greece and Italy. More protectionism and the reshoring of industrial output will result from the current financial instability. This will hasten the



deglobalization process and lead to more world-wide fragmentation. The UAE has made it very clear that the world cannot combat climate change alone and must adopt a multi-pronged strategy to deal with these potential catastrophes.

From the UAE to the world

The UAE's development model over the past half century rested on the premise of reinvesting the revenue from natural resource extraction into other forms of capital to achieve economic prosperity and sustainability, including climate adaptation and mitigation solutions, in one of the most arid areas in the world. This is line with the capital approach to sustainable development. Yet, many more efforts are needed to reduce the country's carbon footprint, and the UAE has adopted a Net Zero by 2050

strategic initiative for achieving net-zero emissions. This initiative for net-zero emissions builds on the country's three decades of international engagement on climate efforts, dating back to its ratification in 1989 of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol. At the same time, economic and social distress is ramping up political pressure around the world, which makes it unrealistic to envisage any solutions to the climate crisis that ignore short- and medium-term requirements for inclusive growth. In fact, it is currently politically impossible or economically unfeasible to implement any economic or technological measures that have any hope of addressing the enormity of the climate problem (such as global carbon taxes or carbon capture). Today and for the difficult decades ahead, governments in developing and developed countries alike will be faced with the acute challenge of preserving, let alone creating, much-needed jobs and providing social safety nets for their citizens. In fact, the looming climate change crisis risks causing more economic havoc, with socially explosive consequences. Cases of large-scale human migration, such as the estimated one million refugees that entered the European Union in 2015, prompting a significant political backlash, are just the beginning, as refugees seek to escape the effects of climate change.

Thus, we need to approach the phasing out of fossil fuels in a manner that does not further disrupt the global economy, cause more social distress, or destabilize countries. That is the message the UAE is sending to the world. Fully committed to shaping the future and located in one of the planet's most volatile regions, the UAE is mindful of a global national security environment that is more dangerous and unpredictable than ever, with mega-threats on all fronts, from financial, economic, political, environmental, and military crises to technological disasters.

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NATO's New Strategic Concept and the Middle East: Implications for the UAE

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) publishes its 'Strategic Concept' (SC) approximately every ten years. The document presents the priorities of the world's most powerful political-military alliance of more than 30 European states plus Canada and the United States, and representing over 50 percent of global defense expenditure (United Kingdom 2022).

Due to NATO's military prowess, reach and interests beyond its immediate treaty area, the international community invariably takes note each time one is issued. The advent of the 2022 SC is no exception. This article considers what it says about the Middle East, and prospects for UAE-NATO relations as a result.

2022 Strategic Concept

In contrast to the previous three SCs (1991, 1999, 2010), the 2022 version is the first to be published since the end of the post-Cold War period when great power competition and multipolarity once more characterize the international system (Morcos and Simon 2022). Additionally, it follows the US and NATO's end to two decades of military engagement in Afghanistan, as well as the reappearance of conventional war in Europe with Russia's 'special military operation' in Ukraine. Reflecting on the implications of the document for the Middle East serves to allay any uncertainties. Two points are noteworthy.

First, NATO has not abandoned its prominent post-Cold War roles of cooperative security (partnerships) and crisis management beyond Europe.



However, reminiscent of the Cold War, pride of place rests with territorial collective defense and deterrence against the threat of Russian aggression. While the 2010 SC's introduction emphasized 'the Alliance remains an essential source of stability in an unpredictable world' (NATO 2010), its 2022 replacement stresses, 'Its [NATO's] key purpose and greatest responsibility is to ensure our collective defense, against all threats, from all directions. We are a defensive alliance.' (NATO 2022). Re-armament at home (total NATO defense spending is at its highest in almost a decade), and ongoing political-military support for Ukraine, means less resources for costly, large-scale, expeditionary crisis management operations abroad. Pierre Morcos and Luis Simon (2022) argue that coupled with the West's apparent 'intervention fatigue', the result should be greater emphasis on the capacity building of local actors to deal with crises themselves ('building resilience'). The 2022 SC provides for this trajectory: 'We will work with partners to tackle shared security threats and challenges in regions of strategic interest to the Alliance, including the Middle East and North Africa and the Sahel regions.' On the ground, a sustained commitment to the non-combat training and advisory NATO Mission - Iraq (NMI) affirms it.

Second, beyond Europe, the Indo-Pacific has risen in strategic importance to NATO conceivably shifting attention from the Middle East. In the midst of its ISAF mission in Afghanistan – to which the UAE contributed F16s and troops – NATO's 2010 SC made special mention of the Gulf region and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative – the partnership framework involving the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar. However, in the 2022 SC, the Gulf does not appear, while the Indo-Pacific debuts. The latter development may be appreciated in the context of the return of Great Power competition, and NATO member states' interest in buttressing its partners in the region (Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea) against a rising China.

So with this backdrop, what might the future hold for the UAE's relations with NATO? The remaining part offers some projections.

Prospects for UAE-NATO relations

To begin, it is important to recognize that, despite the rise of Indo-Pacific on NATO's 'radar', the UAE-NATO relationship remains important. This was underscored by the September 2022 meeting between HH Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. His Highness reiterated that 'the UAE and NATO share a distinguished partnership that aims to promote stability in the region and maintain international



H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed meets Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary-General in New York

peace and security, highlighting the keenness to develop bilateral cooperation between the two sides in various fields' (WAM 2022). As one analyst has observed, in the perspective of the UAE drawing closer to NATO, the UAE 'operates in a framework as not to jeopardize its relations or relations building with other players' (Khatib 2017). So embracing partnership opportunities with NATO, while being mindful of its strategic partnerships with other significant international actors like China and Russia (both signed strategic partnerships with the UAE in 2018), likely

will remain an imperative. Abu Dhabi's continued calls for a peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian crisis and its provision of humanitarian, not military, aid to the conflict zone may be understood in this regard.

Next, in terms of shared UAE-NATO threats and concerns, the menu is diverse, and therefore opportunities for cooperation equally so. One subject high on the list of mutual preoccupation is countering violent extremism and terrorism. The 2022 SC leaves no doubt as to the subject's continued importance to NATO member states: 'Terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international peace and prosperity.' In the past, for example, the Hedayah Countering Violent Extremism Center of Excellence has cooperated with the NATO on joint training and education initiatives (Science for Peace 2022). Counter-terrorism is a pillar of the UAE's Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program (IPCP) signed with the Alliance in 2016 so the foundation for continued joint activities is there. The IPCP also gives weight to forging military interoperability to NATO standards, which the new SC similarly stresses as regards preparing partners for crisis management operations. Although NATO-led ones are likely to be less frequent and ambitious, seeing NATO standards as a means by which to build regional capacity and resilience speaks to their sustained value for the UAE and other ICI states.

In a related point, the recent discussions regarding greater regional air and ballistic missile defense integration to confront the Iranian threat is reminiscent of NATO discussions in the mid-2010s for an expanded, US-enabled, European BMD system to confront the same Iranian as well as North Korean (and now Russian) missile threat (Lopez 2023). NATO's experience could serve as a useful reference point similar to the way the integrated NATO Military Committee helped inform the development of GCC joint command structures (Samaan 2020).

With Europe's decoupling from Russian oil and gas following the Ukraine crisis, its interest in Gulf energy resources has increased. Notwithstanding traditional ones, the EU is 'looking to the Gulf region as a producer and supplier of decarbonized energy, including renewable hydrogen and electricity' (European Parliament 2022). Thus, forging dialogue on energy security, including protection of critical infrastructure and sea lines of communication, could be another subject ripe for consideration by the UAE and NATO. The 2022 SC profiles each of these inter-related issues, including maritime security for the first time.

"NATO's new Strategic Concept is the blueprint for the Alliance in a more dangerous and competitive world."

JENS STOLTENBERG,
NATO SECRETARY GENERAL

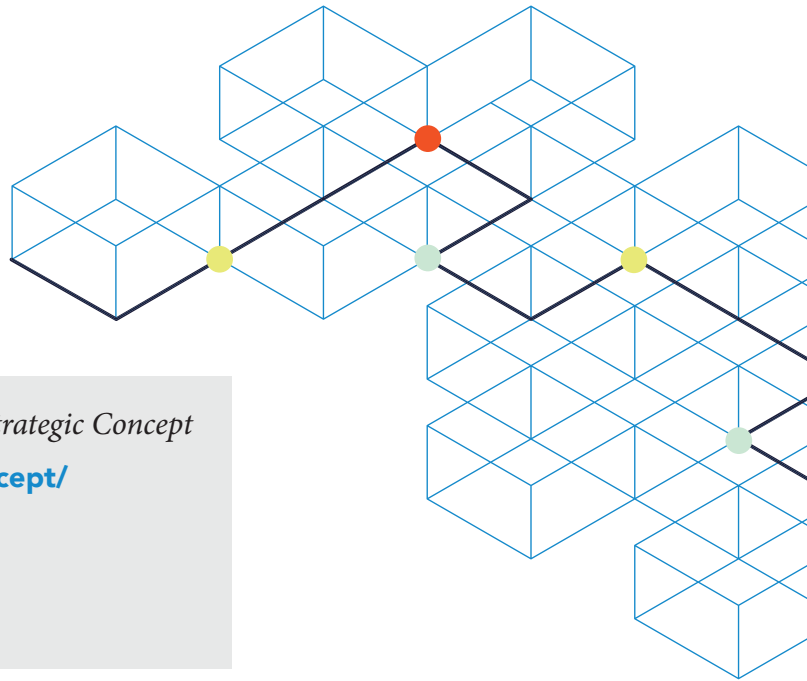
Another first for the 2022 SC was the level of detail expended on the subject of climate change. It was described as a 'crisis and threat multiplier' that can 'exacerbate conflict, fragility and geopolitical competition'. The gravity of NATO concern also was underscored by the announcement of Montreal, Canada, as host city for a new NATO Center of Excellence on Climate Change (Canada 2022). Considering the importance of the issue for the UAE – underlined by COP28 – engagement with the Center would appear a logical outflow. Already some analysts have advocated for the Middle East to be a climate security priority for NATO (Khorrami 2023).

Conclusion

Since the 1990s, NATO Strategic Concepts have provided a blueprint for its engagement with the world. One outgrowth has been a rich security partnership with the UAE. The 2022 SC may represent a break with the post-Cold War order, but not a brake on opportunities for UAE-NATO engagement.

The Strategic Concept's Key Aspects:

- ✦ The Alliance's key purpose and greatest responsibility is to ensure the collective defence of Allies. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty remains the bedrock of Allied collective defence.
- ✦ NATO's three core tasks are deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security.
- ✦ The Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace. Euro-Atlantic security is undermined by strategic competition and pervasive instability. The Russian Federation poses the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security. Terrorism is an asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international peace and prosperity. The People's Republic of China's stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values. We also face global and interconnected threats and challenges like climate change, emerging and disruptive technologies, and the erosion of the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.
- ✦ NATO will continue to adapt and develop, politically and militarily, to meet the challenges of a more unpredictable and competitive world.
- ✦ The Alliance is based on the enduring transatlantic bond between Europe and North America. NATO remains the unique, essential and indispensable transatlantic forum to consult, coordinate and act on all matters related to Allies' security.



See more on the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept

www.nato.int/strategic-concept/

#STRATEGICCONCEPT

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Is the US Really Leaving the Middle East?

It can be dangerous to predict the future based solely on the extrapolation of current trends. At the turn of the 21st century, the conventional wisdom among policymakers in the United States and the Middle East was that the US would become increasingly dependent on crude oil imports as its domestic reserves were depleted.

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As a result, the free flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz would remain a vital American national interest, necessitating an ongoing military presence in the region.

But after decades of decline, US oil production began to increase around 2007 due to the application of hydraulic fracturing techniques to exploit unconventional oil reserves. As US domestic oil production increased, imports began to decrease,

and in 2020 the US exported more oil than it imported for the first time since 1949. Alongside growing domestic natural gas production, this trend led to claims that United States had achieved ‘energy independence’.

As America’s reliance on foreign oil and gas diminished, so too did its willingness to use military power to maintain stability in the Middle East and ensure the security of its regional partners. President Obama did not intervene militarily in the Syrian civil war despite the use of chemical weapons by Syrian government forces, which the American president had declared to be a “red line.” President Trump followed through on Obama’s threat to punish Syrian forces following subsequent chemical attacks. He was also willing to use force against Iran, authorizing the assassination of IRGC commander Qassem Solemani in 2020. But Trump proved reluctant to risk a military confrontation with Iran. He did not respond directly to Iranian attacks on oil tankers near the port of Fujairah and on Saudi oil processing facilities

at Abqaiq, in May and September 2019 respectively. Moreover, when Iranian missiles struck Iraqi bases hosting US personnel in retaliation for Solemani’s killing, Trump declined to escalate further. Declaring that “energy independence” has “changed our strategic

priorities,” he called on other NATO members to carry more of the burden in deterring Iranian aggression.¹ This disengagement has seemingly continued under President Biden, who initiated a rapid withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 that led to the collapse of the Afghan government

that the US had spent two decades supporting. Biden’s 2022 *National Security Strategy* offers further evidence of America’s shifting focus, prioritizing the Indo-Pacific and Europe over the Middle East.

As the Middle East has slipped down America’s list of priorities, China has taken an increasing interest in the region. Significantly, China is far more dependent on Middle Eastern oil than the United States. Over the past two decades, China’s annual oil imports have increased by more than 500 percent. Oil from the Middle East has consistently made up about half of these imports, meaning that while the US is importing less oil from the region, China is importing more and more. Unsurprisingly, China has become more concerned with regional stability, as demonstrated by its recent efforts to restore ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia. China’s military activity in the region has also increased, with Chinese naval vessels engaging in joint exercises with Russian and Iranian vessels in the Gulf of Oman in 2019, 2022 and 2023.²



Based on these developments, it is tempting to assume that China will continue to increase its diplomatic and military presence in the Middle East, progressively filling the vacuum left by the departure of the US. But the future will likely be more complicated, for several reasons. First, the US

has not attained 'energy independence' in any meaningful sense. While US oil production has

2022, even with US production nearing all-time highs. The price that American consumers pay for petroleum products depends on the global price of oil, and disruptions to supply can lead to significant increases. These disruptions can stem from deliberate decisions by oil producers, but also to crises and conflicts. Given that the Middle East produces more than 30 percent of the world's oil, turmoil in the region can have a particularly dramatic effect on global prices.

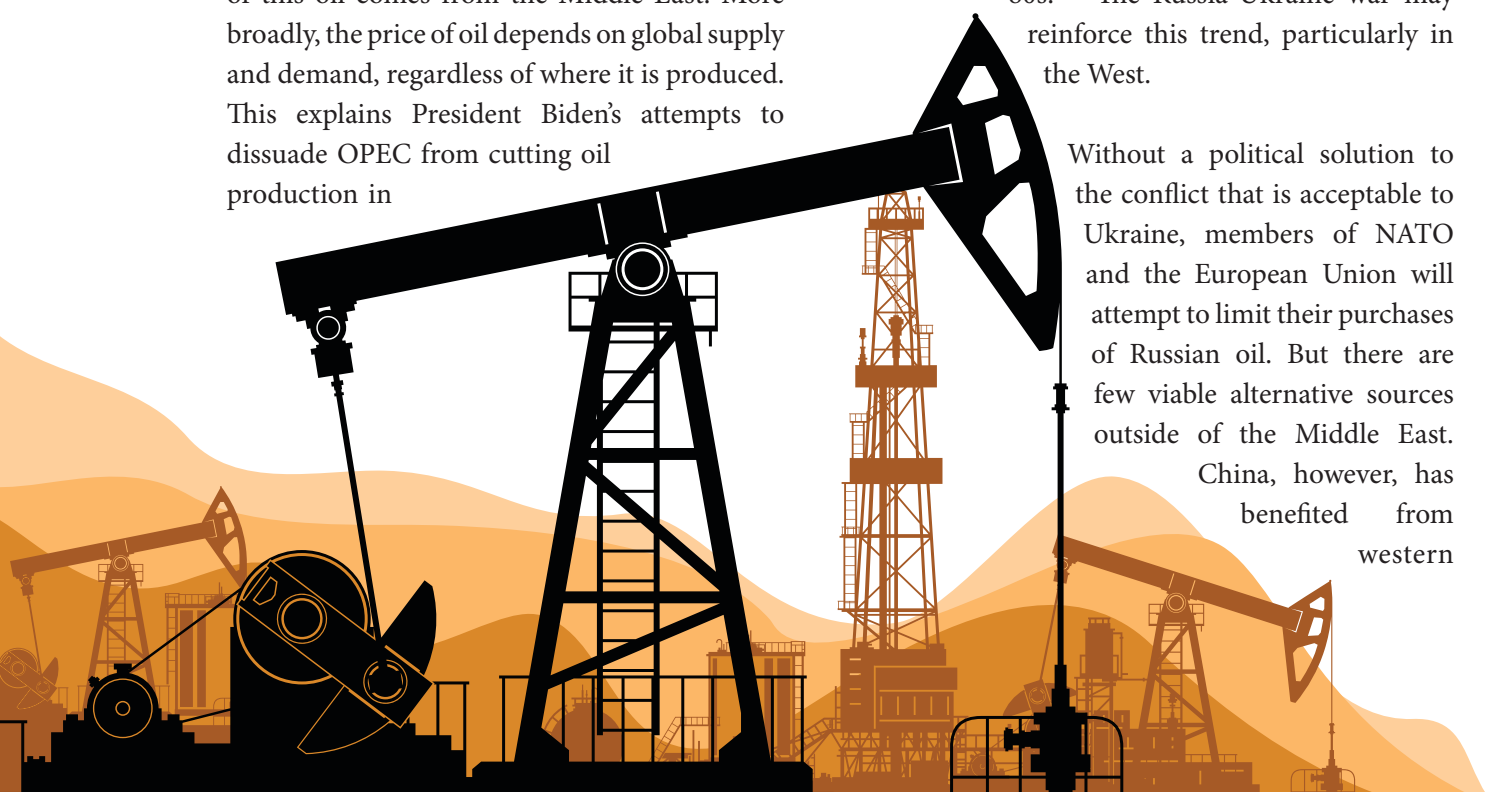
In addition, there is evidence that the rapid growth of US oil production is slowing. American companies are drilling fewer wells, and even

recently matched or exceeded its consumption, it still imports significant volumes of oil, exceeding six million barrels a day in 2022.³ This is because some American refineries are configured to process types of crude that are not produced in the United States. It can also be cheaper for refineries on the east and west coasts of the country to purchase crude oil from overseas than to do so domestically.⁴ Some of this oil comes from the Middle East. More broadly, the price of oil depends on global supply and demand, regardless of where it is produced. This explains President Biden's attempts to dissuade OPEC from cutting oil production in

the best of these are producing less oil than those drilled a decade ago. If US production plateaus or even declines, while global demand for energy continues to increase, as is expected over the next two decades, this will increase the importance of the Middle East as a reliable source of oil. According to the Chief Executive Officer of ConocoPhillips: "The world is going back to the world we had in the 70s and the 80s."⁵ The Russia-Ukraine war may reinforce this trend, particularly in the West.

Without a political solution to the conflict that is acceptable to Ukraine, members of NATO and the European Union will attempt to limit their purchases of Russian oil. But there are few viable alternative sources outside of the Middle East.

China, however, has benefited from western



sanctions, purchasing record amounts of Russian oil at discounted prices.⁶ If these sanctions remain

reliant on Middle Eastern oil, respectively. But it is unlikely that these trends will continue over the long term. China will continue to import oil from the Gulf region, but its dependence may be offset by alternative sources. For the US, however, the free flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz will remain a vital interest, and may increase rather than diminish.




in place, Russian oil may reduce China's reliance on oil from the Middle East. So too would the development of China's extensive unconventional oil reserves. Although these are more difficult to exploit than unconventional reserves in the United States, Chinese companies are investing significant resources to gain access to these reserves. For all of these reasons, we should not assume that the China will replace the United States as the guarantor of security in the Middle East. Certainly, recent years have seen growing Chinese engagement, while the US has increasingly focused on issues in other parts of the world. These developments have occurred as China and the US have become more and less

This suggests that while the US military presence in the region may never again match the levels of the early 2000s, it will persist nonetheless. This presence includes military personnel stationed in multiple countries and an extensive network of partnerships. To cite just one example, along with Chinese naval exercises with Russia and Iran, in February 2022, the US conducted an 18-day naval exercise in the region involving 42 other nations, including Israel, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.⁷ While China will maintain and possibly increase its military footprint as its economic ties in the Middle East grow, it has neither the capability nor the intention to replace the United States.

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Will the Ukraine War Reshape the Global Energy Market?

The International Energy Agency has labeled the instability in the global energy market triggered by the war in Ukraine as “the first truly global energy crisis, with impacts that will be felt for years to come” (Thomspon 2022). While the war has prompted certain global energy trade dynamics, this article argues that tectonic, long-term shifts are less likely to follow.

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While the war has prompted certain global energy trade dynamics, this article argues that tectonic, long-term shifts are less likely to follow.

War-Driven Dynamics in the Energy Market

Since the Ukraine war began in February 2022, experts have observed two major changes in the global energy market:

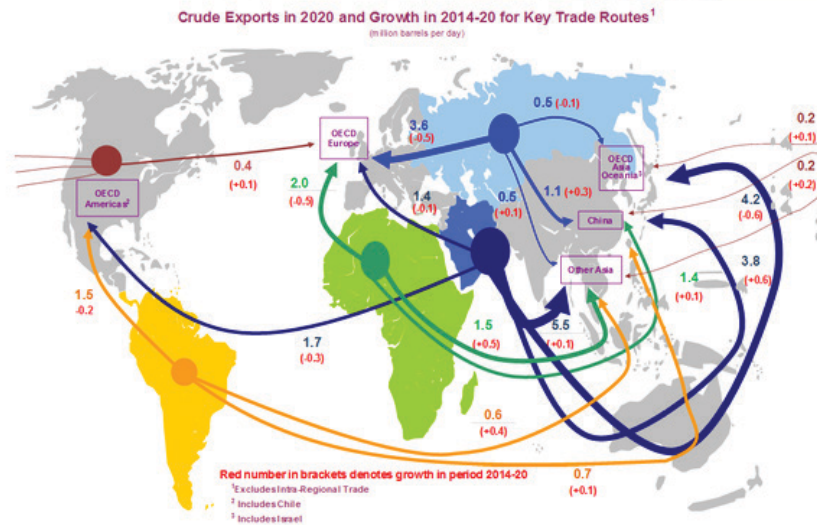
- Immediately following the invasion, energy prices shot up and have remained high ever since. In Europe, for instance, the prices for crude oil increased by 60% and gas by 400% (Butler 2022). Along with price increases, uncertainties are ramping up energy price volatility.
- Disrupted energy supplies from Russia to Europe are affecting trading patterns beyond the Eurasian energy market. Russia is among the world's top energy producers and exporters. Europe is the largest importer of natural gas and is one of the largest markets for crude oil. Considering that Europe has been importing 41% of its gas, 27% of oil and 46% of coal from Russia, the disrupted Russian energy supplies

are now heading toward other markets while European states attempt to secure energy imports from new suppliers (Besson 2022; Saravanan 2022).

Europe has had no choice but to act rapidly to avoid any major disruptions in oil and gas supplies, as it has been largely cut off from its major source of energy—Russia. However, the question remains as to what extent these dynamics will fundamentally reshape the global energy market.

World crude markets after the peak

Medium-Term
Market Report
2015



Crude trade will continue to shift eastwards

© OECD/IEA 2023

Miscalculations on Both Sides: Europe and Russia

There was a miscalculation in Moscow on Russia's ability to weaponize oil and gas supplies to Europe. Cutting Europe off from its much-needed Russian energy did not change the former's foreign policy towards Moscow and the war in Ukraine as Russian President Vladimir Putin expected. The West is still providing large-scale military and financial support to Ukraine. At the same time, despite sanctions and the war lasting for over a year, Russia is still a strategic petro-state, and its level of energy exports is holding up. A prominent scholar, Daniel Yergin, at the beginning of the invasion highlighted that, "Russia's days as an energy superpower are ebbing away" (Geman 2023). Apparently, the size of Russia's share in the global energy market renders it too big to be isolated (Sim 2022). While Moscow's European energy partners have considerably reduced the import volumes, Russia has managed to keep its oil production and exports at the pre-war level by exploring new markets, such as India, China and Turkey (Thomson 2022). In January 2023, its oil production totaled 11.2 mb/d—somewhat short of the second largest oil producer – Saudi Arabia (12.4 mb/d) (International Energy Agency n.d.).

As a response to the Russian aggression, the EU has made an announcement to end imports of Russian gas by 2027 and significantly reduce the import of Russian crude and petroleum products. To avoid an energy crisis, along with energy initiatives aimed at securing self-sufficiency, Europe is looking for alternative suppliers. In addition to an increased import from its North American partners, the EU is counting on oil and gas from the Arabian Gulf, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. However, evidence suggests that the diversification of supplies away from Russia may not be easily reversed in the mid-to long-term perspective. Cheap Russian oil and gas will always be a tempting option for the EU once the conflicting dynamics fade. Sanctions aside, technical specificities of the Russian oil and gas wells do not allow Russian companies to suspend ongoing energy production. Stopping the hydrocarbons extraction in most of the wells located in the northern territories of Russia, which account for the largest share of oil and gas production, will lead to ice plugs that will be too costly to repair, if even possible (Krutikhin and Overland 2020). Thus, regardless of prices or changes in external demand, Russia will do its best to maintain the current production level. These hydrocarbons will remain too cheap and available to entirely ignore by the European customers in the future.

Export Destination	United Arab Emirates \$ bln. / %	Saudi Arabia \$ bln. / %	Kuwait \$ bln. / %	Qatar \$ bln. / %	Oman \$ bln. / %	Bahrain \$ bln. / %
Asia	54.6 / 86	80.3 / 76	29 / 88	14.28 / 89	14.56 / 93	2.68 / 84
Non-Asia	8.9 / 14	26.1 / 24	3.9 / 12	1.75 / 11	1.13 / 7	0.51 / 16
Total	63.5 / 100	106.4 / 100	32.9 / 100	16.03 / 100	15.69 / 100	3.19 / 100

Table 1. Export Destination and Volume Crude Oil and Refined Petroleum in 2020 (OEC 2020)

What Are the Alternatives: Gulf Energy Exporters' Strategic Objectives?

The war in Ukraine provides opportunities for the Gulf and Central Asian exporters to expand their presence in the European energy market and the European states can benefit from energy import diversification. There are major obstacles, however, that need to be taken into account. Moscow still retains leverage over its strategic backyard—Central Asia and the Caucasus—and may block projects to supply energy bypassing Russian territory. There are two pipeline projects designed to deliver gas to Europe from Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, via Georgia and Turkey—Trans Caspian Gas Pipeline and South Caucasus Pipeline Expansion. The construction of the Trans Caspian Gas Pipeline has been on the agenda for almost thirty years and Moscow has always blocked, through various means, any progress in its construction (Stein 2020).

While Europe is forced to reconsider the nature of energy relations with the Gulf and the latter is taking advantage of the emerging situation by exploring new markets, it may not be in the interest of the Gulf exporters to reverse their 'Pivot to Asia' strategy in the longer run. Overall, both Gulf and Europe remain relatively reluctant partners on this matter.

- While higher LNG imports represent a viable immediate solution to the crisis, large-scale imports will be too costly even for Europe to sustain in the long run. Refilling gas storages with LNG this upcoming summer will cost European states around €70 billion, which is six

times the price in 2022 (Saravanan 2022).

- Gulf countries may not be able to increase oil and gas production capacity to meet the growing demand in both Asia and Europe. Almost 90% of the Gulf hydrocarbons are currently heading towards Asian market (see Table 1). Long-term extra supplies of hydrocarbons to Europe are likely to be entrenched by new long-term contracts. At the moment, European nations are neither ready to make long-term commitments to import hydrocarbons nor are Gulf countries willing to turn away from Asia.
- Despite fluctuations, Russia remains an important partner of the Gulf countries in OPEC+. The OPEC+ partnership not only increased Gulf countries' oil market influence but also helped Saudi Arabia to balance the influence of the US. H.H. Mohammed bin Salman resisted the US demand to abolish OPEC+ (Aboudouh 2022) and OPEC members have recently announced a 1 mln bp/d in oil output cut in response to an oversupplied market that will increase the leverage of the oil exporters, including Russia (Button 2023). The Gulf states will react to the emerging situation in line with their national interests, which so far does not imply jeopardizing their relations with Russia.

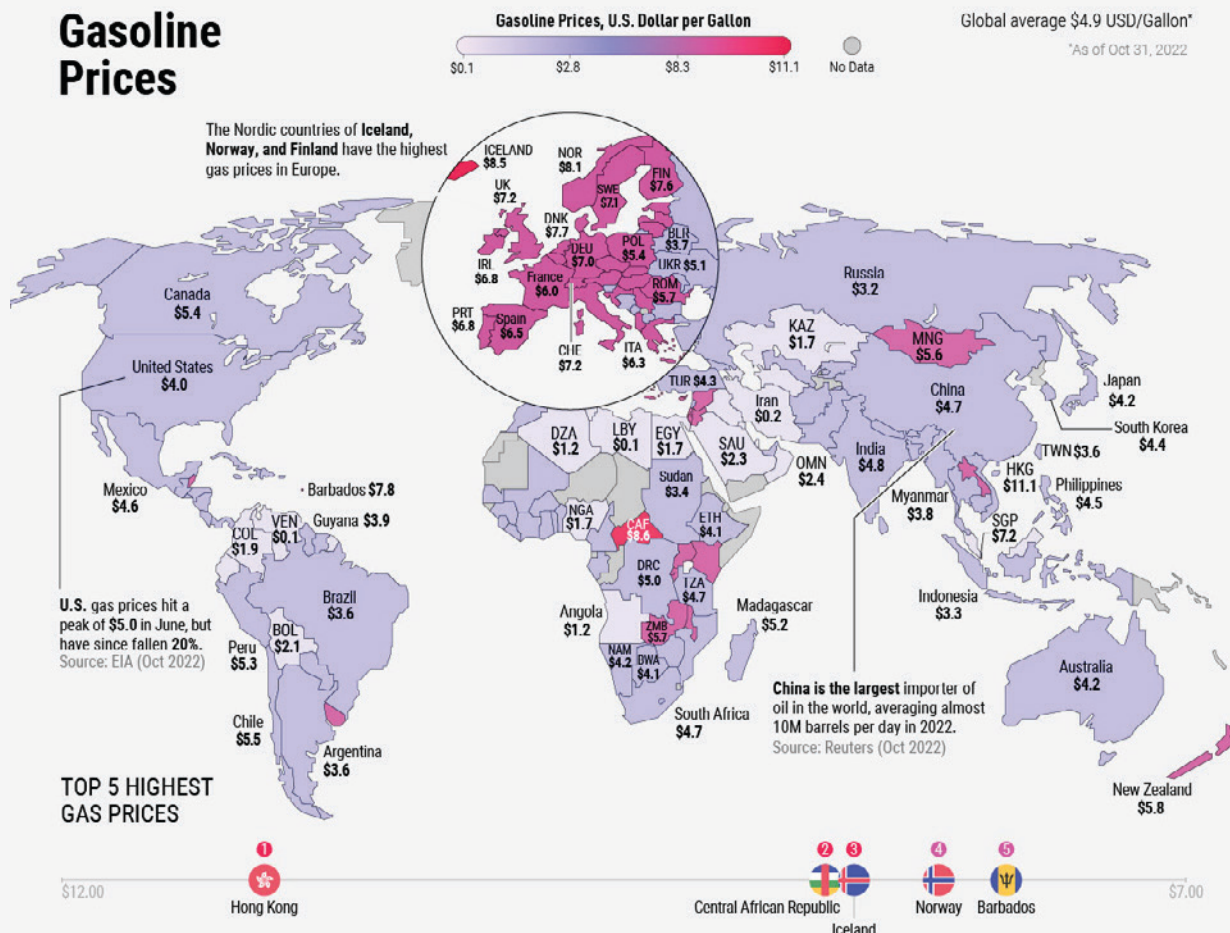
While it is clear that the Ukraine war has boosted the energy price and triggered changes in the energy trading dynamics, it does not necessarily herald long-term trends in the global energy market.

Global Energy Prices

Despite the recent drop in energy prices, gasoline, electricity, and natural gas prices have soared over 2022.

Which countries have the highest prices around the world?

Gasoline Prices



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Logistics and the Modernization of the People's Liberation Army

Over the past three decades, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has made enormous progress in the modernization of its forces. Such modernization has taken place in all three major service branches of the PLA, the Navy, Air Force and Army.

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While much attention has been paid to some of the more sophisticated military platforms in Beijing's inventory, an often neglected aspect of China's military modernization is the gradual expansion of the PLA's logistical capacity—in particular, the slow, but steady increase in naval logistics.

This article examines the current state of the People's Liberation Army Navy's (PLAN) logistical capacity. The core area of focus is on the PLAN's progress in increasing and reinforcing its logistical capacity on the high seas.

The Role of Logistics in War

Logistic capabilities is a fundamental aspect of a military power's ability to conduct operations. States that neglect to fund and improve their logistical capacity frequently struggle to win wars or achieve their goals. The ability of the American military to defeat Nazi Germany on the western front in World War Two was heavily assisted by the logistical capacity of the Red Ball Express, which consisted of trucks that supplied American and allied troops with essential equipment during their offensive towards Germany. More recently, in their invasion of Ukraine, the Russian army has had a very difficult time supplying their frontline troops with adequate supplies because of severe logistical challenges, ranging from fuel and food shortages, to supplies of munitions. In short, logistics matter enormously in both times of peace, and more critically, when fighting a war.

China's Logistics Reforms

In terms of logistics, three anecdotes symbolize the challenges that China faced in the 1990s and early 2000s. Firstly, in 1996, during a long voyage to visit the American base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, Chinese warships ran low on water as they did not have the ability to desalinate water. Secondly, in 2002, the Chinese destroyer Qingdao broke down on a world tour and German technicians had to be flown in to fix the ship. Thirdly, in the Chinese Gulf of Aden anti-piracy patrol from 2008-2012, 30 Chinese vessels were deployed. However the PLAN only had three supply ships that could assist the warships with their logistical needs. The shortages and lack of experience of blue water operations led to calls for the PLAN to rapidly increase its logistical capacity, which led to a significant reshuffling of the bureaucratic entities responsible for logistics. The PLA's logistical reforms began in 2015 when the Logistic Support Department (LSD) and the Joint Logistic

Support Force (JLSF) were created to enhance joint operations. The JLSF is based out of Wuhan and is in charge of the implementation of joint logistics support systems, coordination issues, and supplies to various theatre commands. The LSD is tasked with providing PLA-wide strategic logistics planning and determining strategic priorities. Altogether the two organizations are in charge of everything from warehousing, to oil pipelines and to force projection.

Logistics and Power Projection

According to the American government, the PLAN is the world's largest navy with roughly 355 platforms. The Americans also project that the PLAN will grow to 460 vessels by 2030. While these numbers are impressive, a key impediment to the PLAN's ability to become a truly global navy is the absence of reliable bases around the world and a limited ability to replenish warships at sea. The Chinese military operates a base in Djibouti, but apart from this location in the Horn of Africa, the PLA does not have any other official military bases, or proper logistics centers. The lack of such locations makes it challenging for China to properly supply vessels far away from the safety of home ports. Directly addressing this logistical shortfall saw the introduction of various kinds of replenishment ships. Such vessels have the ability to provide supplies ranging from ordnance, to food, to fuel to warships on the high seas. For example,



in 2013, the PLAN introduced a modified version of the Type 903 replenishment ship. The Type-903s had extensive experience of working with Chinese warships during the Gulf of Aden patrols. The patrols usually consisted of two warships along with either a Type-903 or a Type-908. In a more recent development, the PLAN has been equipped with the Type-901 replenishment ship. This vessels has the ability to supply Chinese aircraft carriers due to its ability to travel at a top speed of 25 knots. The Type-901 is also roughly 35 percent longer and twice the size of the 901.

Once the PLAN is able to reliably and consistently resupply its warships through either foreign bases/ logistical hubs, or on the open seas, this will usher in a new era of Chinese naval capability. Beijing has developed the hardware to be a world class navy, however in the absence of a strong logistical foundation, the PLAN will struggle to be able to conduct blue water missions for extended periods of time.



Logistic capabilities is a fundamental aspect of a military power's ability to conduct operations.

Conclusion

Armchair generals frequently ignore or downplay the importance of logistics in military operations. Critical infrastructure such as ports, fuel depots, and roads and railways that connect to ports do not always garner headlines. However, they are absolutely essential for a modern military to be able to achieve its goals and strategic aims. In the absence of a robust logistical network, tasks ranging from combat to humanitarian missions will struggle to fulfill their aims. The logistical reforms initiated by Beijing in the past decade demonstrate that the Chinese leadership is cognizant of the challenges associated with this issue. The reforms when combined with the new supply vessels, such as the Type-901 and 903 are an important development. Although supply at sea is a fundamental characteristic of a proper blue water navy, it is not a long-term substitute for naval bases. The establishment of the base in Djibouti in 2017 demonstrated that Beijing has overcome its previous aversion to overseas bases. The next critical step in China's path to becoming a truly global military power is where the next PLA/PLAN base will be located. If the base at Djibouti is any indicator, it will likely be in a strategically important country where China has considerable economic, political and strategic interests.

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Strategic Unification of Accreditation of Higher Education: GCC-Commission for Academic Accreditation to Cohere and Act as One

A brief review of the history of education for the past few decades reveals a massive expansion of higher education. The number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the world has grown nearly tenfold, and universities have spread out across 196 countries.

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Never before have the new generation of children had as much access to higher education and vocational training as today. Consequently, universities have responded and driven the transformations associated with the training of graduates to serve the needs of a knowledge-based society across the spectrum.

(The World Higher Education Database- (WHED)). Institutions of Higher Education are required to establish their internal standards, policies and rules for operations and continuous quality improvement. Accreditation ensures that institutions of higher education meet regulations and standards set by a

recognized, external organization or acknowledged body of accreditation. Accreditation acts as an external stamp of approval, showing that an institution follows required standards and best practices. The standards typically cover everything from teaching and research, to data security and talent retention, to facility equipment and maintenance, and to governance and engagement. To successfully prepare for accreditation, institutions must conduct and report a comprehensive self-assessment of their processes, policies, and procedures, and everything else related to accreditation standards to show evidence of compliance. This allows us to identify any areas where there are gaps, misalignments or non-compliance. Moreover, accreditation is not just about reputation. Going through the accreditation process helps streamline operations, improve the quality of the academic programs, and build trust between the institution, its community, stakeholders and accreditors. This paper calls for expanding the UAE-CAA by creating a joint and independent GCC- Commission of Academic Accreditation (GCC-CAA) that provides oversight, guidance and support to GCC public and private institutions of higher education through compliance with standards and guidelines for quality assurance, accreditation and excellence.

Unification of GCC Academic Accreditation of Higher Education

The realization of strategic priorities, greater coordination and integration among GCC Ministries of Higher Education will lead to wider access and multi-country collaboration of all institutions of higher education to maximize the benefits to teaching and learning. More than ever, deeper regional and international cooperation, and shared accessibility is the only “win-win” strategic response to strengthen inclusion, combat inequality, generate innovation and build the capacity to advance societal well-being and sustainable development. Shared culture and tradition, faith and interest in the right

to quality education and in the power of intellectual and moral solidarity to build firm identity and lasting cooperation beyond borders are common threads across the GCC countries that make them stronger. Moreover, such unified and robust efforts will support

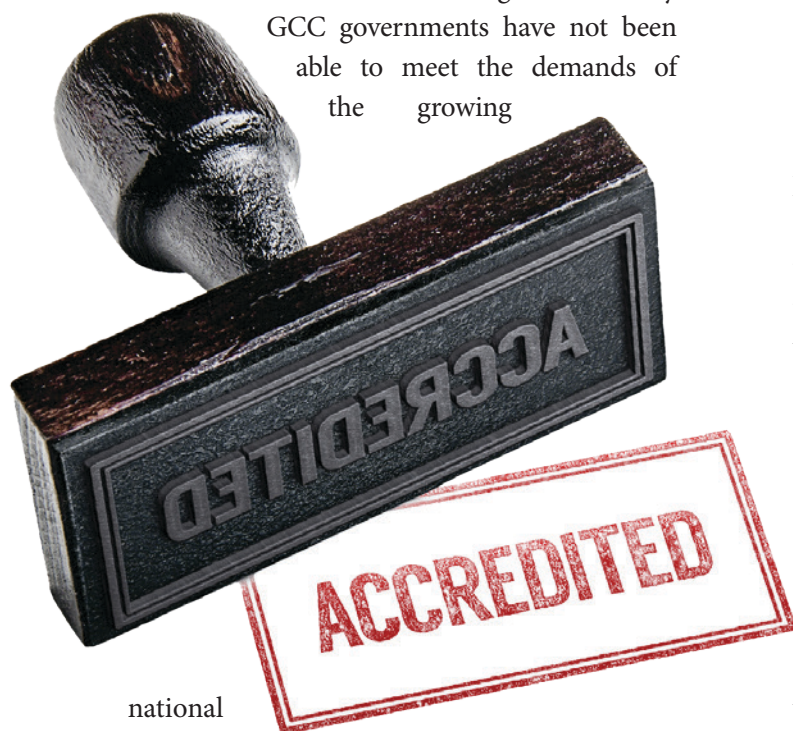


Accreditation acts as an external stamp of approval, showing that an institution follows required standards and best practices

the need to meet the educational and workforce necessities of the GCC citizens and society alike. The UAE- Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) is the UAE Federal Government Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Working collaboratively with relevant international and local authorities in the Emirates, the CAA has a key leadership role in securing and developing the quality of higher education in the country by providing institutions of higher education, both public and private, with guidance, advice and direction toward continuous improvement. In 1981 Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman and Kuwait formalized their regional cooperation by launching and becoming members of the Gulf Cooperation Council

(GCC). Besides other socio-economic objectives, the promotion and advancement of education facilities and infrastructure was one of the main aims of GCC (Kirk and Napier 2008). In the last two decades, the development of higher education infrastructure has been primarily on account of setting up of numerous private higher education institutes in GCC countries.

Universities and colleges funded by GCC governments have not been able to meet the demands of the growing



national as well as expatriate population seeking postsecondary education. Around two third of the native population in GCC falls in the age range of 14 to 27 years (Dollman, 2007), which results in a high number of students seeking to pursuit higher education.

Currently, GCC member countries have their own bodies of academic accreditation and quality assurance that perform similar roles with variances in rigor, scope and regulations. Each country should maintain its local accreditation and aspire to seek GCC- accreditation. A unified overarching body of academic accreditation of higher education will preserve the academic, financial and administrative operations of the GCC university system and align it to best serve the interests of GCC students and states, by providing the highest quality educational experience; and relieve individual countries from the burden of seeking regional accreditation body to provide their institutions with accreditation and recognition. Moreover, unified accreditation is an

effective way to promote high standards and quality in higher education while streamlining the accreditation process for organizations seeking accreditation in the GCC and the region. Unified accreditation can also be beneficial for all GCC institutions of higher education as they only need to go through one accreditation process provided by a larger and recognized entity of accreditation rather than multiple processes for different accrediting bodies. This process will result in having a standardized approach to quality and accreditation in higher education which helps to ensure consistency, accountability, fairness and larger opportunity for shared experiences in the accreditation process. In addition, this will ensure that GCC institutions of higher education are held to the same high standards and students are provided with a quality education that is transferable and recognized across the GCC institutions.

The transformation effort of the Academic Accreditation of higher education by extending its mission and outreach to the GCC member countries will eventually grow to become a well-recognized and trusted body of academic accreditation of higher education in the region and around the world. Moreover, selected Ministries of Higher Education in the neighboring countries and the region can be invited to seek GCC- accreditation as part of mutual agreements in order to enrich the process and provide more perspective towards enhanced quality, compliance requirements and implementation. In addition, it is particularly important to highlight the UAE- CAA's tireless effort and its respected reputation that make it an outstanding model by leveraging its capacity, trust and outreach to all institutions of higher education in the region. The CAA's standards for institutional licensure, program accreditation, quality assurance and overall compliance requirements are among the most rigorous standards implemented in the region when compared with standards and practices around the world. This is an open call for stepping up regional collaboration to enhance the future of higher education.

Conclusion

The ongoing rising demands of contemporary higher education in the region and around the world require countries and their accreditation entities to rethink their outreach and consider moving towards collective partnerships and closer cooperation with other nations in the region and around the world. Such cooperation leads to intensive peer institutions and national reviews that require higher expectations, competitiveness and higher level mandated accountability and compliance. Collective and unified effort of academic accreditation standards of institutions of higher education in the GCC will unequivocally contribute to the improvement of education experiences in higher education and to the advancement of the quality of higher education in the region. The higher level of required rigor and compliance evidence by institutions of higher education plays a critical role in the overall improvement of education quality. A GCC-unified academic accreditation in higher education will lead to establishing a joint set of standards and guidelines for evaluating and accrediting institutions of higher education. In essence, unified academic accreditation in the GCC should enhance the quality of higher education and improve the teaching and learning experiences to both students and faculty by:

1 Continuous Quality Improvement

Unified GCC- academic accreditation of higher education ensures that all institutions of higher education are held to the same standards and guidelines, which helps to ensure the quality of education provided to students.

This is particularly important for students who may be considering attending an institution in another country.

2 Recognition of Prior Learning and Transferability

Unified GCC- academic accreditation of higher education ensures that credits earned at one institution can be easily transferred to another institution within the GCC, which can be particularly important for students who may need to transfer for financial or personal reasons.

3 Liability

Unified GCC-academic accreditation of higher education promotes accountability among institutions of higher education in the region by ensuring that they are held to the same standards and are subject to the same evaluation, assessment and ranking process.

4 Financial

Unified GCC-academic accreditation of higher education and establishing a single set of standards and guidelines reduce the costs associated with accreditation, as institutions will not need to navigate multiple sets of standards and requirements required by different accreditation organizations. This unified GCC academic accreditation effort encourages growth to become one of the world's prominent organizations of academic accreditation in higher education that can, gradually, compete with existing accreditation situations.

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Wars of Contrast: Analyzing the Soviet-Afghan and Russo-Ukrainian Wars

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Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has devolved into a fiasco. Russia has failed to achieve its original objectives (i.e., sacking Kyiv, ousting the Ukrainian government led by President Volodymyr Zelensky, and installing a puppet regime in its stead). Upon instigating a multi-pronged invasion, Russia withdrew its forces from the outskirts of Kyiv and elsewhere several months later, and has since concentrated on seizing tracts of the Donbas region.

In September 2022, Ukrainian forces initiated a successful counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region. In response, the Kremlin at President Vladimir Putin's behest organized sham referendums in parts of Donetsk Oblast, Luhansk Oblast, Zaporizhzhia Oblast, and Kherson Oblast and annexed these lands. Some argue that Russia is caught in a quagmire, redolent of the Soviet-Afghan War. The evacuation of Russian forces from Kherson indicates that this war could drag on for years to come. But does the Russo-Ukrainian War resemble the Soviet-Afghan War of the 1980s?

Although it is tempting to draw parallels between the Russo-Ukrainian War and the USSR's debacle in Afghanistan, the differences between these wars are quite stark. First, the element of surprise distinguishes them. The Soviets invaded Afghanistan on Christmas Eve 1979. The USSR sought to depose General Secretary Hafizullah Amin (the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan's head of state at the time who had run afoul of the Kremlin) and buttress an embattled Communist government. The 1979 invasion took the

world by surprise, and in short order the Soviets killed Amin, installed a new leader, and pledged to support the DRA. In contrast, Russia's invasion of Ukraine was a foregone conclusion. Putin spent months ramping up forces in Crimea, Belarus, and along Russia's western border. Perhaps Putin intended to coerce Zelensky into declaring his intention to keep Ukraine from ever joining NATO. But Putin's list of demands on the eve of the war – stating that NATO would need to withdraw its forces and weapons from countries that joined the alliance after 1997, not admit any more members, and the West would also have to offer “legal guarantees” assuring Russia's security – revealed that an all-out invasion was imminent.

Second, the conduct of these wars differs substantially. During the Soviet-Afghan War, foreign powers (i.e., the United States and Saudi Arabia) covertly provided money and weapons to the mujahedeen via Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency. Today, Western powers are sanctioning Russia and overtly providing Kyiv with weaponry (such as HIMARS) to enable Ukrainian forces to kill/maim Russian soldiers and

destroy ammunition depots. Furthermore, the Soviets in Afghanistan battled against an insurgency (directed primarily by Pakistan) comprised of nationalist and Islamist elements, and the USSR lost about 15,000 soldiers after nine years of fighting. Contrastingly, Ukrainian forces are waging a largely conventional war against Russia and inflicting heavy losses. On this point, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency surmised that Russia had lost 15,000 troops by mid-summer 2022, and in November U.S. Army General Mark Milley estimated that Russia had suffered in excess of 100,000 casualties.

Third, the significance of the Russo-Ukrainian War outweighs the Soviet-Afghan War. The Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 did not usher in the fall of Communism, the collapse of the USSR, or even the overthrow of the Communist regime in Kabul (at least for another three years). Furthermore, Afghanistan did not morph into a threat – in the form of a haven for terrorist organizations – until the late 1990s. In contrast, Russia's failure to achieve victory in Ukraine would jeopardize Putin's hold on power. Moreover, Putin's threat of possibly using tactical nuclear weapons, supposedly in defense of Russia's

new territories, indicates that the war could escalate to an unprecedented level. The stakes are therefore much higher for the Kremlin and the world in Ukraine than they once were in Afghanistan.

Finally, the Soviet-Afghan and Russo-Ukrainian wars vary in terms of their outcome predictabilities. In Afghanistan, it became obvious that the Soviets could not defeat the mujahedeen owing to the country's rugged terrain, safe havens in Pakistan, and sustained foreign involvement in the war. General Secretary Gorbachev even characterized the war as a "hopeless military adventure." In Ukraine, however, the outcome of the war is unforeseeable, at least at this juncture. As the October 2022 attack on Russia's Crimean Bridge and Russia's sustained destruction of Ukraine's energy grid suggest, the Russo-Ukrainian War has evolved into a contest of the utmost significance for Moscow and Kyiv. Russia's partial mobilization order has also sparked domestic uncertainty and regional instability (with thousands of Russian citizens fleeing abroad), and it is unclear as to how ordinary Russians may respond if more are called upon to fight. In sum, for all such reasons the very natures of these two wars differ substantially.

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The UAE's Youth Climate Action and Environmental Public Diplomacy

'Public diplomacy', a term that was coined in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, former dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, refers to the practice of influencing foreign publics' attitudes toward foreign policies that goes beyond the conventional government-to-government diplomacy. Public diplomacy has become a necessity for managing domestic and foreign public opinion and conducting diplomacy in the digital and information age.

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Since the early 2000s, public diplomacy has evolved to include 'new public diplomacy', which is otherwise referred to as 'public diplomacy 2.0', with an emphasis on people-to-people diplomacy. While government's public diplomacy remains the dominant paradigm of public diplomacy, the spectrum of public diplomacy campaigns has broadened due to the proliferation

of information and communication. As Rhonda Zaharna notes, adversarial publics, in parallel with the geopolitical implications, are the greatest threat to the state when viewed through the lens of strategic communication. Thus it is essential to recognize that domestic and international dimensions of public diplomacy are closely intertwined.

International Dimensions of Environmental Public Diplomacy

In preparation for COP28, the UAE has been gearing up on public diplomacy initiatives by proactively incorporating public diplomacy into its 'youth climate action' campaigns.

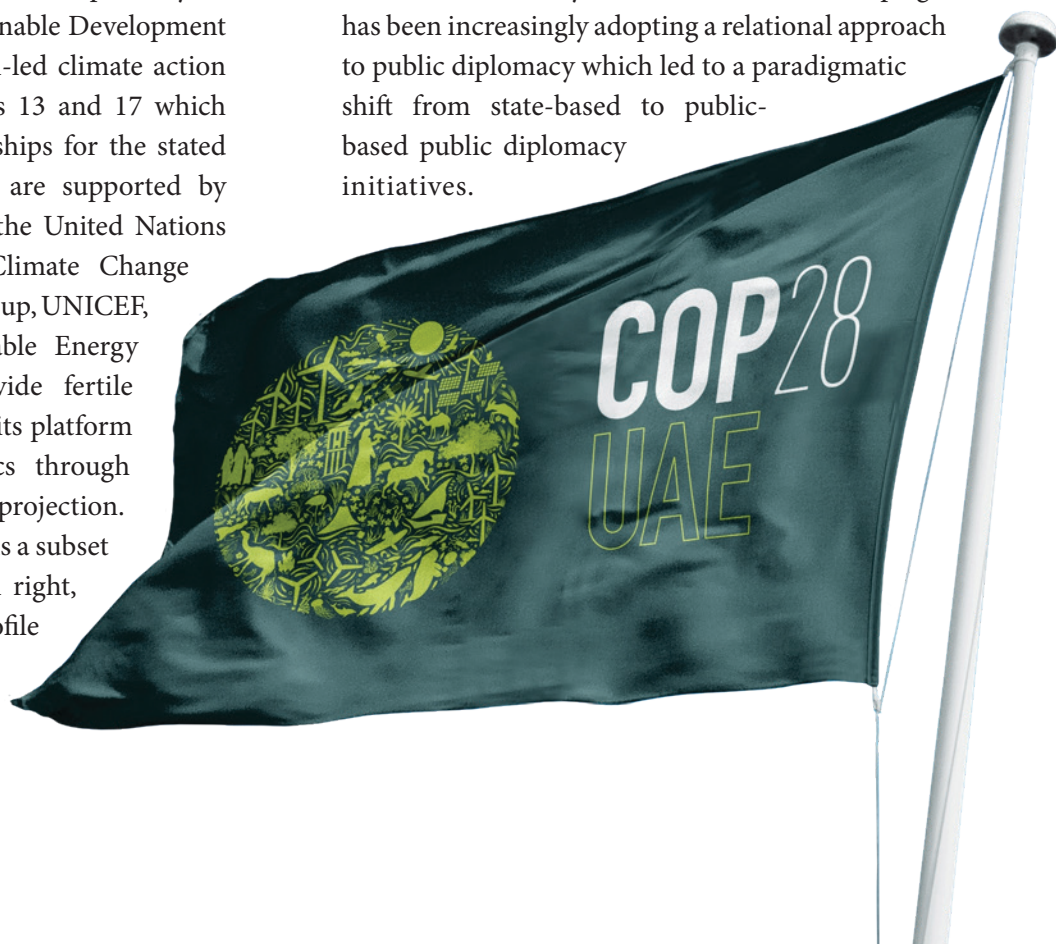


The Youth 4 Climate Initiative is a global initiative that is co-sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the government of Italy. As enshrined in the Youth 4 Climate Manifesto, the aim is to sustain meaningful, long-term strategic engagements with young people by promoting innovative youth-led and youth-inclusive climate action initiatives. As per the five taxonomies of public diplomacy delineated by Nicholas Cull, listening, advocacy, and exchange diplomacy are integral components of the UAE's youth-inclusive environmental public diplomacy. In conjunction with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UAE's youth-led climate action campaign is anchored to SDGs 13 and 17 which are climate action and partnerships for the stated goals. These initiatives which are supported by international partners such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Bank Group, UNICEF, and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) which provide fertile ground for the UAE to expand its platform for influencing foreign publics through nation-branding and soft power projection. Given that hosting mega events is a subset of public diplomacy in its own right, the burgeoning of high-profile international conferences hosted by the UAE ahead of COP28 has revitalized youth-

inclusive climate change communication and youth-led climate action initiatives. To set the stage for the upcoming COP28 conference, a flurry of public diplomacy campaigns was launched through the global conferences such as Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, World Government Summit, and the Youth 4 Sustainability (Y4S) initiative sponsored by Masdar. Youth climate action is also gaining momentum through Expo City Dubai which showcases a sustainability district in the lead-up to COP28. Following on from Expo 2020 Dubai, Expo City Dubai has been marketing the Expo City Dubai as a sustainable venue by posting promotional trailers of climate conservation and running sustainability campaigns that feature children. Youth-based environmental public diplomacy projects have taken various forms including business-private partnerships and citizen diplomacy.

Domestic Dimensions of Youth-Inclusive Environmental Public Diplomacy

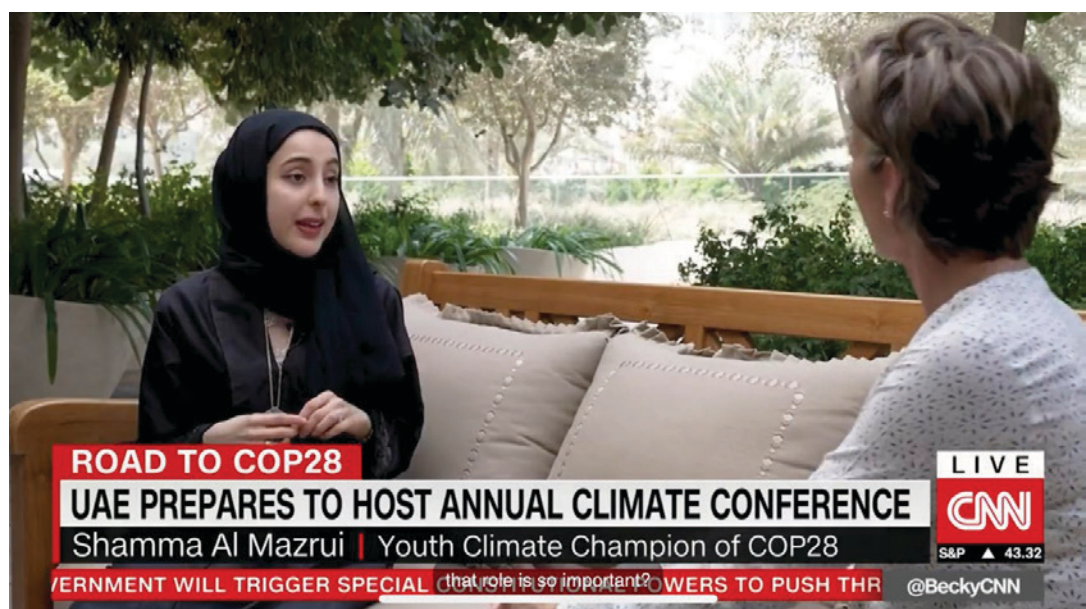
Whilst targeting foreign publics, the domestic dimensions of environmental public diplomacy in the UAE are brought to the foreground by involving Emirati youths and UAE residents in youth climate action. The UAE's youth climate action campaign has been increasingly adopting a relational approach to public diplomacy which led to a paradigmatic shift from state-based to public-based public diplomacy initiatives.



The latter, which adopts inclusive and collaborative approaches to relational public diplomacy between a communicator and audience, are represented through public diplomacy projects that are either public-initiated or have a public-centric orientation, which denotes that public diplomacy options are aligned with public needs and interests. For instance, the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week had a stand-alone hub for Youth 4 Sustainability initiative for two consecutive years and hosted networking events and panel discussions raising awareness on sustainability and showcased the booths of national oil companies and local universities. The objectives are threefold: first, to strengthen public-private partnerships; second, to elicit youth participation in climate action and third, to promote collaboration and exchange diplomacy among youth climate champions, youth envoys, and future sustainability leaders in the Gulf and beyond. Further to this, climate action and climate education presentations have been given by Emirati youths and non-Emirati youths based in the UAE at high-profile global conferences and forums hosted by the UAE. The domestic dimensions of the UAE's environmental public diplomacy are supported by local universities, international organizations hosted by the UAE, as well as local youth councils such as the Arab Youth Center and Environmental Agency Abu Dhabi's Youth Council among others. The abovementioned examples demonstrate that the UAE's youth-inclusive environmental public diplomacy fosters mutual engagement and collaboration between state actors and non-state actors.

Policy and Leadership in Youth Climate Action

Prioritizing youth-inclusion in the UAE's climate action initiatives is evident through the appointment of H.E. Shamma Al Mazrui as the COP28 youth climate champion. In parallel with women's empowerment, youth climate action harnesses policy and leadership as a key pillar of social development. Both forms of public diplomacy, namely government's public diplomacy and citizen diplomacy, have been visible in the area of policy and leadership in youth climate action.



H.E. Shamma Al Mazrui was named as COP28 Youth Climate Champion

In addition to the leadership of cabinet members, government entities, and the permanent representatives of the UAE to international organizations, the UAE has coordinated a youth delegate program at the national level and designated a UAE youth delegate to the UN. International forums and conferences also provide opportunities for discussion and exchange of ideas among youth and sustainability delegates representing private companies and international organizations hosted by the UAE. Youth participation in climate action has profound implications for national security. It is important to tap into the Emirati youth as a vital source of participation and empowerment in decarbonization and Emiratization strategies.

As HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum wrote in an open letter in 2016, it is important to listen to the youth: “We do not forget that the genesis of the tension in our region, the events dubbed the ‘Arab Spring’, was squarely rooted in the lack of opportunities for young people to achieve their dreams and ambitions.”

Conclusion

Youth climate action is at the heart of the UAE’s environmental public diplomacy. As a diplomatic tool and an instrument of soft power, increasing support for participatory and relational approaches to public diplomacy are promoted through youth-inclusive environmental public diplomacy initiatives. Capacity-building for young people on climate change is equally important considering that young people have the potential to take on a leading role in climate action and advocacy. As a result, the mainstreaming of youth participation in policy making has been elevated in the UAE. A collaborative, inclusive approach to environmental public diplomacy is pivotal for ensuring that young leaders take a proactive role in influencing and advocating for responsible climate action.



“We do not forget that the genesis of the tension in our region, the events dubbed the ‘Arab Spring’, was squarely rooted in the lack of opportunities for young people to achieve their dreams and ambitions.”

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Arabian Gulf Security Focus: The Implications of the United Kingdom's Military Return to the Gulf Region

Over the past decade, Arabian Gulf countries have collectively witnessed the reversal of the UK government's removal of permanently-based military forces from the region, which had been the default policy position since the withdrawal 'East of Suez' in 1971 (Devanny & Berry, 2021:147). Although the overall significance of such developments to Gulf security can be questioned, the UK's return to the region in military terms represents a distinct strategic shift, and represents a clear and ongoing process of re-engagement.

Dr. Stephen Quick
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1971 Gulf Departure

By the end of 1971, the UK had ended a two-hundred year military presence in the Arabian Gulf. The Labour Government's 1968 Defence (policy) White Paper announced the swift and complete military withdrawal to the surprise and concern of the Arabian Gulf rulers. All significant concentrations

of military forces were withdrawn East of Suez (except in Hong Kong and the two important Omani Royal Air Force (RAF) bases; RAF Salalah and RAF Masirah), including HMS Jufair in Bahrain, which had been a UK naval base since the 1930s.

The UK's 'withdrawal East of Suez' had significant regional strategic security and therefore political impacts, including propelling the formation of the UAE, the independence of Bahrain and Qatar and Iranian territorial expansion. The security landscape of the Gulf region was changed forever. Britain signaled its tangible loss of great power status, and the USA moved to fill the vacuum (taking over the previous HMS Juffair site and later that of RAF Masirah). The UK was out of the world power 'Big League' and concentrated its efforts towards European integration.

Return to the Gulf

In a stark reversal of the policy in place since 1971, the UK has now re-entered the Gulf, both politically, economically, and most significantly, militarily. Whilst the process was already underway by 2010, the gathering contemporary Brexit issue focused UK planners on a potential post-EU world and the phrase 'Global Britain' entered governmental language (Devanny & Berry, 2021:141). Britain was to re-engage with the Gulf and the wider world through the visible provision of hard power.

The earliest significant development was the opening of a new naval base in Bahrain in 2014. Named HMS Juffair after its predecessor, and located on part of the original base's real estate, it represented a clear "... watershed moment" in the British approach to Gulf security (Stubley, 2018). At the time, it was the largest operational base for the Royal Navy (RN) outside UK waters and created a permanent home for the four ships of its 9th Mine Countermeasures Squadron and up to 500 British



military personnel (Stubley, 2018). This initiative was followed in 2017 by the British Ministry of Defence (MOD) announcing the construction of a new UK Joint Logistics Support Base (UKJLSB) at Duqm in Oman (Binnie, 2020). Officially opened in October 2018, the new base provided

dry dock facilities for the two new 65,000 tonne Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers to support 'East of Suez' deployments.

In 2020, the MOD announced additional investment to triple the size of the Duqm facilities, further reinforcing the operational potential of the base (Lye, 2020). This includes naval assets on permanent forward deployment as part of the Indo-Pacific-specific Littoral Response Group (LRG), described as "A bespoke force assigned to a geographical area that contains dedicated [military] shipping, helicopters and boats" specializing in crisis response (Allison, 2021). Alongside these major base investments, UK military forces are also engaged on a long-term basis in Saudi Arabia, Qatar (Al Udeid Airbase), Minhad (UAE) and Al Musannah (Oman), with a regional defence staff now located in Dubai (Devanny & Berry, 2021:148). The UK military return to the Gulf means approximately 1,500 British military personnel are now on permanent deployment in the region.





Gulf Security Implications

These developments firstly highlight that the UK is investing heavily in a Gulf 'hard power' footprint from where 'soft power' effects can springboard both regionally and worldwide, such as political influence and trade in an upwards virtuous cycle. Secondly, they indicate that Britain is serious about showing the region and the world that it is committed to overall Gulf security. The UK is putting 'blood and treasure' on the line to simultaneously reassure regional allies, as well as to deter potential regional threats. The 2021 MOD Defence (Review) Command Paper names Russia, China, Iran and North Korea as either clear threats or challenges with regards to the global geopolitical strategic context, with Iran highlighted as a key challenge for the Gulf region (MOD, 2021:5-7). Increased military presence will signal to the Iranian regime that the UK takes its regional interests and responsibilities seriously, deploying a revitalized military capability to both deter and compel if necessary. This stance will also back up any diplomatic efforts to reinstate the 2015 P5+1 brokered Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreements, and potentially help deter Iran from breaching weapons grade enrichment levels. Furthermore, on a practical operational level, in-theatre UK forces can take a more proactive and

The UK is putting 'blood and treasure' on the line to simultaneously reassure regional allies, as well as to deter potential regional threats.

sustained approach to countering Iranian activities in the Gulf and Strait of Hormuz with the attendant importance for global oil supplies. Permanent in-theatre forces equals round-the-clock deterrent posture and capability to compel if required. This will also act to reinforce the RN's 'Operation Kipion' which has provided a limited level of rotational, non-permanent, naval forces to promote Gulf security since the 1980s.

Finally, Britain's Gulf return will also act to bolster, in public relations terms, the US position in the region. The highly visible boost to the Anglo-US alliance in the vicinity will help counter the perception that the US is 'abandoning' the region and will act to enhance security for all Gulf nations, including the UAE.

Conclusion

Does the prospect of a permanent military return to the Gulf by the UK radically change the regional security balance? The answer is yes, and no. The fact that the UK now has permanent forces on standby is a significant development. It has a deterrent effect, boosts engagement, the defence capabilities of allies, and proves Britain is willing to 'put skin in the game' to enhance Gulf security. This presence will be a welcome boost to allies concerned by Iran's malign activities coupled with its nuclear ambitions.

The relative contribution of approximately 1,500 British military personnel versus the 55,000 the USA has stationed in the region does not, however, represent a large security-related status quo shift (Devanny & Berry, 2021:148). The US will remain the primary guarantor of Gulf security, and the UK has neither the resources nor the political will to take on such a role. Furthermore, although enshrined in its recent Security and Defence Reviews, the UK's Gulf military stance reflects domestic political realities. If the UK's Labour Party were to win the next General Election (due late 2024 / early 2025), the current strategic stance has the potential for significant alteration. It was after all a Labour government which set in motion the strategic policy to withdraw 'East of Suez' in 1968. The Gulf is also a different place to that the UK departed in 1971. That era of vulnerable, underdeveloped sheikhdoms which faced the twin threats of potential Cold War communist insurrection and Iranian territorial ambitions is no more. Political, economic and military development, allied to the virtual 'pariah' status of Iran internationally has meant a reduction in regional existential threats.

Gulf nations rely on overall US security, but increasingly 'strategically hedge' with rising or established powers such as China and Russia. The need for regional UK security assistance is now, therefore, 'desirable' rather than 'essential'.

Ultimately, even if the enhanced UK commitment is relatively limited in material terms, the most important effect is in terms of defence diplomacy. The UK has shown a willingness to engage and commit resources in the region, which will be a welcome development for its Gulf allies. Essentially, the British return to the Gulf is the hard power 'tip of the spear' of a wider post-Brexit 'Global Britain' approach which should be a win-win both for the Gulf countries and the UK itself.

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Reshaping the UAE military recruitment process using Big Data Analytics

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It is a relatively simple process for citizens of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to apply for military service because it only takes a few minutes to fill out some forms, add copies of personal documents and a filter-enhanced photo, then drive to the nearest military recruiting center to submit these documents.

Subsequently, a time-consuming and complex screening and recruitment process must now begin at the recruitment centers because the stakes are high due to the extremely demanding nature of working in the UAE military. In addition, the process of identifying and hiring new recruits in the UAE Ministry of Defence (MoD) has changed over the years. The acquisition of high-tech military equipment, as well as other initiatives such as Zayed Military University, make it more important than ever for recruitment personnel to place the right people in the right jobs. MoD requires the best candidates to serve in the armed forces. Ultimately, the new recruit's decisions may affect the lives of other service members. To thrive as a soldier, officer or specialist in the modern UAE armed forces, a person must not only be educated and physically fit, but also possess the necessary psychological and emotional characteristics. However, recruiters, candidates, and the MoD may find the current hiring process to be lengthy and frustrating. Therefore, the UAE military recruitment process could benefit from using cutting-edge digital technologies and tools instead of manual recruiters in the early stages of the hiring process, thereby saving time and money and giving the MoD an edge over other local employers and talent seekers.

The UAE's vision entails the use of some of the latest technologies and innovations, as it aims to be at the forefront of global competitiveness (Zaatari 2019). The UAE government currently is at the forefront of technology adoption, and, naturally, the utilization of Big Data by public sectors is happening more and more (D'Mello 2018). The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE), for example, has launched an AI-based system for screening and recruitment that was able to cut transactions from two days to forty-eight minutes, without human intervention (Gulf News 2022). Furthermore, the Dubai Future Foundation (DFF) has implemented a new AI solution called 'HireVue,' which aims to improve productivity, performance levels, reduce the effort and time required to evaluate applicants, and accelerate recruitment processes (WAM 2019). Given these

"The UAE's vision entails the use of some of the latest technologies and innovations, as it aims to be at the forefront of global competitiveness"

successes in other UAE government entities, the purpose of this article is to demonstrate how the MoD could use Big Data technologies to streamline the applicant screening process, allowing them to focus on only the most qualified candidates while also identifying candidates who may not have realized they want a military career but will thrive in this field.

What exactly is Big Data Analytics?

Modern digital tools seek to improve efficiency in an organization's daily operations utilizing Big Data technologies. The term 'Big Data' is used to describe a wide variety of datasets that are either extremely large or very complicated. These datasets might originate from internal company databases, publicly available 'open-source' information, or even from the users of certain software applications (Wu et al. 2016). These data are stored in a number of formats, ranging from structured, numeric data in traditional databases to unstructured text documents, emails, videos, photographs shared on social media, audio, passive sensor readings, and GPS signals from cellphones and satellites (Lim et al. 2019). Big Data is also commonly defined by the "five Vs": volume, variety, velocity, veracity, and value (Gandomi and Haider 2015, 139). Thus, when used effectively, it is widely recognized as one of the most powerful drivers for promoting productivity, improving efficiency, and supporting innovation. Labrinidis and Jagadish (2012) further divide the process of extracting insights from Big Data into two main subprocesses: data management and data analytics. Data management encompasses the processes and supporting technologies used to acquire, store, and prepare data for analysis. Data analytics, on the other hand, refers to the methods used to analyze and extract intelligence from large amounts of data. Thus, Big Data Analytics (BDA) can be viewed as a sub-process within the overall process of extracting insights from Big Data for decision-making (Labrinidis and Jagadish 2012). When it comes to human resource management (HRM), Big Data has become an indispensable tool in recent years for many businesses seeking to efficiently manage massive amounts of data and filter out what is useful.

Benefits of BDA recruitment

BDA recruitment is the process of forecasting future hiring activities and candidates based on historical data. It all comes down to gathering and analyzing data using statistics, machine learning, and modeling techniques to best predict what might happen in different scenarios (Brendan 2021). Many companies including Google, Cisco, Sprint, and Deloitte have all used BDA recruitment for years to drive their decision making and hiring processes and prevent human error and time required in the manual screening of applications based on specified criteria, saving a significant amount of money and time (Brendan 2021; Sabbagh 2021). In addition, the US Department of Defense recently used BDA to improve its recruitment process by efficiently searching through all candidates and identifying the best candidates for each service while eliminating bias (USA Department of Defense 2020). The advantages of BDA recruitment over traditional hiring methods are numerous. It gives you objective insight into the effectiveness and value of your recruitment efforts. It allows you to actively nurture potential future recruits by keeping track of high-potential candidates. It enables you to build a robust talent pool or a permanent record of all candidates that you can refer to on a regular basis. It opens up the possibility of learning from and improving processes. It allows proactive (rather than reactive) recruitment to drive better and more timely hiring decisions. It allows you to predict which candidates will be high performers and which will be sub-standard recruits (Brendan 2021).

Ways to improve the recruitment process in the military

Filtering the candidates

One of the most important ways that BDA can help military recruitment personnel is by streamlining the screening process. Military screening is a complex process that entails scanning candidates' information and selecting the candidate who best matches the job description. This procedure could take a long time, especially if the recruiter is looking for people to fill a variety of roles, from infantry soldier to special operations officer. Using BDA, recruiters may more quickly and efficiently scan through potential candidates' resumés, cover letters, grades, and personal information to locate the individuals who are the best fit for the job (Russell 2020; Guo et al. 2021). Furthermore, text analytics also makes it simple for recruiters to spot relevant phrases in documents such as cover letters and resumés (Durana et al. 2022). They can also save time by eliminating the need to manually compile information about a candidate's employment experience, education, and other background factors that may be important to a position in the military.

Video as military recruitment tool

While a candidate's photo may reveal the interviewee's appearance, a video interview might give insights into their personality and disclose details about their background, unlike a photo. Whenever a recruiter uses video to conduct an interview with a candidate, a video and image data analysis software analyzes the candidate's actions—such as how fast they type or how they structure their thoughts during the conversation—and their body language to draw conclusions about the candidate's character (Guenole and Feinzig 2018). HireVue's facial software, for example, employs AI to scan an interviewee's language - active or passive phrases and tone of voice - as well as facial expressions such as brow furrowing, smiling, and eye widening (Zainab 2020). This application will also enable recruiters to conduct multiple candidate

interviews at the same time, potentially speeding up the selection and hiring process (Park and Ko 2022). In fact, It was reported that recruiters using HireVue have improved hiring quality by 88%, diversity by 55%, and recruitment speed by 90% (Zainab 2020)

Improving military recruitment campaign

Analyzing location-based data helps recruiters evaluate where they should be conducting their recruiting efforts. Although social media and marketing campaigns are well-known for using location-based data to select suitable targets, many institutions, including universities in the US, have recently been effective in targeting excellent students through the use of location-based data (Brown and Anderson 2022). Location-based data can help military recruiters focus on areas with higher employment rates in specific military services and determine when and where they should be visiting those areas jobs, which could improve the military recruitment campaign.

The way ahead

Big Data technology is changing the way we think about data. It is moving beyond simply storing and analyzing large volumes of data from a variety of platforms to now include predictive analytics, machine learning and AI. Due to the large datasets, sophisticated predictive algorithms must be created and linked to military services in order to properly select candidates and measure performance and feed that information back into the system to complete the machine learning loop (Hamilton and Sodeman 2020). As a result, in order for the MoD to succeed in this task, it must first and foremost gain the support and commitment of the MoD's top leadership as well as military service commanders. It must be done with everyone's best interests in mind, as collaboration between MoD HR and military services HR department will improve overall system performance and outcomes. Furthermore, the primary principle behind implementing BDA recruitment is the concept of machine learning (Arabian Business 2019). Hence, to properly train the algorithms, it is necessary not to just employ

software and data specialists, but also train HR managers and recruiters on the importance of conducting relevant research and making use of appropriate statistical methods while avoiding bias and emotional constructs (Singh and Shaurya 2021). Finally, the MoD needs to address the regulatory challenges such as privacy and information security concerns if they want to be successful in this endeavor.

In conclusion, many organizations are rather hesitant about jumping into the uncertain world of Big Data. This article contends that the MoD is well positioned to succeed in this mission. By

utilizing Big Data technologies such as text analytics and video analytics, as well as developing software algorithms that set relevant criteria for education, experience, and abilities and linking it to military service criteria and requirements, the MoD will be able to sort through data quickly and easily to filter applications based on the criteria selected and focus on what is most relevant. Implementing Big Data technologies also will unlock new future prospects for the MoD to build more technological products and AI-based solutions that will improve military personnel career planning, military training, and mission planning.

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Challenging Assumptions and Mitigating Risks: The Power of Strategic Red Teaming in Military Operations

The military operates in complex and rapidly changing environments, where assumptions and plans can be challenged by adversaries and unexpected events. Strategic red teaming has emerged as a powerful tool for military organizations to challenge and test assumptions, to identify and address potential risks and vulnerabilities (Zenko 2015).

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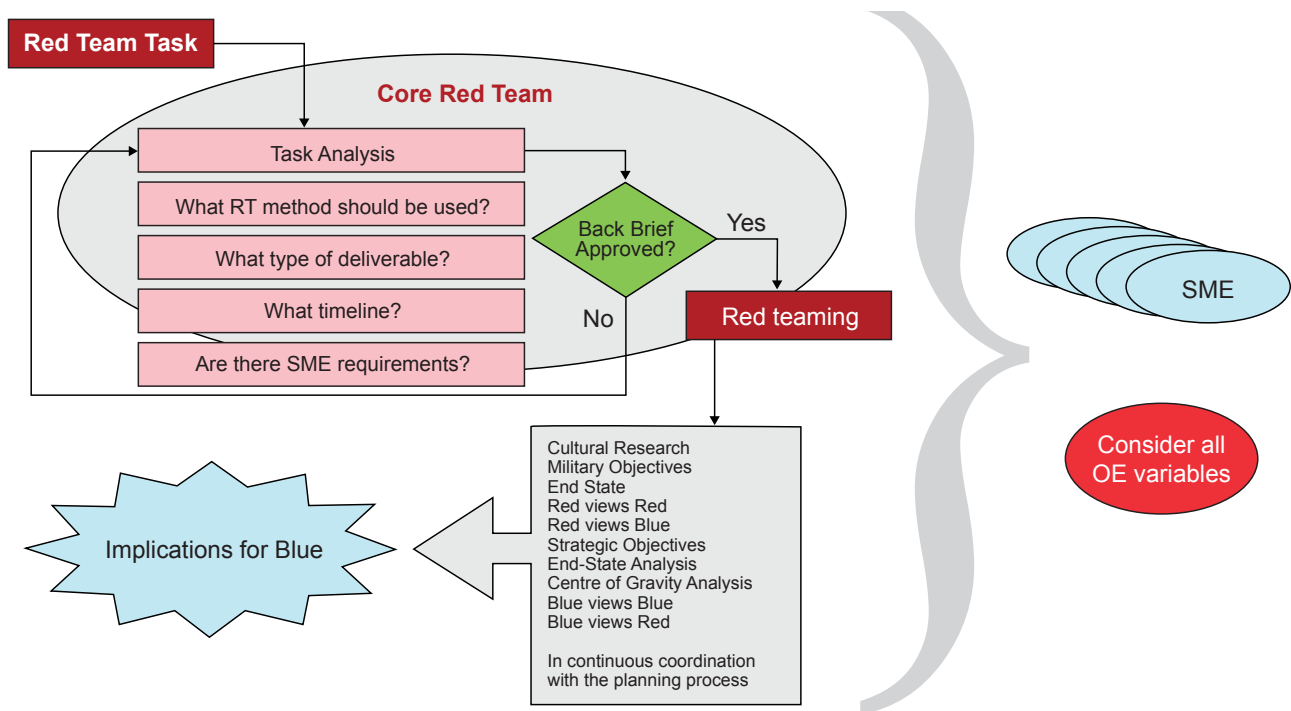


At the strategic level, red teaming focuses on long-term planning and decision-making, identifying potential risks and challenges impacting an organization's overall strategy and direction (TRADOC 2015).

By simulating the actions and behaviors of adversaries or competitors, strategic red teams can help military organizations better understand and prepare for potential threats and challenges, to develop more agile and flexible strategies that can better adapt to changing environments.

Defining Strategic Red Teaming in Military Operations

Strategic red teaming in military operations is a structured and systematic approach to challenging and testing military assumptions, plans, and strategies. It encourages critical analysis, creativity, and objectivity, and involves a 'red team' of experts who review a scenario or proposal from different perspectives, to identify weaknesses, blind spots, and problems. The red team is a critical thinking tool that challenges and tests military assumptions and plans, to improve risk management, decision-making, and the identification of vulnerabilities (UK Defence 2021).



The Importance of Strategic Red Teaming in Military Operations

Strategic red teaming in military operations is crucial for organizations that wish to anticipate risks and challenges. By continuously challenging and testing assumptions and plans, strategic red teams can help military organizations discover and resolve potential difficulties. Strategic red teaming promotes innovation, creativity, continuous improvement, and learning. Additionally, red teaming decreases risk and ambiguity (Elizabeth 2020). Strategic red teams can assist military organizations in preparing for threats and difficulties, by imitating opponents or competitors. The red team increases risk management and decision-making capabilities.

Examples of Strategic Red Teaming in Military Operations

Examples of strategic red teaming in military operations are abundant, as military organizations around the world have recognized the value of this tool in challenging assumptions and mitigating risks. Here are some examples of strategic red teaming in action in the military domain:

The US Army: The US Army has been using red teaming for many years to improve the effectiveness of its military operations. The Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG) is one example of a red team that conducts exercises to test and challenge the assumptions and plans of military units. The AWG's primary focus is on unconventional and asymmetric warfare, and it has been instrumental in helping the Army adapt to the changing nature of warfare in the 21st century (Kyle 2020).

The Marine Corps' Warfighting Laboratory: The Marine Corps' Warfighting Laboratory has a red team that tests and challenges the assumptions and plans of Marine Corps units. The Warfighting Laboratory's red team has been instrumental in helping the Marine Corps adapt to new challenges and threats, such as cyber warfare and the changing nature of terrorism (Megan 2018).

The UK Defence Science and Technology Laboratory: In the UK, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory conducts red teaming exercises to assess and enhance the country's military preparedness. For example, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory conducted a red teaming exercise in 2017 to assess the UK's military readiness to respond to a cyber-attack (UK Defence 2021).

These examples highlight the importance of strategic red teaming in the military and how it can be used to identify and address potential risks and vulnerabilities. Red teaming can help military organizations better understand and prepare for potential threats and challenges, develop more agile and flexible strategies, and enhance their organizational resilience and agility. In addition to these examples, many other military organizations around the world use red teaming in various ways. For example, the Israeli Defence Forces use red teaming to test and evaluate the effectiveness of their military tactics and strategies (Fambrini 2021).

Benefits of Strategic Red Teaming in Military

Strategic red teaming can improve decision-making and risk management in military organizations. By simulating the actions and behaviors of adversaries or competitors, strategic red teams can help military organizations identify and evaluate potential risks and challenges impacting long-term plans and decisions (TRADOC 2015). Strategic red teaming can provide an independent and unbiased perspective on crucial issues and decisions, leading to more informed and effective risk management practices. Strategic red teaming can stimulate critical thinking and creativity, which can help military organizations develop more innovative and effective risk management strategies (TRADOC 2015).

Enhanced Organizational Resilience and Agility in Military Operations

Strategic red teaming can help military organizations identify and address potential weaknesses or vulnerabilities that may impact their long-term viability (Zenko 2015). By challenging and testing assumptions and plans regularly, strategic red teams can help military organizations develop more agile and flexible strategies that are better able to adapt to changing environments. Strategic red teaming can foster a culture of continuous improvement and learning, enhancing organizational resilience and agility over time (TRADOC 2015).

Challenges of Strategic Red Teaming in Military Operations

The challenges of strategic red teaming in military operations include securing buy-in and support from top leadership, ensuring the independence and objectivity of the red team, and managing the potential for conflict or disagreement.

Best Practices for Conducting Strategic Red Teaming in Military Operations

In military operations, assembling the right team for a strategic red team exercise requires careful consideration of each team member's skills, experience, and knowledge. It is essential to assemble a team of experts or "red teamers" who can analyze and evaluate the issue or problem from multiple perspectives. The team should be diverse and inclusive, representing various viewpoints and disciplines (TRADOC 2015).

To assemble the right team, military organizations should consider the following factors:

- *Skill sets:* Red team members should possess the necessary skills and expertise to analyze and evaluate the issue or problem. These may include critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and research skills.
- *Experience:* Red team members should have relevant military experience or related fields, such as intelligence, operations, psychology, or subject matter expertise.

- *Diversity*: The red team should be diverse and inclusive, representing various viewpoints and disciplines. This can help ensure that the team considers a wide range of perspectives and solutions.
- *Collaboration*: Red team members should be able to collaborate effectively with one another, as well as with other stakeholders in the organization. Collaboration can help ensure that the team's findings and recommendations are implemented effectively.

Once the right team is assembled, it is essential to set clear objectives and boundaries for the exercise. This can help ensure that the team stays focused and efficient and that the exercise is completed within the allotted time frame. Military organizations should also gather and analyze diverse and relevant information from a wide range of sources, including primary and secondary data, interviews, surveys, and other research methods. This can help the team gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the issue or problem (UK Defence 2021).

Finally, presenting the findings and recommendations effectively is crucial for the success of a strategic red team exercise. Red teams should present their findings and recommendations in a clear, concise, and persuasive manner, using evidence and data to support their arguments. They should also consider the audience for their presentation and tailor their message accordingly.

In conclusion, strategic red teaming is a powerful tool that military organizations can use to challenge assumptions, mitigate risks, and improve decision-making. Assembling the right team is vital to the success of a strategic red team exercise, as it requires careful consideration of each team member's skills, experience, and knowledge. By setting clear objectives, gathering and analyzing diverse and relevant information, and presenting findings and recommendations effectively, military organizations can leverage the power of strategic red teaming to enhance their organizational resilience and agility.

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Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan

اتفاق إحلال السلام في أفغانستان
وافتتامة أوردن صلح

دوحة قطر ٢٩ فبراير ٢٠٢٠

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Afghanistan under the *de facto* Taliban authority: challenges and opportunities for the UAE

In parallel with the US military withdrawal in mid-August 2021, the Taliban's 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' regained control over the country. However, this time the new regime is more structured and open to establishing diplomatic relations. Despite the Afghan government abrogating the 2020 Doha Agreement, it aspires to earn international recognition (Zelin 2022).

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Participant, UAE NDC



This aspiration creates concerns among many states as the Taliban government is exclusively led by Pashtun male leaders with historical connections to Al Qaeda. Moreover, it has failed to provide essential services, ensure security and has broken its promises to allow women to exercise their rights (UNHR 2022). Moreover, any further failure of the Taliban to enhance living conditions would create opportunities

for terrorist groups to emerge seeking power. So, how does this Taliban governance return influence the UAE's foreign policy towards Afghanistan?

Despite the newly structured government and the reopening of a few foreign states' diplomatic missions in Kabul, the Taliban has not been recognized by any state in the international community (Zelin

2022). Additionally, the Biden administration has imposed sanctions on Afghanistan by freezing its assets, increasing Afghans' suffering due to food scarcity and deterioration of living conditions. Thus, the Taliban would need to project more than buzzwords to alter its challenges with the US to create opportunities in favor of the Afghan nation.

Amid these chaotic situations, the current case of Afghanistan poses challenges to the UAE and the Arab Gulf states. Shortage of essential services and deterioration of the economy under the absence of legitimately-organized inclusive governance could ignite insurgency across the immediate region. The Taliban's past has been marred by overlapping relationships with Al Qaeda since hosting its former leader Usama bin Laden in 1996. The terrorist group exploited Afghanistan to train its forces and conducted several terrorist attacks on other states, in particular the 9/11 attacks. Al Qaeda and several other terrorist groups in Afghanistan exported violence and instability worldwide.

Despite the US eliminating Al Qaeda's leader Ayman AL Zawahiri in Kabul in 2022, the Taliban has not been obliged to cut its relationship with Al Qaeda. Moreover, it is possible that Al Zawahiri's

successor, Saif Al-Adl is in Iran and his return might strengthen the group (Raffaello Pantucci 2022). On the other hand, the current weakness in the Taliban's rule is due to the conflict between Pashtuns and other ethnic groups over power, divergent governance regulations in provinces or different issues such as women's participation in public life, while the lack of relations with the outside world could create an opportunity to weaken the Taliban (Sakhi 2022).

Amidst this weakness, the potential rise of other terrorist groups, such as the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State of Khorasan Province' (ISKP) will threaten the Taliban's ambitions. The terrorist group will continue threatening diplomatic missions, international organizations, NGOs and non-Afghans inside Afghanistan (NDTV 2023). The failure of the Taliban to defeat ISKP will create the opportunity for the group to expand. Moreover, the struggle to provide essential services and sufficient funding sources will encourage fringe elements of the Taliban to join the group. Therefore, the deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan will lead the current diplomatic missions, including the UAE embassy, and organizations to leave the state and abandon Afghanistan. As a result, any hopes for recognition by the international community will fade.



The main struggle of the Taliban's government is to save and enhance the economy of Afghanistan, after more than forty years of wars, bloodshed and corruption leaving the state at the bottom of the developing list (UNDP 2022). However, the Taliban has promised to rule differently in favor of the Afghan nation. To mitigate the implications of US sanctions, the *de facto* authority has navigated partnerships with US rivals. Its cooperation with China and Russia has created an initial move for the new government to create a source of income to enhance the economy. The Taliban relies on China as "the main partner" in the upcoming phase (RFERL 2021). It is evident that China has benefitted from an oil extraction and mining deal (Hoskins 2023). On the other hand, Russia has an agreement to export oil, gas and wheat (Reuters 2022). Both state partnerships with a non-recognized government demonstrate the geostrategic importance of Afghanistan.

The UAE has several strategic opportunities in Afghanistan. Pursuing 'muted diplomacy' will shape a working umbrella to achieve its objectives towards Afghanistan. By supporting the economy, the UAE will lead to enhance the humanitarian and social situations. Operating four main airports and investing in aviation, infrastructure development and logistics will enhance the trade route through Afghanistan. Furthermore, training in administrative and financial sectors will increase the skills of personnel and create jobs in vital sectors. Despite several humanitarian aid agencies suspending their work after the ban on employing women, aid has not been halted. Rather, airports have been facilitating the receiving of aid in spite of the isolation that the West imposed to punish the Taliban. As a result, the UAE, through operating the four vital airports of Afghanistan, can promote leverage over the economy and, therefore, the Taliban.



The main struggle of the Taliban's government is to save and enhance the economy of Afghanistan, after more than forty years of wars, bloodshed and corruption.

Any endeavors to revive and enhance the economy of Afghanistan will not succeed unless the *de facto* authority achieves total control over its territories and borders. In addition, economic stability will need to maintain diplomatic relations with other states. ISKP is lurking in the midst of the Taliban's ambitions. It threatens the interests of the *de facto* authority by attacking the Shia minority, diplomatic missions and non-Afghans (D'Souza 2023). Its objective is to hinder the efforts of the current government and demonstrate its unfitness to rule.

If the Taliban maintains its current approach in ruling Afghanistan, the situation could deteriorate leading to rising insurgency among the Taliban's members. Consequently, this might avail the opportunity for ISKP to recruit Taliban followers. Escalation in violence inside Afghanistan by terrorist groups will export instability to the immediate region (Poornima 2022).





Unequivocally, the UAE will face challenges that threaten its national security if the Taliban remain pursuing its current approach which breaching the Doha Agreement 2020. As the agreement did not clearly mention that abiding by the conditions would grant the Taliban international official recognition, it at least required the group to be inclusive, respecting minorities and women's rights and ensuring that Afghanistan's territory is not used against the US national security interests (Mashal 2020). The

UAE can pursue a pragmatic approach to mitigate any fallout with the *de facto* authority. Constant coordination and communication will assist in gaining leverage over the Taliban, which will support altering the behavior of the *de facto* authority—a goal worth pursuing. The change will enhance the economy and promote the legitimacy of the Taliban as a capable government to rule Afghanistan. Therefore, the international community will be more inclined towards supporting the current *de facto* authority.

Success in normalizing relations with the Taliban will create opportunities for Afghanistan's economy. As the Taliban aims to exercise diplomatic relations to enhance the economy, at least with regional powers, this normalization will demonstrate the ability to have relations while respecting Taliban norms and values. Therefore, the UAE's current main focus is to ensure the safety of air routes and maintain these corridors to and from Afghanistan to mitigate the isolation of a significant geostrategic state in South Asia and to continue providing humanitarian aid to Afghanistan to influence the current *de facto* government in Kabul as a matter of long-term regional stability, which impacts core UAE long-term national security interests.

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PTSD Treatment in the UAE: Preparing For Post Conflict Challenges

The United Arab Emirates has recently entered an unheralded new era in its foreign policy and strategy. Out of strategic necessity, the UAE has developed a greater appetite for projecting power to secure its interests beyond its borders, and using military action to defend its objectives and sovereignty.

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These strategic means have come along naturally with a gradual rise in military capabilities and power. The UAE has developed such a sophisticated military force and capability to warrant the sobriquet “Little Sparta” from senior U.S. military officials (Sekandaran 2014). One of the often neglected, negative side effects of the rise in military deployment is the emergence of many post bellum challenges with military personnel such as veterans’ care and more specifically the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The UAE is more prepared to use its military capability to achieve its national interests as a reaction to regional geopolitical threats (Sekandaran 2014). Most notably, the UAE’s involvement in the war in Yemen witnessed unprecedented war casualties and injuries. As a result of being involved in the Yemen conflict, UAE armed forces were directly exposed to challenges such as: casualties, crippling injuries (comprising traumatic brain injuries (TBI)), PTSD, and depression which left unchecked in severe

circumstances can lead to substance abuse and even suicide cases, which is a major concern for any military organization (Blakeley 2013).

For example, veterans' care and the treatment of conditions such as PTSD have become major issues for the United States' armed forces compared to other states, being the country with the most military forces actively engaged in conflict zones (Blakeley 2013). As a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the USA is facing around 300,000 new cases of mental health conditions with around 40% of veterans suffering from PTSD (Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). 2007). Even considering the enormity of these challenges in the USA, they remain often neglected and sometimes insufficiently tackled (Thomas A. Grieger 2006).

PTSD is a long-term debilitating condition that has continual negative effects on the sufferer (Sizer n.d.). PTSD creates "significant medical, social and financial problems....both to nations and to individuals" (Miao 2018). PTSD arises in a person after exposure to a traumatic event or following the threat or actual infliction of physical injury, this then manifests itself into severe depression or anxiety. "PTSD is a chronic impairment disorder that occurs after exposure to traumatic events. This disorder can result in a disturbance to individual and family functioning, causing significant medical, financial, and social problems" (Miao 2018). The persistent challenge with PTSD in particular is that it is a chronic impairing disorder that is characterized by re-experiencing traumatic events via emotional triggers, coupled with negative alternations and fluctuations in cognitive abilities (Miao 2018). It has been shown that the effects of PTSD are long lasting and can even continue up to forty years after the event (Maria M. Steenkamp 2015). The ravages of PTSD do not stop with the sufferer either, and can extend to spouses, family members and the wider society. The

rise in cases of post-conflict mental health conditions are exacerbated by a combination of factors, including the higher survivability rates of soldiers thanks to advancements in medical science; the increase in the use of irregular warfare and guerilla style tactics in recent conflicts and the reduced down-time for soldiers between deployment with twelve months being a decisive factor (Sizer n.d.).

Both the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and the United Kingdom's National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) have devised multiple approaches to the potential methods of treatment for these mental conditions which include psychological interventions and pharmacological treatments. Such treatments may include therapies such as "cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT); cognitive processing therapy (CPT), cognitive therapy (CT), cognitive restructuring (CR), coping skills therapy (including stress inoculation therapy), exposure-based therapies, eye movement, desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), hypnosis and hypnotherapy, and brief eclectic psychotherapy" (Exhibit A) (Miao 2018).

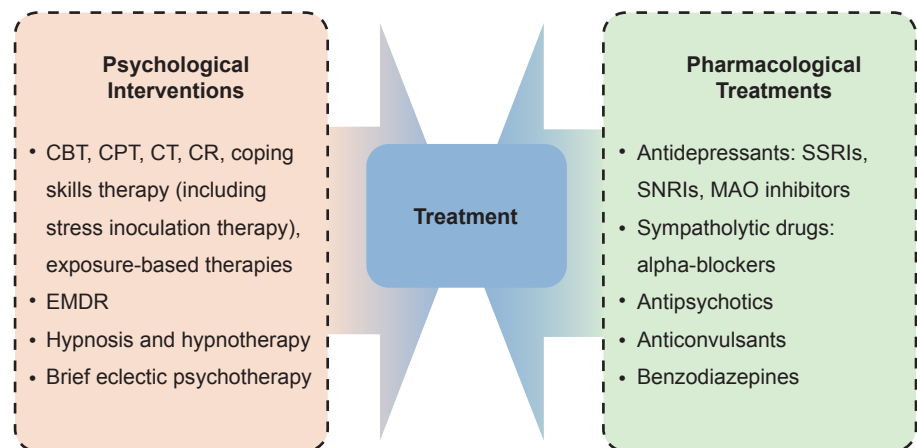


Exhibit A (Miao 2018)

It is apparent from the array of treatments available and their specialized nature that highly customized, dedicated entities or clinics are required to provide comprehensive treatment for mental health sufferers. Unfortunately this is not yet the case yet here in the UAE, and there is definite room for improvement and development for sufficient mental health treatment facilities, cultural awareness and expertise

(Abed 2014). A quick scan of the current landscape demonstrates that some clinics are available but the majority, if not all of these are in the private sector, and nearly all lack sufficient experience with the military domain, or veterans' affairs more specifically. This is the result of many factors such as cultural beliefs and societal stigma related to mental health treatment (AlMazroui 2015), underfunding and lack of state level policy buy-in. "Mental health is a considerably neglected area of research in the UAE....Even though some milestones have been made in the development of the psychology field in the UAE, it is still in its initial phase" (Al-Darmaki 2015).



PTSD arises in a person after exposure to a traumatic event or following the threat or actual infliction of physical injury, this then manifests itself into severe depression or anxiety.



The Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP) need to deploy a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges of PTSD related issues. This should at least include steps such as increasing education and awareness of mental conditions and PTSD; removing the heavy stigma attached to it and encouraging personnel to seek care with their families via confidential treatments and online facilities in collaboration with the private sector; the behavioral screening of combat veterans immediately upon their return from combat, including preemptive treatments, and finally mandatory brain scans for traces of traumatic brain injuries post combat can all significantly contribute to improvements to sufferers and their treatment (Reisman 2016).

It has been encouraging to see growing awareness and recognition of the ravages of PTSD and other related mental conditions, with the range and quality of treatments available being dramatically improved. Trauma-focused psychotherapies and medication are the primary treatments provided, however emerging and alternative treatments, as well as methods to better engage patients and even their families are now



available. Other treatments proven to be effective include cognitive processing therapy (CPT) and prolonged exposure (PE) therapy; structured approach therapy (SAT), eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), pharmacotherapy and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI). Many of these modern methods have proven to be very effective

treatments with encouraging results. SAT for example demonstrates “significant improvements in veteran relationship adjustment, attachment avoidance, and state anxiety” (Owens 2012). In addition, CPT and PE have led to benefits in between 49-70% of patients who had demonstrated meaningful improvements (Maria M. Steenkamp 2015).

Since being involved in a major regional conflict is a relatively novel experience for the UAE, understandably measures and systems for treating post bellum challenges are either virtually non-existent or require substantial development, especially if the strategy of projecting military force continues in the foreseeable future. There is a clear need to establish a comprehensive treatment framework to monitor and provide follow-up care to UAE veterans suffering post-conflict trauma. Sufferers require a multi-pronged approach of medical, social, psychological/psychiatric and rehabilitative care. Evidence shows that the use of military means as strategic foreign policy approach results in widespread cases of mental injuries, depression and domestic problems. To avoid these issues form escalating, the UAE should learn from the lessons of the USA in the treatment of the Vietnam War veterans and subsequent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. We need to be proactive and empathic in order to prevent these mental health issues causing reverberations for future generations.

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ملتقى الإمارات لتكنولوجيا المناخ UAE CLIMATE TECH

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A Critical Look at the UAE's Climate Agenda: Politics or Pragmatism?

Climate change is a global challenge that has gained international attention because of its societal effects. The consequence of climate change is a global phenomenon—ice melting in the Antarctic, rising sea levels, extreme weather events, catastrophic floods, and food production shortages. Because of human activities, deforestation, and heavy industrialization, global warming is now changing faster than at any point in modern civilization's history.



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If we continue at the same pace, the issue is expected to exponentially rise and become unprecedented in scale with the growth of the world's population, living standards and level of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Without drastic action now to avert the

impact of the climate crisis, future efforts will be costlier and more difficult.

Despite varying degrees of vulnerability and greenhouse gas emissions, climate change is a global

issue that needs coordinated worldwide action. The “Paris Agreement” was developed in December 2015 at the Conference of the Parties (COP) 21 which strives to achieve this long-term temperature goal and limit global temperature increases to 1.5°C—the threshold level defined by scientists as a catastrophic and irreversible level. This will require concerted economic and social transformation based on the best available science. Countries have pledged to reduce GHG emissions in 2030 by approximately 25 to 55 percent from the 2017 baseline. Countries’ plans vary depending on their particular objectives, level of ambition, and how they calculate carbon reductions. Each country submitted its nationally determined contributions (NDCs) communicating actions they will take to reduce GHG emissions and build resilience to reach the agreement’s long-term goals. Moreover, around 70 countries have taken an additional step and pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (United Nations - Climate Change 2022). There are gaps and uncertainties associated with the current process of the agreement mainly related to differing targets leading to future deadlocks and failure to achieve goals. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was the first country in the Middle East to pledge to attain net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 in line with the Paris Agreement, demonstrating its commitment to regional energy transition (UAE Portal 2022).

Notwithstanding its strong economic position and relatively lower level of vulnerability to climate change, the UAE is taking proactive steps to address the challenges and prioritize energy transition for various reasons. First, preserving a good reputation will enhance its standing in the international community, given that the UAE has become one of the top emitters of GHG per person because of the energy-intensive industries (world101 - Council on Foreign Relations 2022). Second, the UAE, as

elsewhere, suffers potential implications from climate change such as extreme weather events, water scarcity, and desertification (Mfarrej 2019). The transition to clean energy sources will play a significant part in ensuring that the coastal population is not exposed to risk. Third, investing in clean energy will help the UAE meet its energy needs more sustainably while also providing economic benefits because currently the UAE is not self-sufficient in gas and is still dependent on imports. Finally, the UAE’s economy can be diversified by investments in green energy, reducing its reliance on income from oil and gas.

Despite the UAE’s efforts to combat climate change, criticisms have been made regarding the UAE’s commitment and intentions to counter climate change (Gulf International Forum 2023). The UAE’s is heavily reliant on the oil and gas industries—major environmental pollutants. Not only that, the UAE further aims to expand the country’s



petroleum industries and oil production from the current 3.5 million barrels every day to 5 million barrels by 2027 (Ener Data 2022). The increased use of fossil fuels and targets to increase oil production have made the UAE’s plans to attain net-zero carbon emissions have become perceived as ‘greenwashing’ so as to appear more environmentally friendly.

COP28 has drawn criticism of the UAE in certain quarters. The UAE, a petro-state is hosting COP28—a forum to highlight pollution and promote sustainable sources of energy. Critics interpret the UAE’s hosting of the event as more of a way to attract foreign investments, and boost its international image, rather than addressing the urgent global climate crisis. Furthermore, the appointment of H.E. Dr. Sultan Al Jaber as the president of COP28 provoked a backlash from environmental activists and groups, claiming that as H.E. Dr. Al Jaber is the Chief Executive Officer of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) this represents a conflict of interest with the event. This furore may undermine the venue’s goal of promoting global action on climate change by sending the wrong message about the UAE’s commitment to fighting climate change (Meredith 2023).

It is crucial to assess the global context and future energy demands prior to advocating any overly ambitious and unrealistic energy transition toward renewables. Looking at figures published by the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) in 2021 and the “The New World” report that was published by the Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in 2019 regarding energy consumption, we note that global energy consumption will increase by nearly 50% over the next 30 years. That is mainly due to the growing population increasing global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions and energy consumption. Renewable sources will increase more steeply in comparison to energy from fossil fuels which will be peaking by 2025. However, oil and gas will still be utilized to meet the energy load, especially in developing Asian economies (Agency 2021) (IRENA 2019).



Critics interpret the UAE’s hosting of COP28 as more of a way to attract foreign investments, and boost its international image, rather than addressing the urgent global climate crisis.

It is clear that the transition to alternative energy sources is not an instantaneous issue, fossil fuels remain a vital source of energy not only for the UAE, but also for most countries. The UAE’s oil expansion plans reflect global demands and the UAE oil industry has one of the lowest GHG emissions internationally. This results from using advanced production technologies and investment in energy efficiency initiatives, which will make it one of the most competitive providers of cleaner fossil-fuel sources (WAM 2019).

In parallel, the UAE is taking major steps in the energy transition journey demonstrated in numerous environmental-related actions, starting from establishing Masdar in 2006, a leader in sustainable energy and environmental solutions,

then hosting the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) since 2009. Domestically, the UAE's commitment to transitioning to clean energy sources is shown in mega projects to reduce GHG emissions such as developing a nuclear energy sector to operate zero-carbon nuclear power making it the first country within the Middle East; the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum solar park in Dubai, the world's largest single-site solar park planned for 5,000 Megawatts capacity; Shams 1 Concentrated Solar Power Plant, the largest concentrated solar power plant in the world and has with 100 MW capacity and Noor solar power plant, the largest photovoltaic power station in the Middle East that produces 1.2 gigawatts of power (Embassy of the UAE Washington 2023). At the international level, the UAE has invested more than USD 1 billion in energy projects including wind power (UAE Portal 2023).

The UAE is promoting a realistic, comprehensive energy transition combining fossil fuels and renewables. The UAE's plan to host the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) in 2023 seeks to further strengthen the implementation of the climate actions and obligations to the Paris Agreement. As

president of the event, H.E. Dr. Sultan Al Jaber's experience and leadership make him the ideal choice for this role. He is not only the CEO of ADNOC, but also the UAE's special envoy on climate change, a minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, and Chairman of Masdar (Masdar 2023).

In conclusion, the UAE demonstrates a strong sense of responsibility when it comes to addressing climate change. The UAE is adopting a balanced strategy that is pro-growth, pro-sustainability, pro-prosperity, and pro-climate to ensure that near-term energy security is not jeopardized by long-term objectives. To ensure that it addresses the trilemma of climate change, energy security, and economic success, successful energy transition demands a 'practical', 'realistic', and 'collaborative' strategy. The UAE-hosted COP28 Climate Conference should concentrate its efforts on an innovative, pragmatic, and realistic approach that benefits people, the environment, and the economy.

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