

# Crossroads of Competition: Appendix

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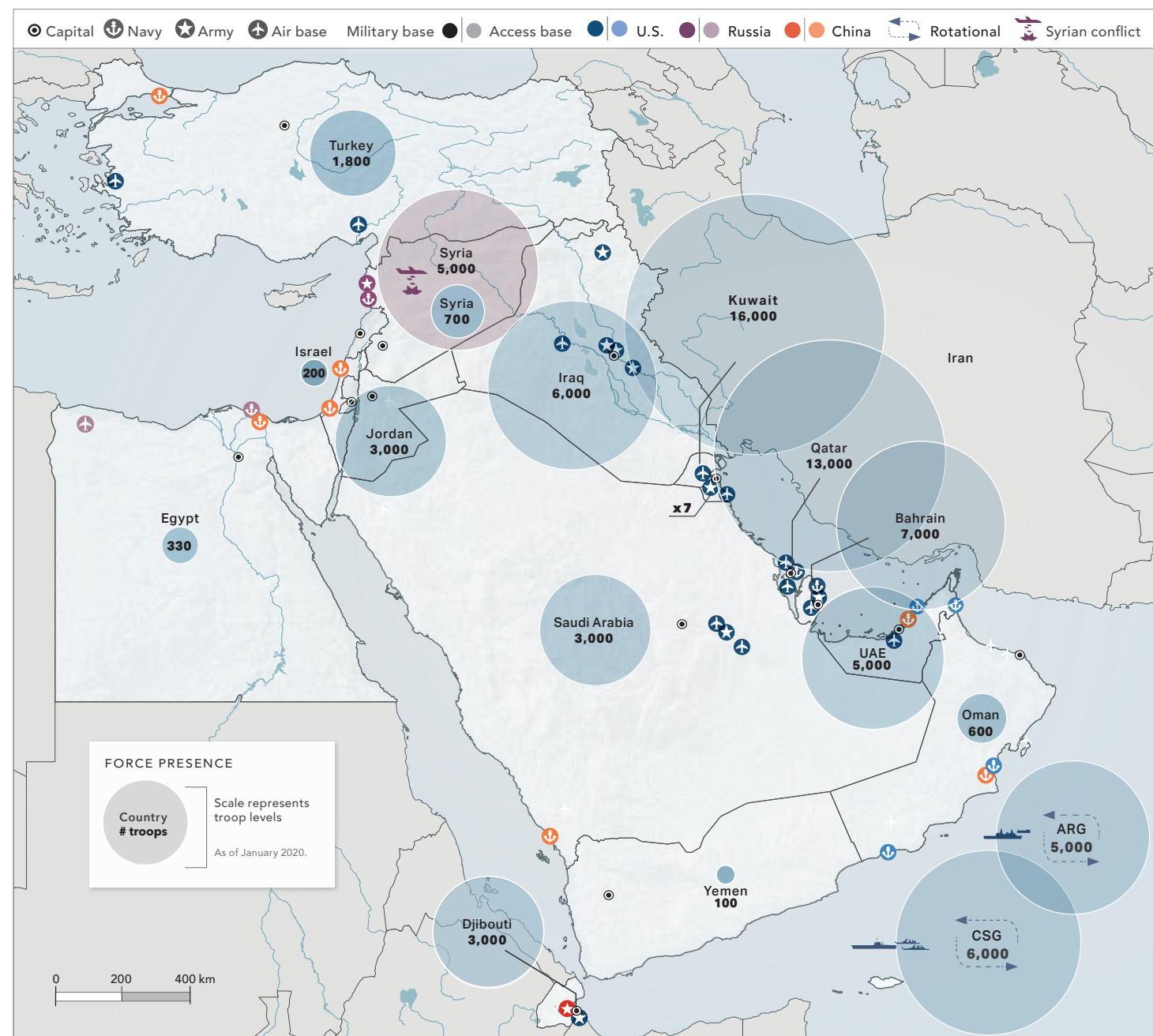
## A Panorama of the Great Powers in the Middle East

### DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY ENGAGEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

While the renewed focus on near-peer competitors in the latest strategic guidance may have turned U.S. attention, efforts, and resources toward Europe and the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East remains an arena for strategic competition. This page of visualizations illustrates how China and Russia are competing with the United States in the Middle East across diplomatic and military dimensions.

### MILITARY BASING, ACCESS, AND FORCE PRESENCE—2020

The United States maintains a sizable force presence undergirded by extensive access agreements, which greatly outweighs China's and Russia's military presence and access agreements. Moreover, U.S. military forces in the region, estimated at 65,000 as of January 2020, based at the installations mapped below, surpass Chinese and Russian forces located in the Middle East. Although China has secured some port access agreements with countries in the region, most notably in the UAE, it has yet to deploy forces to the Middle East on a permanent basis. Instead, China prefers to use its base in Djibouti to project power into the region. U.S.-Russian competition also plays out in the security space. Russia has leveraged a relatively limited military footprint to produce outsized gains in Syria. Russia has also sought additional military outposts and access rights in Egypt.

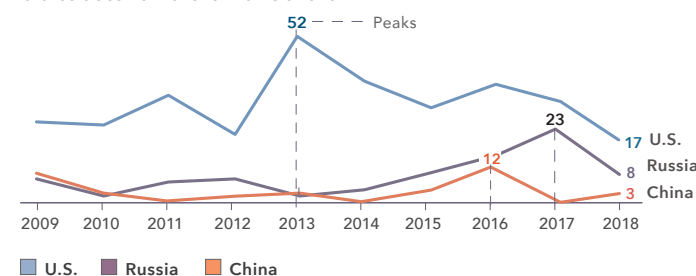


**SOURCES:** Lolita C. Baldor, "U.S. General Says Troop Surge in Middle East May Not End Soon," Associated Press, January 23, 2020; Miriam Berger, "Where U.S. Troops Are in the Middle East and Afghanistan, Visualized," Washington Post, January 4, 2020; Defense Manpower Data Center, "Military and Civilian Personnel by Service/Agency by State/Country," Excel spreadsheet via "DoD Personnel, Workforce Reports & Publications," webpage, December 31, 2019; Omar Lamrani, "Naval Update Map: Jan. 23, 2020," Stratfor, January 23, 2020; Michael R. Pompeo, "A Force for Good: America Reinvigorated in the Middle East," Cairo, Egypt, Secretary of State speech at the American University in Cairo, January 10, 2019; Clayton Thomas, U.S. Killing of Qassem Soleimani: Frequently Asked Questions, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R46148, January 13, 2020, pp. 21, 24; U.S. Department of Defense, "DOD Statement on Deployment of Additional U.S. Forces and Equipment to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," press release October 11, 2019; U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Security Cooperation with Kuwait," fact sheet, March 20, 2020; U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, "Truman Begins Operations in the U.S. Fifth Fleet," December 30, 2019; White House, "Text of a Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate," June 11, 2019b.

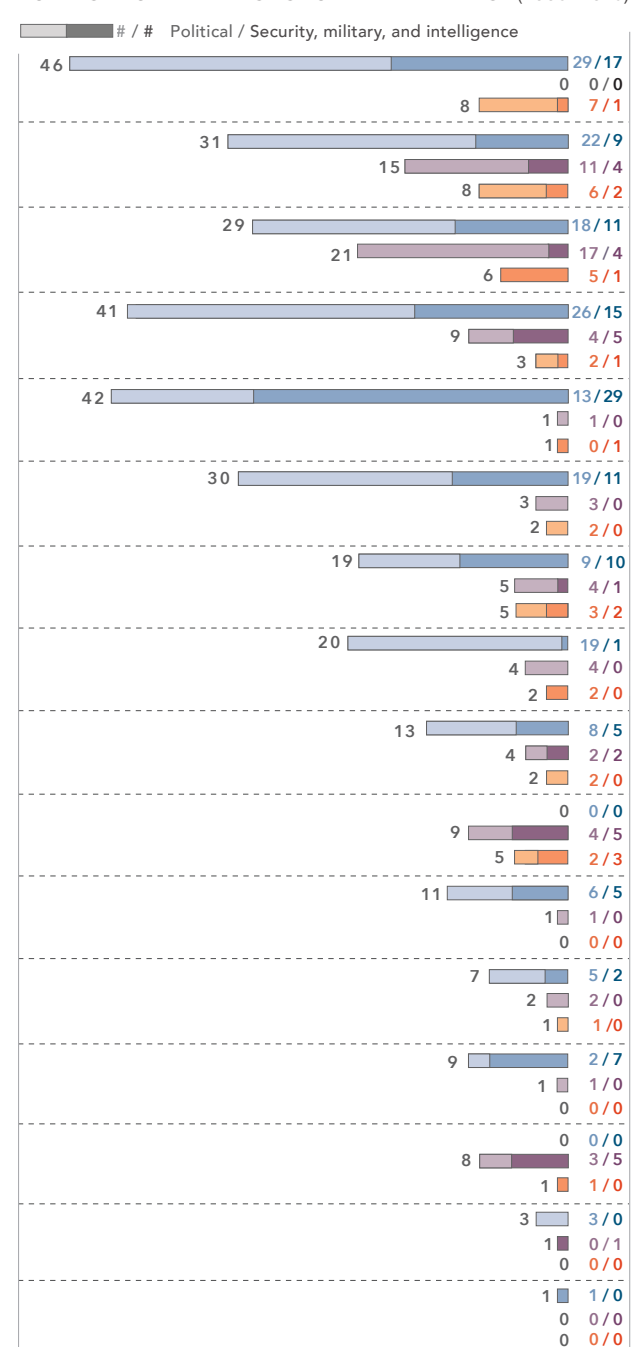
**NOTE:** All numbers have been rounded. The 'x7' near Kuwait indicates that there are seven Army bases in Kuwait. CSG stands for Carrier Strike Group and ARG stands for Amphibious Ready Group.

### SENIOR LEVEL VISITS IN THE MIDDLE EAST BY YEAR (2009–2018)

U.S. high-level political and security engagements in the Middle East vastly outnumber official visits by Chinese and Russian officials. The exceptions are Iran and Syria—two countries with which the United States does not have formal relations.



### TOTAL SENIOR LEVEL VISITS TO THE MIDDLE EAST (2009–2018)

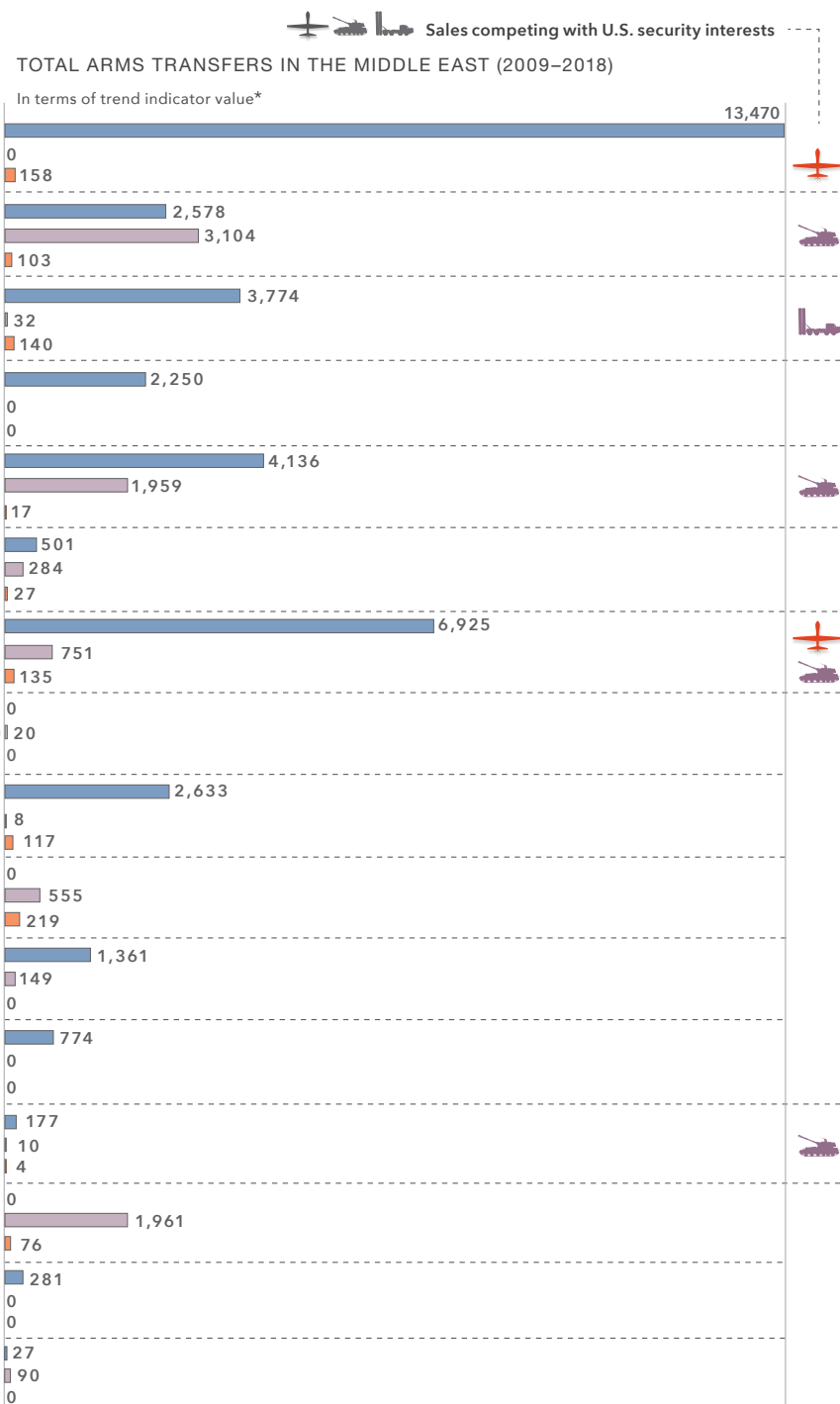


### ARMS SALES IN THE MIDDLE EAST (2009–2018)

From 2009 through 2018, the United States supplied arms to every state and territory in the Middle East, except for Syria, Iran, and the Palestinian Territories. Even though Washington has continued to dominate the arms sales market, there are a few arenas of growing competition with China and Russia:

China has leveraged the U.S.' refusal to sell unmanned aerial vehicles in the region, particularly to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to gain a foothold in the Middle East arms market and to undermine U.S. policy.

Russia has made gains in arms sales to Egypt, Iraq, and Turkey, threatening the U.S. position as the primary arms equipper to these countries and hindering interoperability, notably with Russia's sale of the S-400 air defense system to Turkey.



\* Trend Indicator Value: The trend indicator value is a measure of production costs and is meant to represent the transfer of military resources rather than the sales price of those resources. Data are what SIPRI terms major weapons: aircraft, air defense systems, antisubmarine warfare weapons, armored vehicles, artillery, engines, missiles, sensors, satellites, ships, turrets for selected armored vehicles and ships, and air refueling systems as used on tanker aircraft.

SOURCE: Visits | Information on visits by U.S. officials to Middle Eastern countries from 2009 through 2018 was compiled from U.S. government websites. Information on visits by Chinese and Russian officials was compiled through Google searches of government websites in China and Russia, international media sources, media sources in Russia and China, local media sources in the Middle East, websites of foreign policy journals, think tank websites, and others.

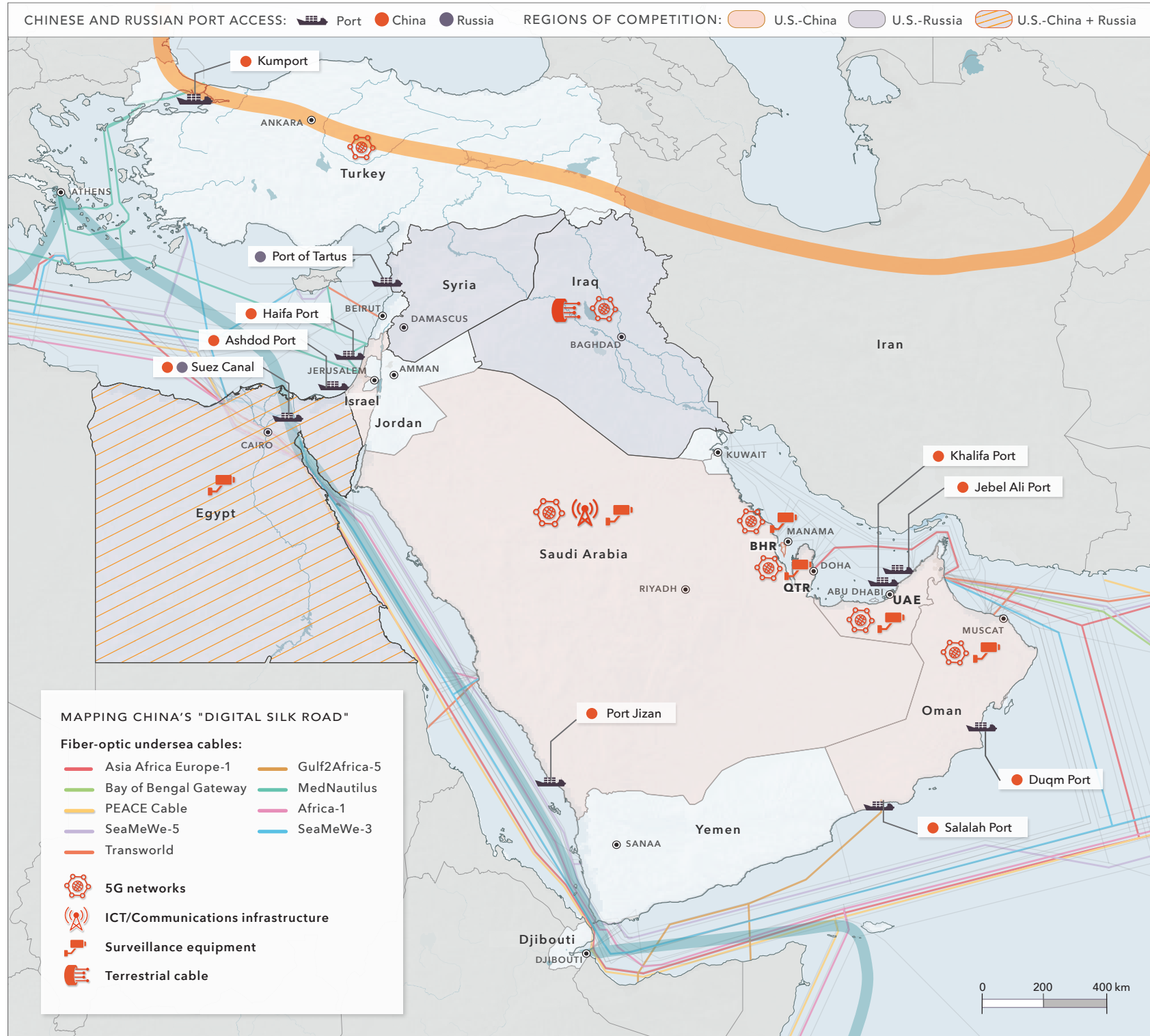
Arms Transfers | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, March 11, 2019.

# A Panorama of the Great Powers in the Middle East

## AREAS OF U.S.-CHINA AND U.S.-RUSSIA STRATEGIC COMPETITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Chinese and Russian efforts to erode U.S. competitive advantages fall short of displacing the United States as the outsized external power in the region. Only in two areas— trade and technology—is the United States not the leader, and trade is of lower importance to the United States, playing only a supporting role in achieving U.S. interests. While China lags in diplomatic engagement, arms sales, and basing and access in the region, it exceeds economically, in line with its stated priorities and objectives. Russia is primarily concerned with security issues and opportunistically seeks security involvement, military sales, and economic benefits.

Belt and Road Initiative: ■ Maritime Silk Road ■ Silk Road Economic Belt



SOURCES: RAND Corporation analysis and, for Digital Silk Road data, International Cyber Policy Center, Mapping China's Tech Giants, database, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2020. Data retrieved September 17, 2020.

This file presents, in graphical form, data discussed in the RAND publication *Crossroads of Competition: China, Russia, and the United States in the Middle East* (Becca Wasser, Howard J. Shatz, John J. Drennan, Andrew Scobell, Brian G. Carlson, Yvonne K. Crane, 2022). This research was sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and conducted within the International Security and Defense Policy Center of the RAND National Security Research Division. For the full research report, visit [www.RAND.org/t/RR325-1](http://www.RAND.org/t/RR325-1)

## CHINA'S ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

**12** of 77 5G Huawei contracts secured in the ME by the end of 2019

**20% / 11%** of all ME oil exports and liquefied natural gas exports respectively went to China in 2018

**\$40.9B** value of 48 Chinese investments in the ME between 2009–2018

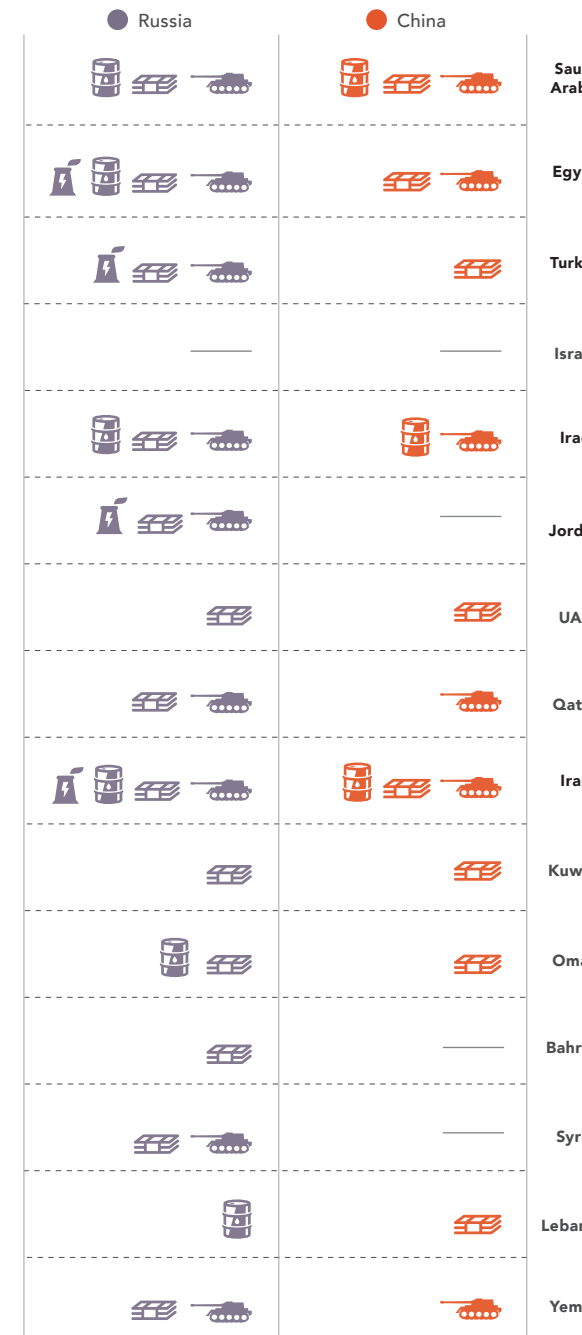
**\$123.7B** value of Chinese construction projects contracted in the ME between 2009–2018

## OTHER RUSSIAN AND CHINESE ENGAGEMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST (2017–2019)

Although China and Russia emphasize different activities in the Middle East, their activities overlap so that they sometimes find themselves in competition with each other.

**Nuclear power agreements** **Major trading partner**

**Oil agreements** **Arms sales**

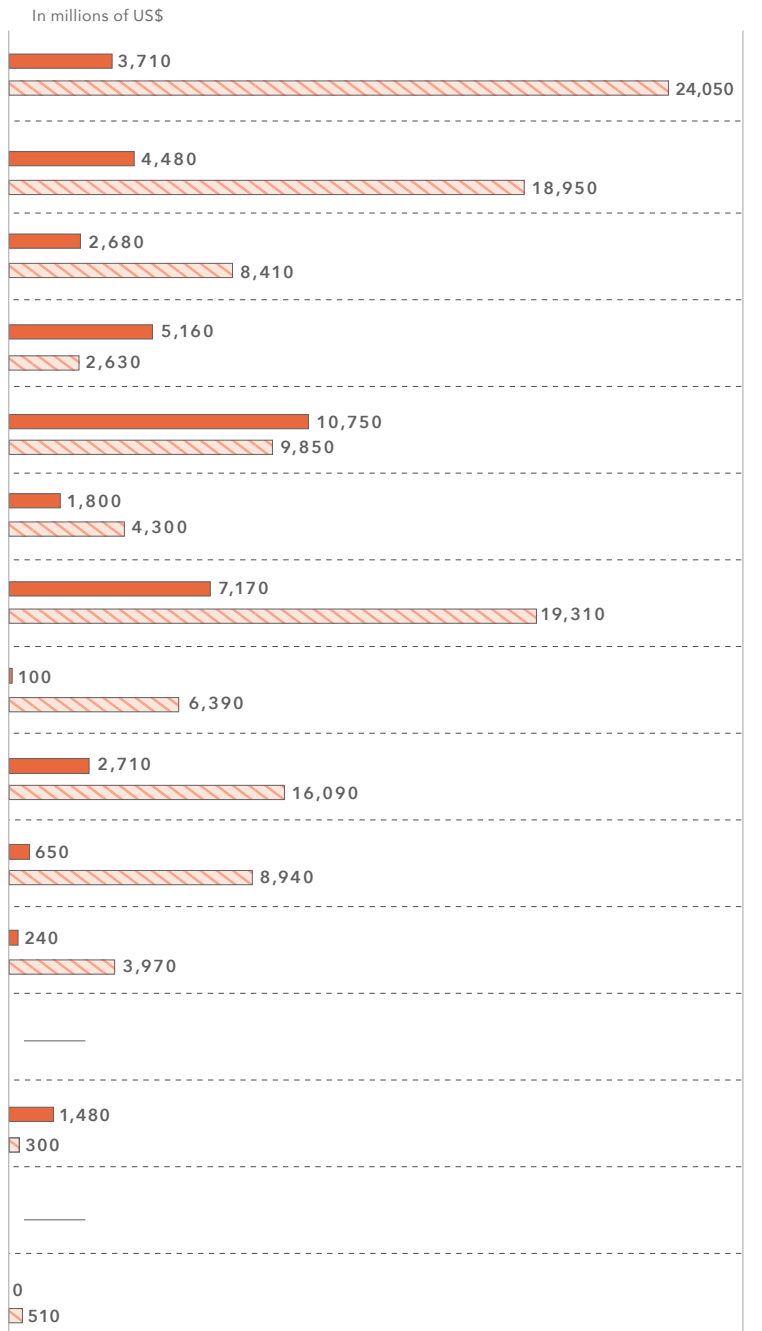


SOURCE: Ben Connable, *An Enduring American Commitment in Iraq: Shaping a Long-Term Strategy with Iraqi Army Partners*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, PE-353-OSD, 2020.

## CHINESE DIRECT INVESTMENT AND CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST (2009–2018)

Almost three-quarters of the value of Chinese direct investments in the region have been in the energy sector. Besides business investments, China has been contracted for 214 construction projects totaling \$123.7 billion in the decade from 2009 through 2018.

**Direct investment** **Construction contracts**



SOURCE: American Enterprise Institute and Heritage Foundation, *China Global Investment Tracker*, undated. NOTE: No data were listed for the Palestinian Territories.