

# OE Threat Assessment: United Arab Emirates (UAE)



[TRADOC G-2 Intelligence Support Activity  
\(TRISA\)](#)

Complex Operational Environment and  
Threat Integration Directorate (CTID)





## Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is important because of its location near the Strait of Hormuz and its willingness to work with Western nations. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow body of water that separates the Persian Gulf from the Gulf of Oman, through which 20% of the world's oil passes annually. The UAE, seven emirates that work under a federalist structure, also is an important hydrocarbon producer in its own right with the world's seventh largest known oil reserves and the eleventh largest known natural gas fields. The UAE allows both the U.S. and France to operate military bases in the country from where the two countries support their military activities in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Middle East.

## Political

Seven former members of what was known in the 19th century as the Trucial or Pirate Coast currently comprise the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In order of size, the emirates are: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al Qaywayn, Ajman, Al Fajayrah, and Ras al Khaymah. Ras al Khaymah joined the UAE in February 1972 after the other six states agreed on a federal constitution the year before. The UAE, with its capital in Abu Dhabi, is a federation with specified powers delegated to the central government and all other powers reserved to the emirates. Due to the prosperity of the country, most of its inhabitants are content with the current political system.

The UAE operates through three branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial. The current president, since 3 November 2004, is Khalifa bin Zayid Al-Nuhayyan. Sheik Shalifa is also the ruler of Abu Dhabi. The Federal Supreme Council (FSC), composed of the seven emirate rulers, elects the president and vice-president for five-year terms with no term limits. The president appoints the prime minister and deputy prime minister.

The legislative branch operates through the Federal National Council (FNC) that is a unicameral chamber composed of 40 representatives—20 elected and 20 more collectively appointed by the emirate rulers. In the December 2006 election, there were only 6,689 voters. This was expanded to 129,274 for the September 2011 election. No political parties are allowed so voters select individual candidates instead of party lists. In this last election, 469 candidates ran for the 20 contested seats, including 85 women. While only one female won an elected seat, six other women were appointed to the FNC. Distribution of FNC seats—both contested and appointed—is based on the size of the emirate: Abu Dhabi (4); Dubai (4); Sharjah (3); Ras al-Khaimah (3); Ajman (2); Fujairah (2); and Umm al-Quwain (2).

The president also appoints judges including the Union Supreme Court, the highest level of judicial review in the country. The UAE constitution declares Sharia or Islamic religious law as the primary source for law within the country. There is no bail system and legal counsel is only



## OE Threat Assessment: UAE



available to the accused after the police complete their investigation. Defendants are considered innocent until proven guilty, but their fate is not in the hands of a jury of their peers, but only the judge(s).

### **Military**

Even though the UAE is comprised of seven separate emirates, there is only one armed force composed of an army, air force, and navy, and called the Union Defense Force (UDF). The president serves as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, but the minister of defense (MOD), who also serves as prime minister and vice-president, exercises administrative and operational control. The MOD delegates daily operational control of the armed forces to the senior military commander through the General Command of the Armed Forces. The UAE military divides the country into three military regions: the Northern region headquartered in Ras al-Khaimah, the Western region located in Abu Dhabi, and the Central region operated out of Dubai. Due to the federation of the seven emirates, there are actually three operational forces—the federal force while Dubai and Ras al-Khaimah maintains a degree of autonomy with their own military forces. The UDF contains about 51,700 active duty personnel with about 30% being foreign expatriates, primarily from Europe, South Asia, or other Arab countries. Almost all military officers, however, are UAE citizens. There is no conscription in the UAE military. In October 2006, the UAE became the second Middle East country that announced plans to establish a military reserve force.

The UAE's major external threat is Iran due to that country's unilateral seizure of disputed islands in the Strait of Hormuz, its future nuclear weapons capability, and its intermediate-range missiles capable of reaching UAE territory. The UAE military would be capable of defending itself from an external attack until other countries came to its assistance.

In 1996, the U.S. and the UAE signed a defense treaty. In return for the U.S. using air bases in the UAE, including logistical ones to support NATO forces in the Persian Gulf region and other assurances, UAE sent over 1,000 personnel to train at American air force bases and purchased modern military hardware from the U.S. to include 80 F-16E/F Desert Falcons. In 2003, the UAE established a regional aviation training center at the Al Dhafra Air Base with assistance from the U.S., Great Britain, and France. In 2010, the UAE spent \$8.7 billion on defense and increased it to \$9.3 billion for 2011. Despite its relatively small size, the UAE provided 250 military personnel as part of the coalition in Afghanistan.

### **Army**

Including the 15,000 members of the somewhat separate Dubai army, about 59,000 soldiers serve on active duty in the UAE's army. While small in size, the UAE's wealth allows it to be well-equipped from a variety of sources. The army can conduct both armor and light infantry



## OE Threat Assessment: UAE



warfare and recently began to conduct not only mountain warfare training, but special operations training as well. Those who wish to seek a commission in the UAE Army attend the Zayed II Military Academy as cadets.

Major bases and camps in the UAE include:

- Al Ain Camp
- Al Maqam Camp (Royal Guard)
- Fujairah Camp
- Madina Zayed Camp
- Manama Camp
- Masafi Camp
- Tarif Camp
- Infantry Command School (Al Ain)
- Abu Dhabi Garrison
- Dubai Garrison
- Sharjah Garrison
- Zayed, Abu Dhabi (Military Hospital)

Major units include:

- 1 Royal Guard Brigade
- 2 Armored Brigades
- 3 Mechanized Infantry Brigades
- 2 Infantry Brigades
- 1 Artillery Brigade (3 Regiments)
- 2 Mechanized Infantry Brigades (under independent Dubai command)

### Air Force

The consolidation of the Abu Dhabi Air Force, the United Air Force, and the Dubai Police created the UAE Air Force (UAEAF) in 1976. Sharjah's air wing operates somewhat autonomously; though it is considered part of the UAEAF. In peacetime, the Western Air Command headquartered in Abu Dhabi and the Central Air Command located in Dubai tend to operate as almost separate aviation units. Approximately 4,000 personnel serve on active duty in the UAEAF including women, some of whom have even trained as pilots. The UAEAF possesses the capability to conduct air-to-air combat, ground attack, air-to-air refueling, strategic transport, and tactical transport operations. The UAEAF operates unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), flies helicopters, and provides ground air defense. The UAEAF sent six F-16s and six Mirage 2000 airplanes to Libya in support of the rebels that overthrew Muammar Qaddafi. Their presence helped to enforce the no fly zone. Major air bases include:

- Al-Ain International Airport, Abu Dhabi
- Al-Dhafra, Abu Dhabi
- Al Safran, Abu Dhabi
- Bateen, Abu Dhabi
- Dubai International Aiport, Dubai
- Minhad, Dubai
- Sharjah International Airport Sharjah
- Liwa, South-West Region



# OE Threat Assessment: UAE



Major units include:

- 3 Fighter Squadrons
- 3 Fighter/Ground Attack Squadrons
- 4 Light Attack/Training Squadrons
- 2 Transportation Squadrons equipped with BTR-3 armored personnel carriers (APC)
- 1 Special Operations Transportation Squadron
- 1 Helicopter Squadron
- 2 Search and Rescue (SAR) Flights

## Navy

About 3,700 active-duty personnel serve in the UAE’s sea services. This includes 2,500 in the navy and 1,200 in the coast guard. Formed in 1978 through the consolidation of the Abu Dhabi Defense Force Sea Wing with maritime assets from the other emirates, the UAE navy is primarily a coastal patrol and surveillance force. While its capabilities continue to grow, the UAE navy operates more like a reinforced coast guard than a blue water navy. To fully protect the UAE’s shoreline, the UAE navy needs to improve its anti-submarine, anti-swimmer, and mine counter-measures capabilities. The UAE navy has the capability to deploy long range submersible carriers (LRSC) and corvettes, conduct localized patrols, and conduct limited amphibious operations. The UAE navy recently added a marine battalion equipped with BTR-3 armored personnel carriers (APC) to expand its capabilities. In recent years, the UAE navy has reduced its dependence on foreigners and only UAE citizens may apply to become naval cadets. Those who seek a commission through the UAE Naval College at Taweela in Abu Dhabi must be 16-22 years of age; have good grades, especially in English, mathematics, physics, and chemistry; and be selected by a committee. Major naval bases include:

- Abu Dhabi (2)
- Al Fujairah (2)
- Dalma
- Dubai (2)
- Khor Fakkan
- Mina Zayed
- Mina Rashid
- Mina Jebel Ali
- Mina Saqr
- Mina Sultan
- Ras al-Khaimah
- Sharjah (2)

ARMY (As of May 2012, French origin unless otherwise noted)					
Armored Equipment in Service		Artillery Systems in Service		AT/SAM Weapons in Service	
LeClerc Main Battle Tank (MBT)	390	Gun, 155-mm AMX Mk F3 SP	18	Air Defense Gun, 30-mm GCF-BM2 (Switzerland)	20
AMX-30 MBT	45	Gun, 105-mm ROF Light Towed (UK)	73	Air Defense Gun, 20-mm M-3VDA SP	42
Of-40 Mk 2 Lion MBT (Italy)	36	Gun, 130-mm Type 59-1 (China)	20	Recoilless Rifle (RR), 84-mm Carl Gustav (Sweden)	250



# OE Threat Assessment: UAE



FV101 Scorpion Light (UK)	76	Howitzer, 155-mm M109A3 SP (US)	125	RR, 106-mm M-40 (US)	12
AML-90 Armored Recon Vehicle	49	Howitzer, 155-mm G-6 SP (South Africa)	78	Anti-Tank (AT) Missile, Milan (International)	230
FV701 Ferret (in storage)	20	Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) 300-BM-30 Smerch SP (Russia)	6	AT Missile, BGM-71A TOW (Launchers Only) (US)	25
BMP-3 ICV w/100 mm gun (Russia)	415	MLRS, 227-mm HIMARS (US)	20 O/O	AT Missile, HOT (Launchers Only) (International)	50
Panhard VBL	24	MLRS, 122-MM Firos-25 (+ 24 non-operational) (Italy)	24	AT Missile, Vigilant (UK) (In Storage)	UNK
FNSS Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) (Turkey)	136	MLRS, 70-mm LAU-97 (40-round) (Belgium)	70	AT Missile, Javelin (US)	UNK
AMX-10P Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV)	15	MLRS, 122-mm Type 90 (China)-reported	UNK	Surface-to-Surface (STS) Missile, SS-1C Scud B (Russia)	6
M3 Panhard VTS IFV (UK)	370	Mortar, 120-mm Brandt	21	Surface-to-Air (STA) Missile, Mistral (Launchers Only)	20
VAB APC	20	Mortar, 81-mm L16 (UK)	114	STA Missile, Blowpipe (Launchers Only) (UK)	20
EE-11 Urutu APC (Brazil)	120	Mortar, 81-mm Brandt	20	STA Missile, Pantsyr S-1 SP (Russia)	50 O/O
VCR/TT APC	90				
BTR-3U Guardian IFV (UAE)	90				
RG-31 Nyala (South Africa)	120 O/O				
TPz-1 Fuchs NBC (Germany)	64				
<b>AIR FORCE (As of May 2012, US origin unless otherwise noted)</b>					
<b>Fixed Wing Aircraft in Service</b>		<b>Rotary Wing Aircraft in Service</b>		<b>Missiles in Service</b>	
Fighter, F-16E, Desert Falcon	54	Attack, AH-64D Apache	30	Surface-to-Air (STA) Missile, I-Hawk	UNK
Fighter, F-16F, Desert Falcon	25	Attack, AS-550C3 Fennec (France)	18	STA Missile, Mistral (France)	UNK
Fighter, Mirage 2000-9 (France)	16	Attack, UH-60M Blackhawk	11	STA Missile, Rapiers (UK)	UNK
Fighter, Mirage, 2000-9EAD (France)	44	Transport, CH-47F Chinook (Special Operations)	16	STA Missile, Crotale (France)	UNK
Light Attack/Trainer, Hawk Mk 102 (UK)	12	Transport, AS365F Dauphin 2 VIP (France)	4	STA Missile, RBS-70 (Sweden)	UNK
Recon, Mirage 2000RAD (France)	7	Transport, A-109 K2 Hirundo (Italy)	3	STA Missile, Javelin (UK)	UNK
Airborne Early Warning, Saab 340 (Sweden)	2	Transport, AB412	9	STA Missile, SA-18 Grouse (Russia)	UNK
Transport, C-130H Hercules	3	Transport, AB139	8	Air-to-Air (ATA) Missile, R550 Magic 1 (France)	UNK
Transport C-130H-30 Hercules	3	Transport, Bell 407	1	ATA Missile, AIM-9L Sidewinder	UNK
Transport, L-100-30 (L-188) Hercules	2			ATA Missile, ASRAAM (International)	UNK
Transport, Beech King Air 350 VIP	2			ATA Missile, MICA	UNK
Transport, CN-235M (Spain)	7			Air-to-Surface (ATS) Missile, PGM-1 Hakim A (UK)	UNK
Transport, DHC-6 Twin Otter (Canada)	1			ATS Missile, PGM-2 Hakim B (UK)	UNK



# OE Threat Assessment: UAE



Transport, DHC-8 Dash 8 (Police) (Canada)	4			ATS Missile, HOT (International)	UNK
Transport, C-17 Globemaster III	4			ATS Missile, AGM-114 Hellfire II	UNK
Transport, Cessna 208B Grand Caravan	8			ATS Missile, Hydra-70, 2.75-inch rocket	UNK
Trainer, Hawk 100 Mk 63 (UK)	20			ATS Missile, Black Shaheen (International)	UNK O/O
Trainer, PC-7 Turbo-Trainer (Switzerland)	30			ATS Missile, AGM-65D/G2 Maverick	UNK
Trainer, G115T Acro (Germany)	12				
<b>NAVY (As of May 2012, French origin unless otherwise noted))</b>					
<b>Vessels/Vehicles</b>		<b>Missiles/Aircraft</b>		<b>Coast Guard</b>	
Guided-Missile Corvette (GMC), Lurssen FB 62 Class (Germany)	2	Anti-Ship, MM 40 Exocet	UNK	Protector Class Patrol Craft (UK)	2
GMC, Baynunah Class	1	Anti-Ship, Harpoon (US)	UNK	Shark 33 10-M+ Design Patrol Craft (US)	11
GMC, Abu Dhabi Class (Italy)	1	ATS, AS15TT	UNK	Arun-Class Pilot Boat (Customs Police)	2
Patrol Boat, FPB-44 Class (Germany)	2	ATS, AS11/AS12	UNK	P-63A, Camcraft 19.8-M Design Patrol Craft (US)	16
Patrol Boat, TNC-45 Class (Germany)	6	STA Mistral	UNK	77-foot, Camcraft 23.4-M Design Patrol Craft	5
Patrol Boat, Vosper 110-foot Class (UK)	1	STA, RIM-7M Sea Sparrow (US)	UNK	Sea Spray Raiding Craft, Special Operations (US)	54
Landing Craft, Ghannatha Class	12	Learjet 35A (US)	2	Baglietto Design, 59-foot Coastal Patrol (Italy)	3
Logistics Landing Craft, Siong Haut Design (Singapore)	3	Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW, AS 332F/L Super Puma	7	Baglietto Design, GC 23-Class Coastal Patrol (Italy)	6
Landing Craft, L 640-1 Class	7	ASW, AS 565 Panther	7	Barracuda/FPB Harbor Patrol Craft (US)	24
Diving Tender, Al Gaffa Class (Italy)	1	SA-316A/319S Alouette	4	Halmatic Works Design, 16-M Work Boats (US)	12
Fast Supply Vessel (FSV), 26-M Class	4			Watercraft 45-foot Coastal Patrol (UK)	6
Minehunter, Type 332 Class (Germany)	2			Boghammar Class Launches (Customs Police)	3
Utility Landing Craft, Umm Al Narr Class	1				
Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB), Arctic 28 (US)	8				
RIB, Al-Shaali Type	12				
APC, Guardian (Marine Company) (US)	90				

## American Forces in the UAE

Approximately 3,000 U.S. military personnel, primarily from the United States Air Force (USAF), are stationed in the UAE. The U.S. negotiated an agreement in 2002 to provide the U.S. military with access to UAE aviation and naval facilities. Most of the U.S. military personnel are at the Al



## OE Threat Assessment: UAE



Dhafra Air Base near Abu Dhabi. The USAF's 380th Air Expeditionary Wing operates aerial refueling tankers, the Global Hawk UAV, and U2 airplanes in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The United States Marine Corps (USMC) recently announced that a small rotational force of 30 Marines would train UAE military personnel on tactics and small arms weapons.

### **French Forces in the UAE**

In January 2008, the UAE and France signed an agreement to allow a French military presence in the emirates. The agreement contained three key points. First, the French Navy could use a 900-foot section of the Zayid Port for its own purposes. Second, The French Air Force could use a portion of the ground facilities at the Dhafra Air Base besides its runways for takeoffs and landings. Lastly, the French military could use a barracks at the Abu Dhabi military camp that can house approximately 400 personnel.

### **Government Paramilitary Forces**

There are several organizations in the UAE that may provide some paramilitary function, but little is known about any of them. The first is the Federal Police Force, but no open source found lists the exact number of police officers that serve in it or what their capabilities might consist of in a combat environment. The second is the UAE Border and Coast Guard Directorate (BCGD) that until 2001 came under the command of the Minister of Interior (MOI). While there are about 1,200 personnel in the Coast Guard, sources do not confirm if this is the total number for the BCGD or only for those who support maritime activities. The Dubai police department features a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) unit of about 50 officers that specialize in counter-terrorism. Many of the SWAT officers received training by U.S. and United Kingdom advisors. There is also a Police Special Unit of about 40 personnel based at the Abu Dhabi Airport that specializes in counter-terrorism missions.

## **UAE Military Functions**

### **Mission Command**

While the UAE's UDF may appear to be operated through a single chain of command, that is not the case. While a senior military leader supervises the UDF's three services—army, air force, and navy—two of the emirates maintain their own separate military forces. Dubai fields its own military force of 12,000 personnel and Ras al-Khaimah maintains a small separate force of 900 soldiers. In peacetime, these forces tend to train separately, so the three would need to quickly learn to cooperate if forced to fight in a combined military operation in wartime.





## OE Threat Assessment: UAE



### **Maneuver**

Most of the UAE's army consists of armor or mechanized units that are well suited to fight in the country's desert environment. The UAE navy does have several ships built specifically to conduct amphibious warfare. For the most part, the UAE equipment is well-maintained and capable of performing to the desired level.

### **Information Warfare**

It does not appear that the UAE UDF fields any designated Information Warfare units. With government owned media outlets, the UAE can attempt to get its message out but it may be countered from the other media sources available in Dubai's Media Free Zone. The UAE air force does not possess many, if any, aviation assets that would be useful in an Information Warfare environment.

### **RISTA**

The UAE UDF does not possess any designated reconnaissance units outside of those organic to their armor and mechanized brigades. The navy, however, does field the Dubai Commando Squadron that includes a combat diving team with ten submergible diving vehicles (SDV) that might be useful for maritime reconnaissance operations. The UDF is also building up its ground special operations capabilities that might provide some RISTA support in the future.

### **Fire Support**

The UAE UDF fields a fairly robust amount of fire support for the overall size of its ground forces. With one artillery brigade comprised of three artillery regiments and six air force squadrons (F-16s and Mirage 2000s) that can provide close aviation support (CAS), the UDF maneuver forces should receive adequate indirect fire support.

### **Protection**

It does not appear that there are specialized units dedicated for CBRNE type missions, but the UDF army does field 64 German made TPz-1 Fuchs vehicles whose primary mission is for CBRNE detection. As the UDF is primarily armor and mechanized infantry scattered at several posts throughout the UAE, the force is protected adequately.

### **Logistics**

Like many other militaries throughout the world, more emphasis is placed on the maneuver units instead of the support units. There are no major support units in the UDF. In 2012, the UDF chose to purchase over 1,000 NIMR high mobility tactical military vehicles that will serve in support roles throughout the military. Much of the maintenance for the UDF, especially the air force, is contracted out to U.S. firms.



### Threat Actors in the OE

#### Non-State Paramilitary Forces

##### Insurgent Forces

Al-Qaeda (AQ): The worldwide terrorist organization, AQ, is known to operate in over 65 countries to include the UAE, although no terrorist group has succeeded in carrying out an attack in the country. AQ is a radical Sunni Muslim organization that wants to establish an Islamic government in Muslim countries based on Sharia law. The UAE is against any conservative brand of Islam. AQ has conducted many attacks over the year ranging from the hijacking of the airplanes that crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City to individual suicide attacks by the faithful carrying explosive-laden vests in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are many AQ affiliated terrorist organizations throughout the world.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP): While AQAP mainly operates in Yemen, the organization took responsibility for package bombs delivered to targets through the postal system to targets in the UAE and Great Britain in October 2011. AQAP has also conducted suicide bombings against tourists in Yemen, attempted an attack on a Northwest Airlines flight out of Amsterdam, and even tried to assassinate a British Ambassador.

Other groups: The Taliban, Haqqani Network, and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) all received funding from individuals based in UAE even though the three terrorist groups are not operational in the emirates. There may also be remnants of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UAE, but they are mostly non-violent and perform primarily social and relief work.

##### Guerrilla Forces

There are currently no known major guerrilla forces operating in the UAE.

##### Criminal Organizations

With an estimated 10,000 women in the UAE that have been forced into involuntary servitude and usually sexually exploited, there must be some type of organized criminal activity involved. The most exploited countries include Iraq, Iran, Morocco, and the regions of South and East Asia, Eastern Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa. The women are usually lured to the UAE with promises of employment as domestic servants. Upon their arrival, the women have their passports taken away and are denied permission to leave the homes where they are employed and then are often forced into the sex trade.

Despite the UAE's zero tolerance policy towards illegal drugs and severe penalties including a possible death sentence if caught, there are drug cartels that use the UAE as a trans-shipment point. The Makran coast of Pakistan is easily accessed from the UAE and that makes the



## OE Threat Assessment: UAE



northern emirates excellent stopping points for trans-shipping drugs from Afghanistan bound for other parts of the world.

Organized criminal organizations also smuggle other contraband including guns in and out of the UAE, especially in Dubai. Dubai handles over 2.8 million of the 5 million shipping containers that pass through UAE seaports each year. Due to other criminal activities, up to \$1 billion in money-laundering activity may occur annually despite the UAE's Central Bank recent attempts to stop the practice.

### **Private Security Organizations**

In 2011, Blackwater Worldwide received a \$529 million contract from the crown prince of Abu Dhabi to set up a private 800-member battalion of foreign troops without any Muslims. The battalion's mission would be to defend the country's pipelines and skyscrapers' from attack, conduct special operations type missions, stop any internal revolts caused by the Arab Spring unrest, and protect the royal families.

There are many other private security organizations that operate in the UAE that provide many types of security services. One of these is called Black Tiger Security and advertises executive bodyguard services for VIPs and celebrities as well as project, premises, and property protection. Most of the private security organizations that have their headquarters in Western countries will be supportive of the U.S. at best and neutral at worst.

There are an estimated 12 ships, including four that operate off the coast of Fujairah, that serve as floating arsenals. These ships rent weapons to security companies whose job is protect ships from pirates that are en route to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, or Yemen.

### **Non-Military Armed Combatants**

Civilians in the UAE can own firearms if they are approved by the police to obtain a license, are fingerprinted, and are a citizen of the country. In one four-day period at the Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition, the police issued 1,565 permits for citizens to purchase firearms. Most regular UAE residents will be neutral if not supportive of any Western support given to the emirates.

## **Threat Actors' Military Functions**

### **Mission Command**

Much of the available information indicates that AQ and AQAP cells operate in a decentralized manner to avoid detection. Additionally, much terrorist communication avoids the use of electronic devices that can be monitored by governmental security agencies. Instead, the more secure means of insurgent communication that avoids compromise remains the courier. While



## OE Threat Assessment: UAE



courier transported messages take much longer to reach their destinations, insurgent leaders typically are willing to sacrifice time in order to protect secrecy.

### **Maneuver**

Most threat actors will maneuver on the ground or use of civilian vehicles for military purposes.

### **Information Warfare**

Both AQ and AQ-affiliated units are masters in the use of modern media to influence the public to support their message. Due to the lack of insurgent activity in the UAE and the pro-Western feeling by much of those that live in the emirates, however, the insurgent message often falls on deaf ears.

### **RISTA**

The most important aspect of RISTA for the insurgents is the use of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) to obtain information. The lack of sophisticated intelligence gathering assets means that HUMINT might be the only way for the insurgents to gather information. With supporters scattered throughout the Middle East including the UAE, AQ can often gain the information it needs to plan and conduct an attack.

### **Fire Support**

The threat actors in the UAE will likely have limited fire support available to support any attack. If a threat actor did make some type of terrorist attack, it is unlikely that much fire support would be used. If needed, the most likely type of fire support would come from small caliber mortars.

### **Protection**

Since most threat actors in the UAE would use civilian vehicles converted to military use, these vehicles would not provide the same type of armor protection found in regular military units. The insurgents would most likely not have access to gas masks unless their plan called for the use of chemical weapons.

### **Logistics**

Most threat actors would have limited logistical capabilities and obtain what they needed through civilian sources or the black market in the case of weapons. Supporters of their cause, however, may provide both food and shelter for cell members.



### Force Protection Issues

The UAE is a fairly safe country with few violent crimes or crimes against property so all force protection issues involve individual self-protection measures to prevent being the victim of a crime of opportunity whether it is terrorism related or not. All U.S. citizens need to take the same security practices in the UAE that they would do in any large American city, such as locking their vehicle and hotel room door; not flashing large sums of money; maintaining control of their wallet and passport; and being aware of their surroundings.

Recreational boaters should be careful not to violate Iranian territorial waters near the island of Abu Musa, approximately 20 miles from Dubai. Both the UAE and Iran claim the disputed island, and fishing in the surrounding waters could result in the seizure of the boat and the detention of the crew and passengers in Iran.

### Economic

Three engines fuel the UAE's economy: oil and natural gas, tourism, and banking. While only 15% of the people work in industry, it accounts for almost 60% of the country's GDP. The UAE holds the seventh-largest proven reserves of crude oil in the world at over 97.8 billion barrels with 94% of it located in Abu Dhabi. While it is unlikely that more oil fields will be discovered in the country, improved oil recovery techniques will allow the UAE to extract previously inaccessible oil from its older fields. UAE currently produces around three million barrels per day of crude oil. The UAE also possesses about 215 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven natural gas reserves to rank seventh in the world. Currently only the 11th largest natural gas producer in the world, its reserves gives it the potential to move up the list in future years.

Tourism, especially high end, is a rapidly growing industry in the UAE, as its revenue now exceeds its oil exports. About 78% of the people in the UAE work in the service industry and many of them cater to the over six million visitors who come to the UAE each year on vacation. Most of the visitors come from Australia, Europe, India, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, and South African. There are over 302 tourist hotels with plans to build 100 new hotels on four man-made islands off the coast at \$3 billion each. The main attractions for visitors are beaches, nightlife, shopping, and museums such as branches of the Louvre and Guggenheim. Construction of a \$9.5 billion theme park, Dubailand, which would be twice the size of Disney World, was halted during the worldwide recession of the last few years. Other projects related to the tourist industry continue to be built.

The UAE is one of the largest banking centers in the Middle East, with over 21 local, 25 foreign, and two specialized banks, with an aggregate of over 50 foreign banking representatives in the relatively small country. The Dubai International Financial Center (DIFC) opened in September 2004 and is a self-regulating financial free zone that includes the Dubai International Financial



## OE Threat Assessment: UAE



Exchange. The UAE is also the home to the Dubai Financial Market (DFM) and the Abu Dhabi Securities Market. The UAE's free trade zones that allow 100% foreign ownership without any taxes make the country an excellent place for business.

### Social

While there are over 8.2 million people that live in the UAE, only about 19% are actually citizens. The others are foreigners that include other Arabs and Iranians at 23%, South Asians at 50%, and East Asians/Westerners at 8%. English is widely spoken. The population increased almost 75% from 1995 to 2005 and continues to grow at almost 7% annually, mostly due to non-nationals who move to work in the country. Over 2.5 million of the people live in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the two largest emirates. About 96% of the people in the UAE are Muslims with about 85% practicing the Sunni variety of Islam, since the government subsidizes 95% of the Sunni mosques and employs most of their imams. While most Arab women will wear a burkha, hijab, or at least cover their heads with a scarf or *shaila* (head covering); there is no obligation for foreign women to do the same. The UAE government claims that the country's literacy rate is 91% and it stated a goal to reach full literacy throughout the country. While the vast majority of the people practice the Muslim faith, it is not the conservative variety found in other Middle Eastern countries such as Iran.

### Information

Most UAE residents operate in the information age. In a country of 5.3 million people, there are two phones for every person. As of 2011, there were 1.825 million landlines and 11.727 million cellular phones that operated through modern fiber-optic integrated networks. The UAE government operates most television and radio stations, but start-ups in Dubai's Media Free Zone and satellite dish ownership means the people can access unbiased information sources. About 70.9% of the people in the UAE can access the Internet through over 338,000 Internet hosts, while about 38.6% of the population maintains a Facebook account.

### Intelligence Services in the OE

Each of the seven emirates maintains its own secret security service, but little is available on any of them from open sources. It appears that the emirates use their secret security services to intimidate, arrest, and detain those who disagree with the government's position on a wide variety of issues. Some of the emirates even provide clandestine means for UAE residents to anonymously turn in their neighbors who are conducting illegal or criminal activities.



## Infrastructure

Over 92% of all the people in the UAE can access clean water, modern sanitation facilities, and the electrical grid. The numbers are even higher in the urban areas. Nationally, 100% of the people can access clean water with most receiving it from a piping system. Much of the UAE's fresh water comes from desalination plants. In urban areas, 98% of the people use modern sanitation facilities and the figure only drops to 95% for the rural areas. Nationally, about 92% of the people can access the electrical grid with an even higher percentage in the urban areas. In 2008, the UAE with U.S. assistance began plans to construct four nuclear power plants to provide electricity that culminated in the selection of the (South) Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) in January 2010 as the builder.

To support its tourism industry, the UAE maintains an excellent transportation network. With five heliports and 42 separate airports throughout the country, including 25 with paved runways, there are seven international airports with the recent completion of the Dubai World Central International Airport at Mina Jabal Ali. The UAE contains 2,535 miles of road including 157 miles of expressways. While there are no railroads in the UAE, the Dubai Metro opened up in 2009 and continues to expand its service throughout the country. There are 15 commercial ports in the UAE including oil terminals, and most operate modern equipment to load and unload cargo.

Due to its abundance of hydrocarbon natural resources, the UAE contains a large number of pipelines to move both crude and refined products. Miles of pipeline include the following:

- Condensate: 285
- Crude Oil: 893
- Liquid Petroleum Gas: 137
- Natural Gas: 1,462
- Refined products: 132

## Physical Environment

Except for the mountains in the east, most of the UAE is flat, barren coastal plains that merge into the sand dunes of the desert. Only about 3% of the country's land is useful for agricultural purposes. There are no permanent rivers in the UAE. There are two oases, however, that provide adequate underground water for permanent settlements. The Al Liwa Oasis lies in the south near the undefined border with Saudi Arabia. The Al Buraymi Oasis lies about 120 miles northeast of the first oasis and extends to both sides of the Abu Dhabi-Oman border.

The climate throughout most of the UAE is normally hot and dry with the exception of the Al Hajar al Gharbi Mountains in the east, where the temperatures are somewhat cooler due to the higher elevation. The coolest months of the year are January and February when the daily high temperature is not over 68°F. Temperatures will exceed 104°F in July and August with very high



## OE Threat Assessment: UAE



humidity. Except for short bursts of rain along the coastal region, usually in the summer months, little rain falls throughout most of the UAE.

### Time

Like most Middle Eastern countries, UAE residents do not believe in punctuality. The exception may be those who deal with Western businesses on a daily business. For business meetings, superiors expect everyone else to be on time but they may be late themselves. The people expect things to run slower than planned, deadlines to be missed, and people to be late. People often blame the latter on the traffic.

The normal work day in the UAE is eight hours per day or 48 hours per week except for those in service industries such as hotels and restaurants, where it is nine hours per day. Any time after that is considered overtime and must be paid at 1.25 the normal hourly rate. During Ramadan, UAE law requires employers to reduce their workers' day by two hours. The public work week is Sunday through Thursday, but many public companies work 5½ to 6 days per week with only Friday as the day off. Government workers normally work from 0730 to 1430 daily, but those in the private sector will vary. Annual leave is usually 22 working days or 30 calendar days off. Many private companies refuse to obey the legal requirements regarding their employees' workday or workweek.

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