



5G and Military Drones: Key Sectors of Growing Chinese-Emirati Collaboration

OE Watch Commentary: 2020 was a year of deepening relations between China and the UAE, according to the accompanying opinion piece written by the Emirati ambassador to China. The piece was originally published on the Arabic-language website of the *China Global Television Network*, the international division of the state-owned *China Central Television*, and subsequently reprinted in the prominent Arabic-language Emirati daily *al-Bayan*. The ambassador highlights several realms of bilateral collaboration, including COVID-19 and the health sector, cultural exchanges and events, and various trade and technical cooperation agreements. Perhaps most noteworthy among them is the UAE's selection of the Chinese company Huawei as its main partner in implementing advanced information and communications technology platforms and infrastructure linked through a nationwide 5G network.



IDEX 2015.

Source: Mikhail Palinchak, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/poroshenkopetro/16508282899>, Attribution: CC 2.0

The latest in Chinese-Emirati military-industrial collaboration was showcased at the International Defense Exhibition and Conference (IDEX), held last February in Abu Dhabi. IDEX marked the first public revelation that the UAE was the flagship foreign customer for China's CR500 Golden Eagle, a compact vertical take-off and landing UAV with attack capabilities developed by the China North Industries Group Corporation Limited (Norinco). The Emirati CR500 was unveiled at IDEX as a joint project between Norinco and the UAE's International Golden Group, through a new entity called the China-Emirates Science and Technology innovation laboratory. The CR500, which is briefly described in the second excerpt from *Global Times*, an English-language Chinese publication, was first cleared for sale to an unidentified foreign buyer last November.

Emirati interest in Chinese weapons is about more than just money, if one is to judge from a recent tweet by Abdul Khaleq Abdullah, an Emirati political scientist who is influential on social media. IDEX, he observes via his Twitter account, provides the UAE with an opportunity "to search for sources of weapons other than America." The Emirati pivot toward Asia, he adds, should be based not only on investment opportunities but also on strategic considerations that "enhance the UAE's future defense and deterrence capabilities." **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

“It is important that the turn toward Asia, the rising global center of gravity, be about strategic considerations as well as investment ...”

Source: نظرة مستقبلية للعام الجديد من سفير الإمارات لدى الصين: عام الثور سيكون عاما مثمرا للعلاقة الصينية الإماراتية (Outlook for the new year from the UAE ambassador to China: The Year of the Ox will be a fruitful year for the Sino-Emirati relationship), *CGTN Arabic* (Arabic-language website of China Global Television Network), 9 February 2021 <https://arabic.cgtn.com/n/BfJEA-IA-CEA/FEIAAA/index.html>

UAE-China relations have been deepened substantially in 2020 based on the strategic partnership between the two countries that was established in 2018, as well as diplomatic relations dating back to 1984... In the year 2020, in particular, it contributed to strengthening the friendship and interdependence between the two countries, which was represented in particular by the mutual support between the two countries to combat the Covid-19 epidemic... Additionally, there have been various developments in the ICT and Artificial Intelligence industries. The UAE has established a partnership with Huawei to create 5G networks to advance the UAE strategy to face the Fourth Industrial Revolution, making the UAE the fourth country in the world to introduce this technology. The Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) and the Huawei Consumer Group have announced the exclusive launch of the first digital “Nol cards” in the GCC and the “NolPay” mobile app on the Huawei app store.



Continued: 5G and Military Drones: Key Sectors of Growing Chinese-Emirati Collaboration

Source: “Chinese arms firm ready to deliver indigenous helicopter drones,” *Global Times* (English-language Chinese publication), 29 November 2020. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1208402.shtml>

As a top Chinese arms firm was recently cleared to deliver its made-for-export multipurpose helicopter drone system, which can conduct missions including reconnaissance, communication relay and battle damage assessment at a long endurance, analysts referred to it on Sunday as a good partner for tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and self-propelled artillery. Developed by the state-owned China North Industries Group Corporation Limited (NORINCO), the CR500 Golden Eagle unmanned helicopter system recently passed final inspections for delivery, the company said in a statement released in its WeChat account on Friday...

The drone can carry a large payload, has a long endurance even when fully loaded, and a compact structure that can be easily stored and transported. It can also resist strong winds, carry different types of electro-optical pods and payloads, and act as a logistics support craft and deliver materials with pinpoint accuracy, the company said. When equipped with weapons like machine guns and anti-tank missiles, the helicopter drone could also conduct armed reconnaissance missions, the expert said.

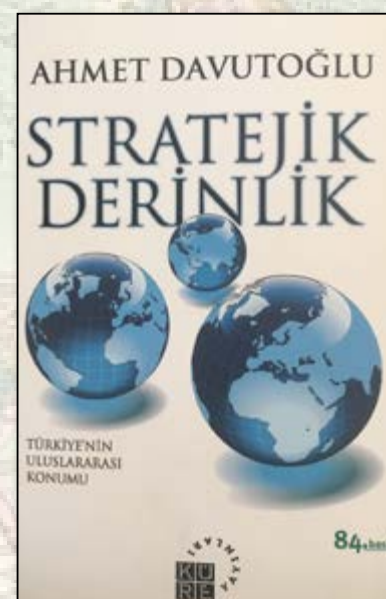
Source: Abdul Khaleq Abdullah, *Twitter*, 21 February 2020. https://twitter.com/Abdulkhaleq_UAE/status/1363541395676352517

The IDEX 2021 exhibition in Abu Dhabi is an opportunity to search for sources of weapons other than America to enhance the UAE’s future defense and deterrence capabilities, such as the Chinese J20 aircraft that employ fifth-generation technology and are comparable to the F35 aircraft. It is important that the turn toward Asia, the rising global center of gravity, be about strategic considerations as well as investment.

Book Review: A Look Back and Forward at Turkey’s “Strategic Depth” Foreign Policy Doctrine

Karen Kaya
February 2020

“Strategic Depth (Stratejik Derinlik)” is a Turkish book published in 2001. This was a time when international relations theorists were describing new frameworks of world order and security modalities following the end of the Cold War and bi-polar world. Works such as Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History” and Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” were icons of this intellectual period. It was in this context of a changing international system that Turkish International Relations Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu (who later served as Foreign Minister between 2009-2014 and Prime Minister between 2014-2016) attempted to define Turkey’s position in his book “Strategic Depth.” From around 2002 to 2012, the foreign policy that Davutoğlu outlined in his book was considered the doctrine and roadmap for Turkish foreign policy.



<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/309386>