Holy & Dallas 6 (Victoria K. Holt, senior associate at the Henry L. Stimson Center. Former Senior Policy Advisor at the State Department. Graduate of Naval War College and BA from Wesleyan. Elisabeth W. Dallas, research associate at the Henry L. Stimson Center. Previously Senior Fellow with the Public International Law & Policy Group in Washington, DC. She has an MA from Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy. “On Trial: The US Military and the International Criminal Court” Henry L. Stimson Center Report No. 55 https://www.stimson.org/wp-content/files/file-attachments/US\_Military\_and\_the\_ICC\_FINAL\_website\_1.pdf March 2006)

The problem, he persisted, is that “*perception is reality*.” *Confusion about the Court* among rank and file **military** personnel is *real*, and is not being assuaged on the ground. Another participant pointed out that a vague fear of the Court is the bottom line for many in the military, and until they understand how it functions both operationally and legally, *they will continue to feel* like their **actions** could be *second-guessed*. One advocate of the Court pointed out that this situation helped no one, and that the *confidence* of those deployed to do their job was *paramount*. Critics of the Court agreed: no one wants military personnel to carry an **additional**, unnecessary *burden*.

​​**Grigore ’23** [Sabina; May 2; Just Access Representative to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime; Just Access, “Justice Delayed, Justice Denied: Bias, Opacity and Protracted Case Resolution at the International Criminal Court,” https://just-access.de/bias-opacity-and-protracted-case-resolution-at-the-international-criminal-court/]

**The ICC** i**s** regarded as a necessary institution for advancing international justice and accountability. However, criticisms have been leveled against it regarding its limited engagement with civil society, and the **transparency** of its activity **has been defective**.2 On the one hand, the Court is being criticized for not having done enough to raise awareness about its work, because it has not communicated effectively with affected communities, victims, or the general public. Numerous individuals, particularly those living in conflict-affected zones, are uninformed about the ICC’s mandate and do not know how to access its services. This lack of awareness and outreach can prevent victims from coming forward to report violations of the Statute, undermining by and large the credibility of the ICC’s work.3 Another issue is the lack of transparency of the ICC’s activities. **Trials** and investigations at the ICC take place behind **closed doors**, and the public has little access to information about active cases.4 Due to this lack of openness, the ICC may come under criticism for bias and unfairness which lead to suspicions and mistrust regarding the activity of the institution as a whole.5

Two other main areas of criticism faced by the Court concern its high costs and slow pace of justice. The Court is funded by contributions from its member states, and its budget has been criticized for being too high. In addition, the Court’s **investigations** and trials can take **years** to complete, leading to delays in justice for victims. One critical case in which both of these points of criticism are illustrated relates to the investigations in Afghanistan. In almost 20 years since the prosecutors of the ICC first considered opening an investigation into the crimes that occurred in Afghanistan, there has been little to no action toward bringing justice to Afghan victims. A month after the ICC authorized the Office of the Prosecutor to launch an investigation, the institution had to stop due to a request of the Afghan government to pursue the investigation themselves. Nonetheless, the conflict is of a protracted nature and crimes of an international nature have continued to occur throughout the whole time since the case came under the attention of the ICC.6 As such, limited by its own mandate and by the resource allocation decided upon by the Court, justice has not yet been delivered to the victims affected by the war in Afghanistan.

Moreover, since 2009, the legitimacy of the institution has been shaken by a gradual African disinterest in the Court, when it issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir, whose country is not a signatory to the Rome Statute. In 2015, the South African government refused to arrest Mr. Bashir. He traveled to South Africa to attend a meeting of the African Union, and South Africa, as a member of the court, was legally required to arrest him. Yet, the government allowed Mr. Bashir to leave the country, claiming that he had immunity as a head of state during the African Union summit meeting. The ICC has issued a judgment on this case, saying that South Africa was wrong about Al Bashir’s immunity. His immunity as a head of state has been superseded by UNSC Resolution 1593 (2005) which referred Darfur to the ICC. Concomitantly, sitting heads of state can be held responsible for crimes in their individual capacity, so that Al-Bashir could have been arrested and tried at the ICC. Nonetheless, South Africa and other African states have expressed deep dissatisfaction with what they consider a tool of Western imperialism.7 As a result, Burundi was the first country to withdraw its membership from the ICC in 2017.8

Most recently, following the arrest warrant of Vladimir Putin, issued by the Pre-Trial Chamber II of the ICC, in connection with the deportation and transfer of children as war crimes,9 and based on the rapid investigations that resulted shortly after the beginning of the war in Ukraine,10 the Court faces another wave of criticism regarding its practices, particularly due to matters of prioritization and resource allocation. Even though the ICC has opened an investigation into crimes committed during the conflict in Ukraine, it has encountered many challenges, including a lack of access to the conflict zone and scant cooperation from Ukrainian authorities. In order to discuss the significance of holding those responsible for international crimes accountable, justice ministers from all over the world gathered in Ukraine in March 2023 for the Justice Ministers’ Conference. Ukraine had a crucial opportunity to emphasize the value of ongoing efforts to prosecute offenders at the conference. However, because Ukraine has not ratified the Rome Statute, its cooperation with the Court has been erratic. Despite these challenges, which are also present in other instances investigated by the Court, the ICC dedicated a significant part of its resources to pursuing this case. Moreover, the Court benefitted from a significant increase in the level of support from its members, which has been unprecedented. This imbalanced support received by the ICC within the past year exacerbated the already existing views about an inconsistent application of its mandate, **increasing the** damaging **perception that the Court is biased and politicized.**11

**Casey 18** --- (Lee Casey, [*Mr. Casey is a partner in the law firm of Baker & Hostetler LLP, based in Washington, D.C. His practice areas include administrative, environmental, and federal constitutional, as well as public international and international humanitarian law. Mr. Casey has served in various capacities in the federal government, including in the Office of Legal Counsel and the Office of Legal Policy at the U.S. Department of Justice. The Office of Legal Counsel is responsible for advising the Attorney General and the White House on issues of constitutional law and statutory interpretation. The Office of Legal Policy served as a strategic "think tank" for the Reagan Justice Department. Mr. Casey has also served as Deputy Associate General Counsel at the U.S. Department of Energy. He has been an Adjunct Professor of Law at the George Mason University School of Law, Arlington, Virginia, and has published many articles on the subject of international criminal law and the International Criminal Court.*], xx-xx-2018, "The Case Against Supporting the International Criminal Court", https://law.washu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/The-Case-Against-Supporting-the-International-Criminal-Court.pdf) //doa1-27-2025 + master chen :)

The United States can never meet that test as an institutional matter. Under the Constitution, the President is both the Chief Executive, i.e., the chief law enforcement officer, and the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. In any particular case, both the individuals investigating, and prosecuting, and the individuals being investigated and prosecuted, work for the same man. Moreover, under command responsibility theories, the President is always a potential – indeed, a likely, target of any investigation. The ICC will simply note that an individual cannot “impartially” investigate himself, and it will be full steam ahead. As a check on the ICC, complimentarity is meaningless. \* \* \* Finally, it’s important to understand exactly what is at stake here. Today, the officials of the United States are ultimately accountable for their actions to the American electorate. **If the United States were to ratify the ICC Treaty** this ultimate accountability would be transferred from the American people to the ICC in a very real and immediate way – through the threat of criminal prosecution and punishment. The policies implemented, and actions taken by our national leaders, whether at home or abroad, could be scrutinized by the ICC and punished if, in its opinion, criminal violations had occurred. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, "[h]e who punishes the criminal is . . . the real master of society."10 Ratification of the ICC Treaty would, in short, constitute a profound surrender of American sovereignty – our right of self-government – the first human right. Without self-government, the rest are words on paper, held by grace and favor, and not rights at all. That surrender would be to an institution that does not share our interests or values. There is no universally recognized and accepted legal system on the international level, particular in the area of due process, as the Rome Treaty itself recognizes in requiring that, in the selection of judges, “the principal legal systems of the world,” should be represented. Moreover, although a number of Western states have signed this treaty, so have **states** such as Algeria, Iran, Nigeria, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. According to the U.S. State Department, each of **th**ese st**at**es **have been implicated in the use of torture** or extrajudicial killings, or both. Yet, each of them **would have a**s **great** a **voice** as the United States **in selecting the ICC's Prosecutor[s] and Judges,** and in the Assembly of State Parties. This is especially troubling because, as the ICTY Prosecutor conceded, who is and who is not a war criminal is very much a matter of your point of view.

Bolton 12 — (John R. Bolton, xx-xx-2012, "", Duke University, https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1205&context=lcp, accessed 1-27-2025) //U SEATTLE 3-3 DEBATER RAHUL RANI + ELIJAH

In fact, **the court** and the prosecutor are illegitimate. The ICC’s principal failing is that its **components do not fit into a coherent** “constitutional” **design that delineates clearly how laws are made, adjudicated, and enforced**, subject to popular accountability and structured to protect liberty. Instead, the court and the prosecutor are simply “out there” in the international system. This approach is clearly inconsistent with American standards of constitutional order, and is, in fact, a stealth approach to erode our constitutionalism. That is why this issue is, first and foremost, a liberty question. The ICC’s failing stems from its purported authority to operate outside (and on a plane superior to) the U.S. Constitution, and thereby to inhibit the full constitutional autonomy of all three branches of the U.S. government, and, indeed, of all states party to the statute.11 ICC advocates rarely assert publicly that this result is central to their stated goals, but it must be for the court and prosecutor to be completely effective. And it is precisely for this reason that, strong or weak in its actual operations, the ICC has unacceptable consequences for the United States. The court’s illegitimacy is basically two-fold: substantive and structural. As to the former, the ICC’s authority is vague and excessively elastic. This is most emphatically not a court of limited jurisdiction. Even for genocide, the oldest codified among the three crimes specified in the Rome Statute,12 there is hardly complete clarity on its meaning. The ICC demonstrates graphically all of the inadequacies of how “international law” is created. The U.S. Senate, for example, cannot accept the statute’s definition of genocide unless it is prepared to reverse the position it took in February 1986 in approving the Genocide Convention of 1948, when it attached two reservations, five understandings, and one declaration.13 By contrast, Article 120 of the Rome Statute provides explicitly and without any exceptions that “[n]o reservations may be made to this [s]tatute.” Thus confronted with the statute’s definition of “genocide” that ignores existing American reservations to the underlying Genocide Convention, the Senate would not have the option of attaching these reservations (or others) to any possible ratification of the statute. Stripped of the reservation power, **the United States would risk expansive and mischievous definitional interpretations by a politically motivated court.** Indeed, the “no reservations” clause appears obviously directed against the United States and its protective Senate, and is a treaty provision we should never agree to. The Rome Statute’s two other offenses, crimes against humanity and war crimes,14 are even vaguer, as is the real risk that an activist court and **prosecutor can broaden the language of the terms essentially without limit**.15 It is precisely this risk that has led our Supreme Court to invalidate state and federal criminal statutes that fail to give adequate notice of exactly what they prohibit under the “void for vagueness” doctrine. Unfortunately, “void for vagueness” is largely an American shield for civil liberties. A fair reading of the treaty, for example, leaves the objective observer unable to answer with confidence whether the United States was guilty of war crimes for its aerial bombing campaigns over Germany and Japan in World War II. Indeed, if anything, a straightforward reading of the language probably indicates that the court would find the United States guilty. A fortiori, these provisions seem to imply that the United States would have been guilty of a war crime for dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.16 This is intolerable and unacceptable. The list of ambiguities goes on and on. How will these vague phrases be interpreted? Who will advise a President that he is unequivocally safe from the retroactive imposition of criminal liability if he guesses wrong? Is even the defensive use of nuclear weapons a criminal violation?

**Ahmetov 21** — (Igor Ahmetov [Editor in chief of the portal “Wave of Caspy”], 5-19-2021, "Corruption and honour: why ICC is losing global support", World Geostrategic Insights, https://www.wgi.world/corruption-and-honour-why-the-icc-is-losing-global-support/, accessed 1-31-2025) //FK

“We have good reason to believe that **there is corruption and misconduct at the highest levels of the ICC, and this calls into question the objectivity of the investigations against US military personnel.** Despite repeated calls from the United States and our allies, **the ICC** has taken no reform action and **continues to conduct politically motivated investigations against the U**nited **S**tates and our allies,” the White House said in a special statement.

Stradner 20 --- (Ivana Stradner, 3-17-2020, "The U.S. Must Reject the International Criminal Court’s Attack on Its National Sovereignty", https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/03/united-states-must-reject-international-criminal-court-attack-on-national-sovereignty/) //doa1-27-2025 + master chen :)

Last week, the International Criminal Court (ICC) authorized an investigation of alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity by U.S., Afghan, and Taliban troops in Afghanistan, as well as by CIA black sites operated in Poland, Lithuania, and Romania. While the prosecution will likely fail, it represents another effort by a global elite — consisting of European governments, international organizations, and their supporting interest groups, academics, and activists — to threaten American sovereignty. 00:00 09:14 Top Stories Colombian President Backs Down on Refusal to Accept Migrants after Trump Threats Brittany Bernstein Tom Homan Fires Back at Pope Francis for Calling Mass Deportations a ‘Disgrace’ David Zimmermann This Is What Democracy Looks Like Rich Lowry NRPLUS The Rome Statute, which established the ICC in 1998, was supported by 120 states. It had the worthy goal of preventing the world’s most horrific crimes. Today the ICC can exercise jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity, aggression, and genocide. Its founders believed that an international organization in the form of a court could replace the customary role of nation-states to punish those who violate the rules of civilized warfare. The Clinton administration signed the treaty in 2000, but did not submit it for Senate ratification. American support for the court dissolved after 9/11, as American officials worried that the ICC would become an anti-American kangaroo court used by certain countries to constrain nation-state sovereignty. In 2002, the Bush administration announced that it would not sign the agreement, and empowered then-State Department official John Bolton to lead a U.S. campaign to sign bilateral immunity agreements with more than 100 countries to protect both parties from the ICC’s jurisdiction. Ever since, the ICC has labored ineffectually. To date, the Court has spent more than $2 billion dollars and yielded just eight successful convictions and four acquittals, focusing only on African countries. While there are 123 member states, nations that still might have to wage war, such as the U.S., Israel, India, South Korea, China, and Russia, have refused to join. America’s Western European allies, perhaps still hoping for a utopian future where war has disappeared and meager conventional forces are all that is needed, lend the ICC its greatest support. Most ICC officials have long hoped to achieve international relevance by attacking the ICC’s greatest critic: the United States. Since November 2017, ICC chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda has sought to use alleged crimes in Afghanistan to bring charges against the U.S. military and intelligence community. America’s response has been tough, and after numerous threats by the ICC, U.S. secretary of state Mike Pompeo ordered the revocation of the ICC chief prosecutor’s U.S. entry visa (though Bensouda managed to circumvent the ban and attend her UN meetings last April). The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber later ruled against an investigation (and possible prosecution) of the U.S. for alleged crimes in Afghanistan because both would most likely fail. Last week, however, the ICC’s appellate court reversed this finding and allowed Bensouda to continue her pursuits of American activities in Afghanistan and elsewhere after 9/11. To end this charade, the U.S. should continue to challenge the Court’s jurisdiction and protect the rights of nations that are bound only by rules to which they consent. The Trump administration should continue to deny ICC officials and any government officials (such as any military or law enforcement officers) that assist them from entering the United States or using its financial system. Most important, the United States should strike at the ICC through its supporters. Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Canada, Spain, Mexico, and Australia are all major Court funders. The Trump administration should warn countries who are ICC top funders yet depend utterly on the U.S. for their defense (such as Japan) that they cannot expect American troops to protect any nation seeking to prosecute and imprison them. It should weaken defense ties with ICC member countries, and cut foreign aid to any nation that cooperates with the Court. With these actions, the Trump administration will defend the rights, not just of the United States, but of all sovereign nations. America did not join the Rome Statute. It remains unfettered by its requirements. To protect international law, it should refuse to recognize any ICC probe. International rules should only bind nations that consent to them. Allowing the ICC to claim power over the U.S., which does not consent to its jurisdiction will erode any incentive to obey any international rules at all. The ICC’s actions threaten the only true mechanism for deterring human rights abuses. **Subjecting U.S. forces to an after-the-fact and idealistic human-rights barometer will only discourage Washington from intervening to end massive human-rights abuses in** difficult world hotspots. If the global elite want the U.S. to lead efforts to end killings in places such as **Syria, Yemen, or Sudan**, the last thing it should do is prosecute American troops when they take on the difficult jobs that no other nation can or will do.

Goldsmith 03--- (Jack Goldsmith, xx-xx-2003, "The Self-Defeating International Criminal Court on JSTOR", https://www.jstor.org/stable/1600547?read-now=1#page\_scan\_tab\_contents) //doa1-26-2025 + master chen :)

We can now finally begin to see the perverse effects of the ICC. The first component of the central ICC compromise leaves in place in- ternational human rights' dependence on United States political sup- port, funding, and military might. The second component of the fatal compromise exposes the United States, a non-signatory nation, to li- ability for crimes committed in signatory nations or in non-signatory nations that temporarily invoke Article 12(3). But this latter part of the compromise will lead the United States to limit its human rights enforcement activities. And the first enforcement activities to go will be ones involving human rights crises that lack a powerful U.S. wel- fare-enhancing justification. We have already seen these perverse effects in the **United States' threat to pull out of UN peacekeeping missions unless U.S. troops re- ceive immunity before the ICC**. However this is resolved, peacekeep- ing will suffer at least at the margin. To the extent that ad hoc interna- tional tribunals have been important in protecting human rights, they too have suffered, and will continue to suffer, from a general U.S. withdrawal for reasons already canvassed. But perhaps the greatest ef- fect will be on U.S. humanitarian and quasi-humanitarian interven- tions, such as in Haiti, Kosovo, Bosnia, and Somalia. Human rights ad- vocates increasingly view such interventions as legitimate and neces- sary to protect human rights.39 It is hard enough to generate domestic support in the United States for these interventions when there is no threat of liability. U.S. intervention will now be much harder. Such in- terventions invariably involve combat against irregular forces inter- spersed in civilian populations and thus invariably run the risk of war crime accusations

Mckenzie 24 --- (Kenneth F. Mckenzie Jr., 2-14-2024, "Opinion", https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/14/opinion/us-troops-syria-iraq-withdraw.html) //doa1-28-2025 + master chen :)

The United States base at Tower 22 in Jordan is in the middle of a seemingly unending desert, astride the ancient Damascus-Baghdad Highway near the border with Syria. In January it is cold, often rainy and very bleak. Last month three U.S. service members at Tower 22 were killed by a drone launched by an Iranian-backed militia. Their deaths prompted more than 80 retaliatory strikes by the United States against the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and militias operating in Iraq and Syria. The attack in Jordan was the clear, foreseeable result of our tepid responses to more than **150 attacks against U.S. forces in Syria and Iraq since October.** The simple fact of the matter is this: For too long, we postponed dealing with a growing threat to our forces in the region because our troops were able to defend themselves so well. In other words, our troops’ capabilities enabled Washington to minimize the risk they faced — and to avoid making hard choices. The Tower 22 attack ended that state of play and sparked fresh questions about the safety of thousands of U.S. military personnel stationed in Jordan, Syria and Iraq as the Middle East conflict widens. Last month, the **United States and Iraq started talks that could lead to the withdrawal of U.S. troops**. Some members of the Biden administration may be considering pulling troops from Syria as well, according to one report. This kind of talk can be seriously damaging to U.S. interests in the region. It gives hope to Tehran that it is succeeding in its long-term goal of ejecting the United States from the region through its proxy militias. Nothing could be less helpful — or more dangerous to our service members who are already in harm’s way. Advertisement SKIP ADVERTISEMENT Should U.S. troops stay in Syria and Iraq, or should they go? And if they stay, how does American leadership prevent these attacks from continuing? What’s needed now is a presidential decision that has been too long deferred: a firm commitment to keeping our troops in Syria and an additional, nuanced commitment to work with the Iraqi government to find a mutually agreeable force level in that country. Sign up for the Opinion Today newsletter Get expert analysis of the news and a guide to the big ideas shaping the world every weekday morning. Get it sent to your inbox. Let’s look first at **Syria**. It’s become commonplace in Washington to say that the presence of our 900 service members in Syria has outrun our foreign policy. The reality is much more complex than that. The United States entered Syria in 2014 with an international coalition to confront ISIS with our partners, the Syrian Democratic Forces. By mid-2019, we achieved the goal of removing the caliphate as a geographic entity, but remnants of ISIS endured. Since then, **American troops** have continued to **work with** the **Syria**n Democratic Forces in northeastern Syria **to train local defense forces**. **We have helped the group manage more than 10,000 surrendered ISIS fighters now in prison and the roughly 50,000 people displaced there.** A **withdrawal** would **come with serious risk**s. Without U.S. support, the **Syria**n Democratic Forces could **struggle to continue to secure the prisons holding ISIS fighters** and camps where so many displaced Syrians lead tenuous lives. If enough **ISIS** fighters are **freed** and **the group** has the space to **rejuvenate itself,** it will **lead to fresh threats to Iraq** and many other nations. President Bashar al-Assad’s forces, even if buttressed by Russia and Iran, would find it **difficult to suppress ISIS.** Our long-term goal in fighting ISIS in this part of the world has always been to get to a point that local security forces will be able to assume primary responsibility for preventing attacks. **We have made some progress in Syria, but much remains to be done. I**t is not yet time to leave. Editors’ Picks If Talking Politics With Family Has Become a Horror Show, This Book’s for You ‘ I Heard a Man Behind Me Explaining the Work to His Group’ A Chef’s Secret to Homemade Chicken Broth Advertisement SKIP ADVERTISEMENT Next door in Iraq, we have about 2,500 **troops**, who **have been helping train Iraq**i security forces to **confront ISIS.** We’re farther along with this goal than we are in Syria, but there is still a need for us in Iraq. It is reasonable to assume that our troop presence in Iraq will decrease as negotiations continue with the government and will shift to a more normal security cooperation arrangement that will require fewer U.S. forces. But it would be a mistake to withdraw too quickly, as we did in 2011. We also need to bear in mind that a platform in Iraq is a precondition for maintaining our forces in Syria. Image Troops and equipment in a barren landscape. **American troops are in Syria and Iraq to prevent ISIS from being able to attack our homeland.** U.S. troops at an undisclosed location in northeastern Syria in 2019.Credit...Darko Bandic/Associated Press As in Syria, our forces in Iraq have been subject to attacks by paramilitary groups that answer to Iran. Negotiating our continued presence there is another complex situation. Iraq’s leaders are in an uncomfortable place. They know they need allied help to train their security forces; at the same time, they face strong pressure from Iranian-sponsored Shiite groups to remove all foreign military presence in the country. The United States ratchets up that pressure by striking Iranian proxy and Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps targets in Iraq, as it did this month. In the end, American troops are in Syria and Iraq to prevent ISIS from being able to attack our homeland. **By leaving,** we **could** give them the time and space to **re-establish a caliphate, increasing our risk at home.** We may also face the prospect of being forced to return at a very high cost. There would be negative consequences across the region as well: **Our rapid withdrawal** would be **seen as** yet another **example of American weakness that adversaries would not hesitate to exploit.** Leaving is not a choice that should made lightly, but staying is not a good choice, either, unless we can end the attacks on our troops. It’s still unclear whether we will be able to do this, and a stream of U.S. casualties will make it increasingly hard to stay. If we want to remain, we must effectively deter, deflect and defeat attacks on U.S. forces by Iranian-backed groups. Advertisement SKIP ADVERTISEMENT **We are at an inflection point.** Americans have died. Our response must be based not on emotion or a desire for revenge but rather on a cleareyed determination about what is best for the United States. I believe it is best to stay the course and to defend our homeland abroad rather than at

Home.

Chang 24--- (Agnes Chang, [writer @ NYT] 10-2-2024, "Here’s Where U.S. Forces Are Deployed in the Middle East", https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/02/world/middleeast/us-troops-middle-east-map.html) //doa1-28-2025 + master chen :)

As U.S. **warships** helped Israel shoot down missiles from an Iranian attack on Tuesday, the Pentagon was preparing to send thousands more U.S. troops, including three additional aircraft squadrons, to the Middle East. That highlighted the scale of the American military presence in a region where war appears to be spreading. Here’s an overview of where U.S. forces are operating in the Middle East, and what they are doing: Eastern Mediterranean The United States has an **amphibious assault ship** and three **guided-missile destroyers in** the eastern **Mediterranean**, the part of the sea that borders Israel and Lebanon. U.S. warships there helped Israel shoot down Iranian missiles on Tuesday, President Biden told reporters after the attack. An aircraft carrier, the Harry S. Truman, left Virginia in late September on a scheduled deployment to the eastern Mediterranean. As of Monday it was still crossing the Atlantic. ImageA person in camouflage clothing and helmet sits, leaning back on a brown military vehicle. A U.S. soldier near Syria’s northeastern border with Turkey in September. **The U.S. has** around 900 **troops in Syria.**Credit...Delil Souleiman/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images Red Sea In the Red Sea, which lies south of Israel and borders Yemen and other countries, U.S. forces have been trying in recent months to stop attacks on commercial ships by the Houthis, an Iranian-backed militia that has described itself as acting in solidarity with Hamas. Some American ships have come under attack. As of Monday, the Navy had deployed several guided missile destroyers to the sea, according to the U.S. Naval Institute. Gulf of Oman The aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln is on an extended deployment in the **Gulf of Oman**, south of Iran. Like other aircraft carriers, it is part of what is known as a carrier strike group, which also includes fighter jets and guided-missile destroyers. In August, Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III sent the Abraham Lincoln’s strike group to the Middle East as part of an effort to strengthen the U.S. presence in the region. On Sunday, he ordered it to remain there. Military bases **About 40,000 American troops are stationed on bases across the Middle East.** On Tuesday, the Pentagon declined to say how many more it was deploying, saying only that it would send a “few thousand.” As of September, about 2,500 troops were in **Iraq**, many of whom served as a defense against attacks by a resurgent Islamic State, and 900 in neighboring Syria. **Qatar**, across the Persian Gulf from Iran, hosts the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East. Nearby Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates also host American bases, as does Djibouti, an African country across the Red Sea from Yemen. Kuwait, southeast of Iraq on the Persian Gulf, had about 13,500 U.S. troops on bases as of 2021. At the time, only Germany, Japan and South Korea had more U.S. forces. **Kuwait** was a hub for American forces during the Iraq war.

**Talei**, Rafiah, May 27, **2021**, “The Dilemma of U.S. Democracy and Human Rights Promotion in the Middle East,”

https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/84632 //vy

Although **79 percent** of **Arab public opinion considers** a **democratic system** to be the **most appropriate for their countries**, the ruling elite in many Arab countries still oppress, imprison, and exile those who demand it. Autocratic regimes continue to justify their repressive practices; however, with the idea that Arab people are not yet ready to practice democracy, pointing to the negative repercussions of the Arab Spring in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. In assessing citizens’ views on the 2011 Arab uprising, however, 58 percent consider the uprisings to have been positive. This percentage from the 2019-2020 poll is the highest ever since the question was first included in the 2012-2013 survey. These statistics clearly show that the majority of Arab people support democracy and **support** an **American plan to promote democracy** as a **solid political base** for their **governments**.

**Mckenzie 24** --- (Kenneth F. Mckenzie Jr., 2-14-2024, "Opinion", https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/14/opinion/us-troops-syria-iraq-withdraw.html) //doa1-28-2025 + master chen :)

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The Tower 22 attack ended that state of play and sparked fresh questions about the safety of thousands of U.S. military personnel stationed in Jordan, Syria and Iraq as the Middle East conflict widens. Last month, the United States and Iraq started talks that could lead to the withdrawal of U.S. troops. Some members of the Biden administration may be considering pulling troops from Syria as well, according to one report. This kind of talk can be seriously damaging to U.S. interests in the region. It gives hope to Tehran that it is succeeding in its long-term goal of ejecting the United States from the region through its proxy militias. Nothing could be less helpful — or more dangerous to our service members who are already in harm’s way. Advertisement SKIP ADVERTISEMENT Should U.S. troops stay in Syria and Iraq, or should they go? And if they stay, how does American leadership prevent these attacks from continuing? What’s needed now is a presidential decision that has been too long deferred: a firm commitment to keeping our troops in Syria and an additional, nuanced commitment to work with the Iraqi government to find a mutually agreeable force level in that country. Sign up for the Opinion Today newsletter Get expert analysis of the news and a guide to the big ideas shaping the world every weekday morning. Get it sent to your inbox. Let’s look first at Syria. It’s become commonplace in Washington to say that the presence of our 900 service members in Syria has outrun our foreign policy. The reality is much more complex than that. The United States entered Syria in 2014 with an international coalition to confront ISIS with our partners, the Syrian Democratic Forces. By mid-2019, we achieved the goal of removing the caliphate as a geographic entity, but remnants of ISIS endured. Since then, **American troops** have continued to **work with** the **Syria**n Democratic Forces in northeastern Syria to train local defense forces. We have helped the group manage more than 10,000 surrendered ISIS fighters now in prison and the roughly 50,000 people displaced there. A withdrawal would come with serious risks. **Without U.S. support**, the **Syria**n Democratic Forces c**[w]ould struggle to continue to secure the prisons holding ISIS fighters** and camps where so many displaced Syrians lead tenuous lives. **If enough ISIS fighters are freed** and **the group** has the space to **[can] rejuvenate itself,** it will **lead[ing] to fresh threats to Iraq** and many other nations. President Bashar al-Assad’s forces, even if buttressed by Russia and Iran, would find it difficult to suppress ISIS. Our long-term goal in fighting ISIS in this part of the world has always been to get to a point that local security forces will be able to assume primary responsibility for preventing attacks. We have made some progress in Syria, but much remains to be done. It is not yet time to leave. Editors’ Picks If Talking Politics With Family Has Become a Horror Show, This Book’s for You ‘ I Heard a Man Behind Me Explaining the Work to His Group’ A Chef’s Secret to Homemade Chicken Broth Advertisement SKIP ADVERTISEMENT Next door in Iraq, we have about 2,500 troops, who have been helping train Iraqi security forces to confront ISIS. We’re farther along with this goal than we are in Syria, but there is still a need for us in Iraq. It is reasonable to assume that our troop presence in Iraq will decrease as negotiations continue with the government and will shift to a more normal security cooperation arrangement that will require fewer U.S. forces. But it would be a mistake to withdraw too quickly, as we did in 2011. We also need to bear in mind that a platform in Iraq is a precondition for maintaining our forces in Syria. Image Troops and equipment in a barren landscape. American troops are in Syria and Iraq to prevent ISIS from being able to attack our homeland. U.S. troops at an undisclosed location in northeastern Syria in 2019.Credit...Darko Bandic/Associated Press As in Syria, our forces in Iraq have been subject to attacks by paramilitary groups that answer to Iran. Negotiating our continued presence there is another complex situation. Iraq’s leaders are in an uncomfortable place. They know they need allied help to train their security forces; at the same time, they face strong pressure from Iranian-sponsored Shiite groups to remove all foreign military presence in the country. The United States ratchets up that pressure by striking Iranian proxy and Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps targets in Iraq, as it did this month. In the end, American troops are in Syria and Iraq to prevent ISIS from being able to attack our homeland. By leaving, we could give them the time and space to re-establish a caliphate, increasing our risk at home. We may also face the prospect of being forced to return at a very high cost. There would be negative consequences across the region as well: Our rapid withdrawal would be seen as yet another example of American weakness that adversaries would not hesitate to exploit. Leaving is not a choice that should made lightly, but staying is not a good choice, either, unless we can end the attacks on our troops. It’s still unclear whether we will be able to do this, and a stream of U.S. casualties will make it increasingly hard to stay. If we want to remain, we must effectively deter, deflect and defeat attacks on U.S. forces by Iranian-backed groups. Advertisement SKIP ADVERTISEMENT We are at an inflection point. Americans have died. Our response must be based not on emotion or a desire for revenge but rather on a cleareyed determination about what is best for the United States. I believe it is best to stay the course and to defend our homeland abroad rather than at home.

Jamieson 16--- (Alastair Jamieson, 1-19-2016, "ISIS Death Toll: 18,800 Civilians Killed in Iraq in 2 Years: U.N.", https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-death-toll-18-800-killed-iraq-2-years-u-n499426) //doa1-28-2025 + master chen :)

LONDON — At least **18,802 civilians** have been **killed** in Iraq **in ISIS-linked violence in under two years**, a United Nations report said Tuesday — **with millions of others forced from their homes and thousands more held as slaves**. “The violence suffered by civilians in Iraq remains staggering,” said the report by the Office of the United Nations High Comissioner for Human Rights [PDF link here]. ISIS continues to commit “systematic and widespread violence and abuses of international human rights law and humanitarian law,” it said, adding that some of those act amount “crimes against humanity, and possibly genocide.” FROM OCT. 27: Pentagon Chief Outlines 'Three R's' to Defeating ISIS 01:06 U.N. monitors recorded at least 55,047 civilian casualties as a result of the conflict between Jan. 1, 2014 and Oct. 31, 2015, with 18,802 people killed and 36,245 wounded, it said. Over the same period, 3.2 million people became “internally displaced” including over one million school-age girls and boys. “The persistent violence and scale of the displacement” limit their access to housing, clean water and education, the report said. It also documented human rights abuses, saying some 3,500 people are believed to be held as captives, mostly women and children from the Yazidi religious minority who have been forced into sexual slavery. Recommended Immigration Immigration raids surprise New York City residents Asian America The Year of the Snake is all about shedding that bad energy U.N. human rights chief Zeid Raad al-Hussein said the civilian death toll may be considerably higher. "Even the obscene casualty figures fail to accurately reflect exactly how terribly civilians are suffering in Iraq," he said in a statement. ISIS punishes and kills those who refuse to abide by its code of behavior, the report said. “Journalists and homosexuals were targeted for killing; journalists were shot, those accused of being homosexual were thrown from the tops of buildings,” it said. “ISIS continues to deliberately target civilians and civilian infrastructure in its campaign of violence and terrorism and employed tactics, such as IEDs and possibly other methods, which were used indiscriminately or directly targeting civilians.” In conclusion, the report calls on the international community to help Iraq’s government in providing humanitarian support for displaced civilians and locating and excavating suspected mass graves.

Savit 23 --- (Adam Savit, 10-26-2023, "American weakness enables Chinese ambitions in Middle East", https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2023/oct/26/american-weakness-enables-chinese-ambitions-in-mid/) //doa1-28-2025 + master chen :)

China’s primary geopolitical goal is to displace the United States as a global power, and it is taking advantage of the Israel-Hamas war to expand its influence in the Middle East. The Chinese Communist Party sees its rivalry with the U.S. as a zero-sum game, and so it welcomes any weakening of Israel, a close U.S. ally. It also views the disruption of the Abraham Accords — which established diplomatic relations between Israel and Gulf Arab states — or a potential Israel-Saudi normalization as a win for Iran and the larger Beijing-Moscow-Tehran axis. The reality, however, is that China is not ready to play with the “big boys” in the Middle East. China cannot project its military power, intimidate economically, or manipulate diplomatically enough to challenge U.S. influence directly. But the U.S. cannot keep it that way unless we course-correct back to the America First policies of just two years ago. You Might Also Like Recommended by Boost Email DeliverabilityPAID Boost Email Deliverability Achieve 99%+ email accuracy and transform your campaigns with ZeroBounce. (www.zerobounce.net) 5 Critical Tax Moves for Investors With Over $500KPAID 5 Critical Tax Moves for Investors With Over $500K (Evergreen Wealth) The attacks on Israel are the latest manifestation of aggression invited by the provocative weakness of the Biden administration. **The botched** August 2021 **pullout from Afghanistan**, which resulted in thousands of Afghan deaths, a massive refugee crisis, and the deaths of 13 American service members at the Kabul airport, **marked a dangerous decline in U.S. deterrence. This perception of vulnerability inspired Vladimir Putin, who had been deterred during the Trump administration, to invade Ukraine** in February 2022. In addition, the reckless investment of diplomatic capital, foreign aid, and irreplaceable materiel and munitions in the war has emboldened China’s threats against Taiwan. China has taken advantage of the situation by staging unprecedented live-fire exercises and unrelenting sea and air incursions into Taiwan’s territorial waters over the past two years. Meanwhile, the Biden administration’s appeasement of Hamas and its patrons in Iran enabled funding and training for the massacre on Oct. 7. In April 2021, President Biden restored $235 million of fungible aid to Palestinian institutions largely under the thumb of Hamas. Following massive bipartisan pressure, the $6 billion ransom promised to Iran for the release of U.S. hostages in September has been frozen, but the relaxation of oil sanctions has given the Iranian regime a windfall of up to $29.5 billion since the end of the Trump administration, according to the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. TIMESMYView all ‘OutKick’ tracks athletes defying woke sports industry by siding with Trump Generation Alpha’s slang, amplified by TikTok, leaves older generations scratching their heads Adam Schiff extends olive branch, Trump asks if he was ‘hit with a baseball bat’ In the current conflict, China has presented itself as neutral but has effectively taken Hamas’ side. In the immediate aftermath of Hamas’ deliberat slaughter of more than 1,400 Israeli civilians, China made no unequivocal condemnation of Hamas’ atrocities and called for an immediate cease-fire. It also called for a two-state solution, with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stating that the failure to create a Palestinian state is the root cause of the conflict. This formulation, denying Israel’s right to respond and calling for all Palestinian demands to be met immediately, is comparable to what radical Hamas supporters on European streets and U.S. college campuses are calling for. Chinese Premier Xi Jinping has been promoting his Global Security Initiative, explicitly pushing an alternative vision to the U.S.-led international order, including a more ambitious strategy of diplomatic and economic engagement across the Middle East. In March, China bypassed the U.S. to negotiate an agreement to restore diplomatic relations between archenemies Saudi Arabia and Iran. In June, Mr. Xi entered a strategic partnership with the Palestinian Authority and announced a road map to Israeli-Palestinian peace. The Middle East is also a cornerstone in the Belt and Road Initiative, part of the $1 trillion invested in transportation infrastructure and resource extraction across the Global South. On the economic front, China has boosted the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as a rival economic bloc to the U.S.-led G7, and the BRICS New Development Bank as a direct competitor to the World Bank. The Middle Eastern nations of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates will join BRICS in 2024. These alarming events say more about U.S. weakness and China’s opportunism than they do about the supposed inevitability of China’s rise. The Biden administration deliberately abandoned effective policies that kept Israel and the Arab states on the path to peace, Iran isolated and financially squeezed, Russia contained, and therefore China with no sustainable avenues of influence. Luckily, despite two-plus years of mistakes, China is not yet a credible threat to U.S. authority. It still lacks a “blue water navy” capable of projecting power to the Middle East. Its considerable economic problems at home prevent it from investing the resources the U.S. can into keeping sea lanes open and fossil fuels flowing freely to Asia. BRICS institutions lack the coordination and unifying mission of their U.S.-led equivalents, and the dollar is still the dominant global reserve currency and top choice for international trade. Despite its impressive growth, China is still not seen as a “big boy” in the Middle East. But if we continue to purposely weaken our deterrence, that may change.

Spacapan 22--- John Spacapan, xx-xx-2022, "Blocking the Gateways to Nuclear Disorder in the Middle East

", https://npolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2202-John-Spacapan-Middle-East.pdf) //doa1-28-2025 + master chen :)

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the Middle East was the only region where China’s investments increased between 2013 and 2019.1 Since 2019, China has promised at least hundreds of billions in investments and infrastructure development to Iran, Turkey, and the Arab states. China has built a major naval base in Djibouti on the Red Sea, recently sought basing rights at a port that it is constructing in the UAE, and is rumored to be developing naval capabilities at a commercial port it’s building in southwestern Pakistan, not far from the Gulf of Oman. Why are Russia and **China increasingly fixated on** the **Middle East**? Recently, they told us. In a joint statement following President Putin and President Xi’s pre-Winter Olympics summit, the two leaders pledged **to counter American influence** everywhere and to combat “attempts by external forces to undermine security and stability in their common adjacent regions.”2 Putin and Xi’s ambitions are beginning to sound like “domination of Eurasia,” which is how historians Stephen E. Ambrose and Ernest J. King described Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan’s primary goal at the outset of WWII.”3 **To dominate** Eur**asia**, the Russians and the **Chinese will have to dominate the Middle East,** **for energy, geographic, and ideological reasons.** In 2020, 25 percent of the world’s electricity was generated by natural gas and 40 percent of the world’s proven gas reserves sat under Middle Eastern sand. 24 percent of the world’s gas reserves are in Russia, so a Russia-China axis that dominated the Middle East would dominate global power generation. As for oil, about two-thirds of the world’s proven reserves are in the Middle East and North Africa. While the world may gradually become less dependent on oil, natural gas will continue to generate electricity for billions of people for the foreseeable future. Geographically, the Middle East is at the center of global trading routes. In 2020, 12 percent of all global trade passed through Egypt’s Suez Canal. When a supertanker got stuck and blocked the canal in March of 2021, it cost the global economy an estimated $400 million an hour.4 For a tanker ship to avoid the Suez on course to Europe, it adds 6,000 miles and roughly $300,000 in fuel.5 The Straits of Hormuz, a narrow body of water that connects the Persian Gulf and the 3. Ambrose Stephen E. and King, Ernest J. (1970) Grand Strategy of WWII. Naval War College Review. 4. See https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/25/suez-canal-blockage-is-delaying-an-estimated-400-million-an-hour-ingoods.html. 5. See https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-25/suez-canal-traffic-snarl-is-making-shipping-costsskyrocket. 5 Indian Ocean, is part of the shipping route for one-third of the world’s liquified natural gas trade and about one-fifth of the world’s oil.6 Middle Eastern states have developed additional ports to bi-pass the choke points. For example, the Omani port at Duqm (developed with billions in investment by the Chinese), is now considered the favored off-loading point for cargo headed to the Arabian Peninsula. For both China and Russia, strong relations in the Islamic holy land improves relations with Muslims across Eurasia, where roughly 1.2 billion Muslims live. For Russia, at least ten percent of its population is Muslim, mostly living in restless Caucuses regions that have given Moscow headaches for decades. For China, the powerful Muslim states of Turkey, Pakistan, and the Arabian Peninsula were all virtually silent in the face of China’s Uyghur concentration camps – a silently “loud” signal that economic relations with China have become politically vital to Middle Eastern states. This monograph project began about two years ago to address a comparatively more pedestrian challenge than winning great power competition: A future with multiple states in the Middle East pointing nukes at one another seems more likely today than it ever has before. This monograph still focuses on this problem, however, over the last two years, and especially in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the Arab States’ response to it, it became clear this project does more than just talk about nuclear weapons. It outlines the tenets of an organizing principle to guide Western states toward a more coherent Middle East policy. The most concrete manifestation of Middle Eastern states’ insecurity and distrust of the West is the collective explosion of interest in building robust nuclear programs. If Turkey, Saudi Arabia, or another Arab state built the bomb, they would no longer need to rely on the United States, London, or their friends. Most states in the region already have far more robust economic relations with Beijing than with Washington, in part because China has a greater need for Middle Eastern oil and gas than does the United States. Armed with the bomb, Western security guarantees, arms sales, and bases would become much less meaningful to Riyadh, Ankara, or any other friendly capital. A nuclear Middle East would not only bring the world exponentially closer to nuclear war, but it would hand the keys to the region to the Beijing-Moscow axis. Perhaps this is true, but the United States and like-minded nations have slowed the spread of nuclear arms, even in the Middle East. This suggests nonproliferation should still be quite possible. One example of success is Algeria. Near the beginning of its second civil war in 1991, Algeria built a nuclear reactor with China’s help. In now declassified National Security Council memos, intelligence officials noted the reactor was large enough to be used to make plutonium, which is a fuel for nuclear bombs, but an uneconomic fuel for civilian power generation.8 There were suspicions Algeria had a facility to extract this plutonium from the reactor’s spent fuel. why today’s three most worrisome proliferators – Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia – remain nonnuclear weapons states. So far, Middle Eastern states have failed to acquire nuclear weapons because they faced three barriers. First, **Western states blocked Middle Eastern** states **from getting the bomb** through coercive measures such as military strikes and economic sanctions, and **through re-assuring measures such as basing troops** in the region, selling advanced weaponry, and signing security agreements. Second, most Middle Eastern states have not been certain they needed the bomb. Nuclear weapons are useful to deter conventional foreign invasions, 9 not the domestic political instability – revolutions, coups, and other forms of regime change – that plague most Middle Eastern states. Third, Middle Eastern states have struggled to execute nuclearization because of technological barriers and more pressing military imperatives that required immediate focus and funding. The case of Israel (the one Middle Eastern state with a nuclear arsenal) validates these findings. Not only was its nuclear pathway not blocked by Western states, but its security decision makers were convinced they needed the bomb to prevent annihilation by Arab states. Unlike its Middle Eastern neighbors, Israel had steady access to funding and scientific research that was not constrained by more pressing security prerogatives. From the vantage point of Riyadh, Ankara, and Tehran, the barriers are starting to look more and more as they did to Israel in the 1950s. Today’s most likely proliferators have become less certain that Western states will or can stop them from going nuclear. They are less confident in security guarantees and agreements signed with Washington and its allies. They have easier access to funding and nuclear scientists than in the past. They face long-term security anxieties rather than immediate existential threats – a recipe that drove Israel and other states to invest in nuclear weapons programs. The United States has protected Turkey since the earliest days of the Cold War, and in exchange Turkey has not pursued the bomb. The greatest threat to modern Turkey came during the early Cold War years of 1945 until Stalin’s death in 1953. 1945 not only marked the end of WWII but also the expiration of the 20-year Treaty of Friendship between the USSR and Turkey. Stalin chose not to renew the treaty with Turkey because he believed strengthening the Soviet position around the Black Sea was vital to Russian security. In 1945-1946, Western officials were startled by Stalin’s fiery speeches declaring his intention to reclaim Georgian lands along the Black Sea, which constituted roughly half of Turkey’s Black Sea coastline, and his intention to reclaim the old Armenian Kingdom, which was a substantial portion of Eastern Turkey.233 Separately, Stalin demanded joint Turkish-Soviet Administration of the Black Sea Straits, the narrow series of waterways that connect the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. Part of this waterway – the Bosphorous – runs through downtown Istanbul, Turkey’s largest city. Giving up any control of the waterway would put Turkish security at the mercy of the Kremlin. Then US Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson made America’s position on Soviet aggression against Turkey clear in writing to American diplomats in Paris in 1946: “In our opinion the primary objective of the Soviet Union is to obtain control over Turkey. (…..) Therefore, the time has come when we must decide that we shall resist with all means at our disposal any Soviet aggression.”234 In late 1946, the Soviets massed troops in the Balkans near the Turkish border and ran naval exercises along Turkey’s Black Sea coastline. In response, the Truman Administration sent an American naval task force to Turkey, Britain and the US reaffirmed their commitment to Turkey and began discussing aid packages to the country worth hundreds of millions of dollars as part of the Truman Doctrine.235 In the face of a possible permanent US military presence in Turkey, Stalin backed down. In late 1946 he removed Soviet troops from the Balkans and backtracked on his demand for joint control over the Black Sea Straits. However, he never relinquished the Georgian and Armenian SSR’s territorial claims in eastern Turkey and Russo-Turkish relations remained militant until Stalin’s death in 1953. **The most important reason that the bomb has not spread** beyond Israel is that most **states have not felt they needed it.** Some **states felt protected by Washington** and its allies, a larger group simply was not threatened by another state. States that did not feel protected by the West and were threatened by another state have pursued nuclear weapons. Even among that most troublesome group, some states gave up or froze their programs when other political, economic, or conventional military imperatives required more funding and focus. The case studies reveal that the region’s three most aggressive proliferators – Israel in the 1950s and 1960s, Iran from the late 1980s through at least 2003, and Iraq under Saddam Hussein – all had prolonged fears of invasion and overthrow by their neighbors.

International Inspectors, 4-19-2024, "Frequently Asked Questions about nuclear weapons in the Middle East", ICAN, <https://www.icanw.org/faq_nuclear_weapons_middle_east>

Nuclear weapons are indiscriminate and even some modern so-called “small” or “tactical” weapons are more powerful than the bombs that killed 140,000 people at Hiroshima and 74,000 people at Nagasaki. They do not distinguish between combatants and non-combatants and their use would kill, injure and maim civilians in huge numbers. This means their use would almost certainly constitute a war crime under the existing laws of war. **A single nuclear weapon would likely kill hundreds of thousands of civilians and injure many more**; radioactive fallout could contaminate large areas, including in the country that used the weapon, particularly if used against a nearby target which would be the case **in the Middle East.** There are online resources available to predict these impacts, such as Nukemap. It takes around 10 seconds for the fireball from a nuclear explosion to reach its maximum size. A nuclear explosion releases vast amounts of energy in the form of blast, heat and radiation. An enormous shockwave reaches speeds of many hundreds of kilometres an hour. The blast kills people close to ground zero, and causes lung injuries, ear damage and internal bleeding further away. People sustain injuries from collapsing buildings and flying debris. Thermal radiation is so intense that almost everything close to the detonation is vaporised. The extreme heat causes severe burns and ignites fires over a large area, which coalesce into a giant firestorm. Even people in underground shelters face likely death due to a lack of oxygen and carbon monoxide poisoning. Following the effects of the intense heat and the blast, there is the devastating impact of radiation poisoning. Nuclear weapons produce ionising radiation, which kills or sickens those exposed, contaminates the environment, and has long-term health consequences, including cancer and genetic damage which people can pass down to any children they may have later in life. The use of nuclear weapons would contaminate large areas with radiation. Medical workers and first responders would be unable to work in these areas. Even a single nuclear detonation in a modern city would strain existing disaster relief resources to breaking point. Displaced populations from a nuclear war would produce a refugee crisis that is orders of magnitude larger than any we have ever experienced before. You can read more about the impacts of a nuclear detonation on health care systems here. Casualties from a major nuclear war between the US and Russia would reach hundreds of millions and according to recent research up to 5 billion would die from famine due to “nuclear winter” where sunlight would be blocked by soot and particles from the explosions. Even a “limited” regional war involving 100 nuclear weapons could have devastating global climatic consequences due to the effect of nuclear winter.

Rider 11 [Toby Rider, Journal of Peace Research, “Just Part Of The Game? Arms Races, Rivalry, and War”, January 2011, [https://sci-hub.se/https://www.jstor.org/stable/29777471?seq=1](https://sci-hub.se/https:/www.jstor.org/stable/29777471?seq=1)

As should be clear from the results reported in Model 7, the phase in which the arms race occurs matters when predicting war onset.10 The arms race component term is negative, suggesting that arms races that occur early in the life of the rivalry are unlikely to be followed by war; but the relationship does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Yet, the probability of war is 78% lower for an infant rivalry that has experi? enced an arms race as compared to rivalry in the same phase without an arms race.11 In addition, rivalry phase alone appears to be a poor predictor of war. The interac? tions between arms race and the latter two, however, are both positive and statistically significant.12 Arms races that occur in those phases are much more likely to go to war than those occurring in the first phase. An adoles? cent rivalry that has experienced an arms race has a 68% greater probability of war onset over the baseline; a mature rivalry has a 222% increase in the probability of war over the baseline.13 Furthermore, later phase rivalries that have experienced an arms race have a greater risk of war than similar rivalries that have not experi? enced an arms race. The probability of war increases by 147% when moving from an adolescent stage rivalry without an arms race to one with an arms race; a similar change from a mature rivalry without an arms race to one with **an arms race increases the probability of war by 331%**. In Model 8, Table V we again estimate a selection model to determine whether these relationships hold after accounting for selection into rivalry. Stage 1 of Model 8 yields results similar to Model 6 (as well as Model 3 and stage 1 of Model 5). Stage 2 of Model 8 and Model 7 are very similar, except that the interaction between arms race and adolescent rivalry is no longer statistically significant. Notably, the arms race component term is not statistically significant, indicating it exercises no independent impact on dis? pute escalation to war.

Rebuttal

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