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# COVER FEATURE

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## USMTM: Point Guard on the Arabian Peninsula

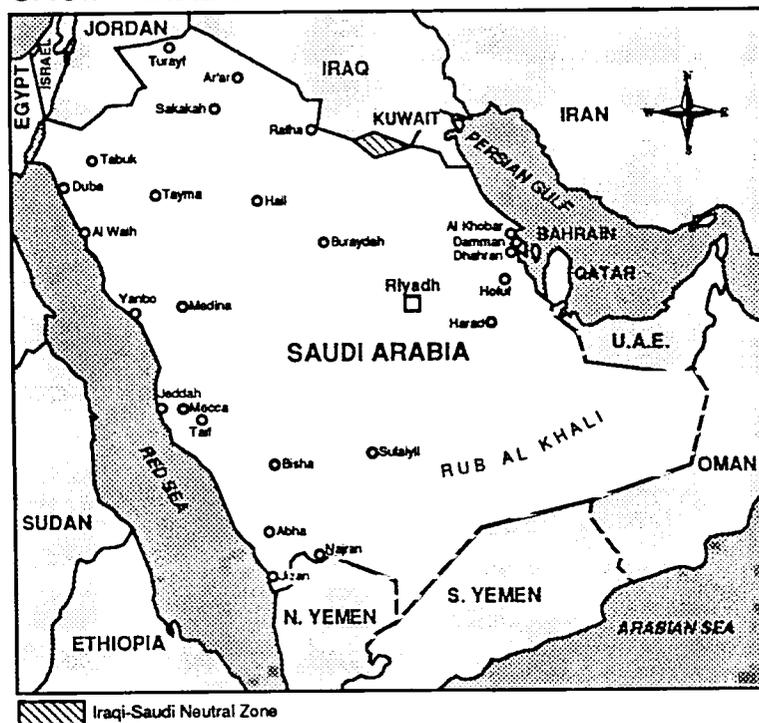
By

Major Jim Dart, USAF

### INTRODUCTION

A short time ago, most Americans would have had a difficult time finding Saudi Arabia on a world map. Today, because of Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, much more is known about the Desert Kingdom by people of all ages. What most Americans don't know, however, is that the United States Military Training Mission (USMTM) has been operating in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for almost forty years. In 1990, USMTM facilitated purchases by the Saudi Arabian military of \$16 billion worth of material and training from the United States. This gives USMTM responsibility for one of the largest United States security assistance programs in the world with management responsibility for the vast majority of almost \$65 billion in foreign military sales (FMS) cases Saudi Arabia has with the U.S., including more than \$10 billion in new letters of offer and acceptance (LOAs) since the start of DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. The proposed expansion of Saudi Arabian military forces now being considered could drive these numbers even higher.

### SAUDI ARABIA



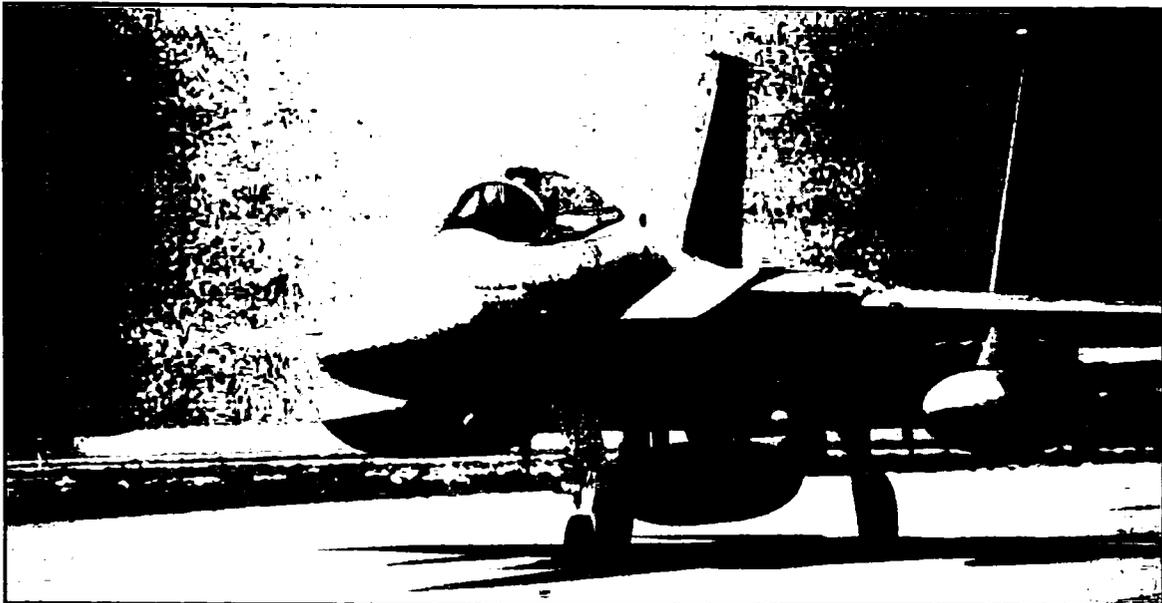
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With this in mind, we hope to provide the reader a clear understanding of the size and scope of the United States security assistance program in Saudi Arabia and the key role played by USMTM in accomplishing this vital mission.

## STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

Every American president since Roosevelt has recognized the importance of maintaining a good political and economic relationship with Saudi Arabia. Born out of concern over depleting United States oil reserves during the early years of World War II, the United States-Saudi Arabia relationship has been sustained and strengthened by recognition of the Kingdom's strategic importance and the stability it provides to the Middle East. Because of its size and oil wealth, Saudi Arabia has naturally assumed a leadership role in several regional organizations, including the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Furthermore, since Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam and guardian of two holy shrines, it holds special influence throughout the Islamic world.

One of the earliest signs of U.S. and Saudi Arabian ties was the use of Dhahran as a staging area for resupply of our Asian forces during World War II. Then, when Saudi Arabia was threatened in 1962 by a war in Yemen, the U.S. Government reinforced its commitment to the Kingdom by deploying F-100 aircraft to Saudi Arabia. This kept other foreign powers from intervening and supporting the Yemeni forces. Saudi Arabia first began to look seriously at improving its armed forces in 1962 following the Yemen crisis. Wars in the Sinai only exacerbated the Saudi Arabian Government's concerns over its military strength and regional stability. Revenues from increased oil prices, beginning in the early 1970s, made it possible for Saudi Arabia to finally start strengthening its armed forces.



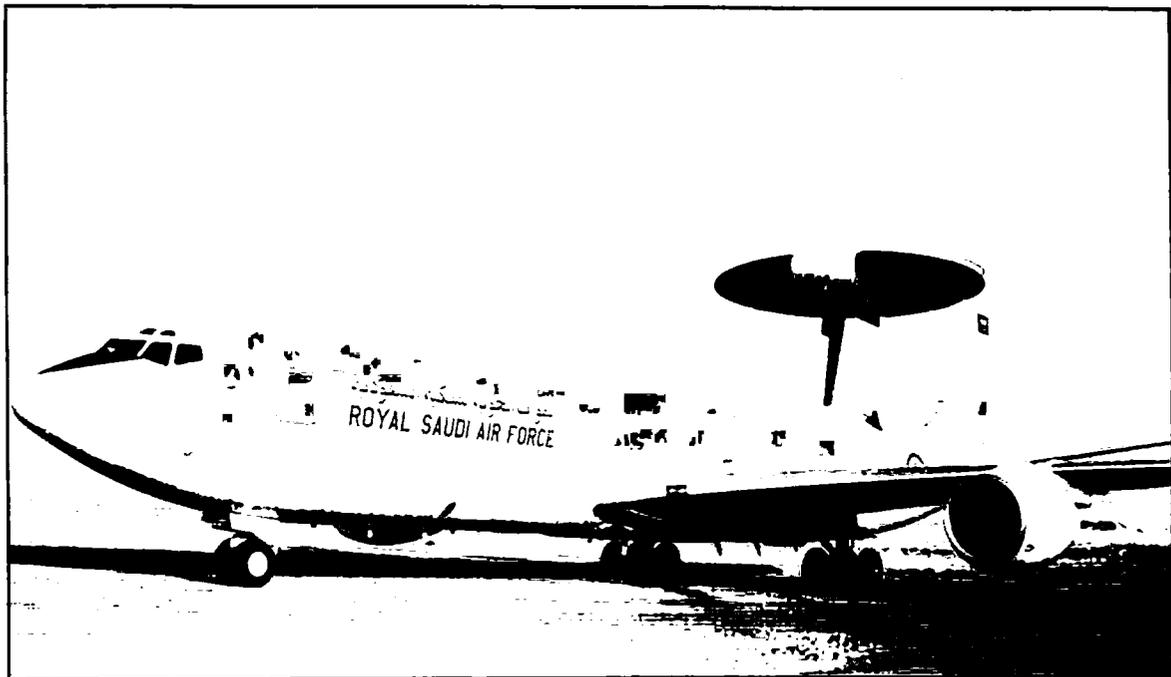
Royal Saudi Air Force F-15

USAF F-15 and E-3A AWACS were first deployed to the Kingdom in 1979, again in response to a Yemen crisis. The AWACS redeployed back to Saudi Arabia a year later to help prevent the spread of the Iran-Iraq War. Currently, Saudi Arabia's arsenal includes some of the most modern, sophisticated weapons available. Although Saudi Arabia purchases weapons

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primarily from the U.S., Britain, and France, many other countries share in an arms market that prides itself both on diversity and advanced technology. One of Saudi Arabia's largest buys involved U.S. E-3 AWACS and F-15 fighter aircraft, making it the only foreign country to have both of these aircraft in its force structure.

All U.S. military sales to Saudi Arabia of defense articles and services, as well as construction sales, are on a cash basis, the vast majority of which are processed through the FMS system. Roughly one-quarter of all U.S. worldwide FMS sales have been to the Saudi Arabian Government. Since 1950, these FMS sales to Saudi Arabia have totaled over \$64 billion, with deliveries to date at over \$39 billion. Saudi Arabia also has made almost \$2 billion in direct commercial purchases of defense articles and services from the U.S.

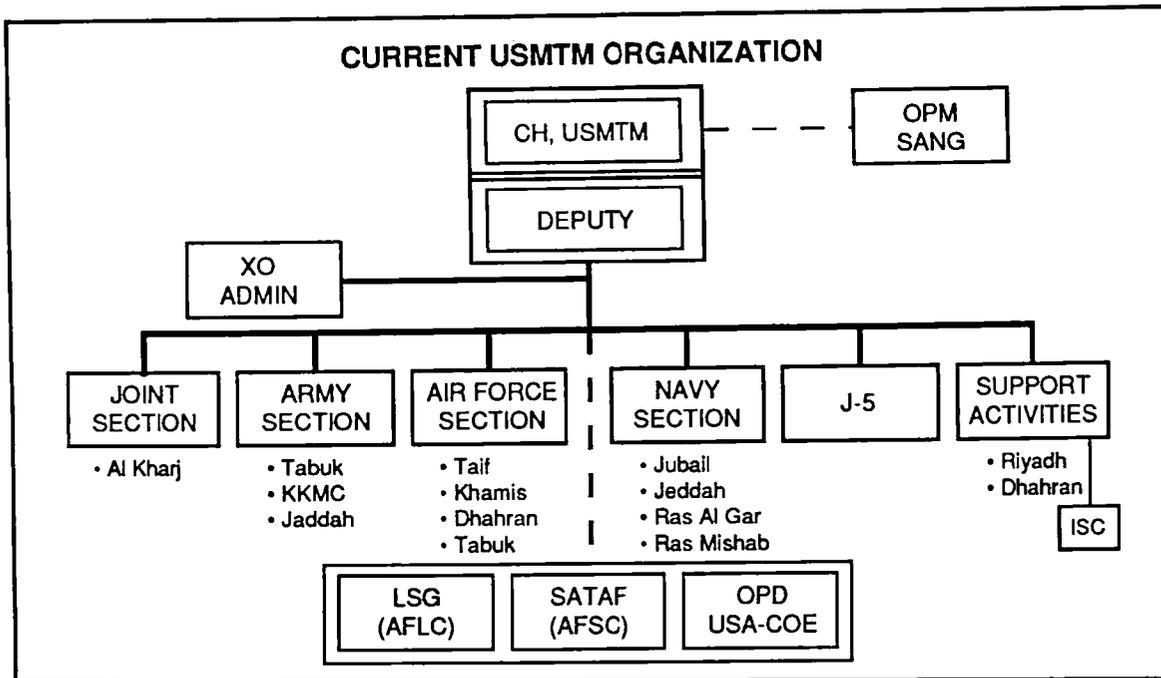


Royal Saudi Air Force Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) Aircraft

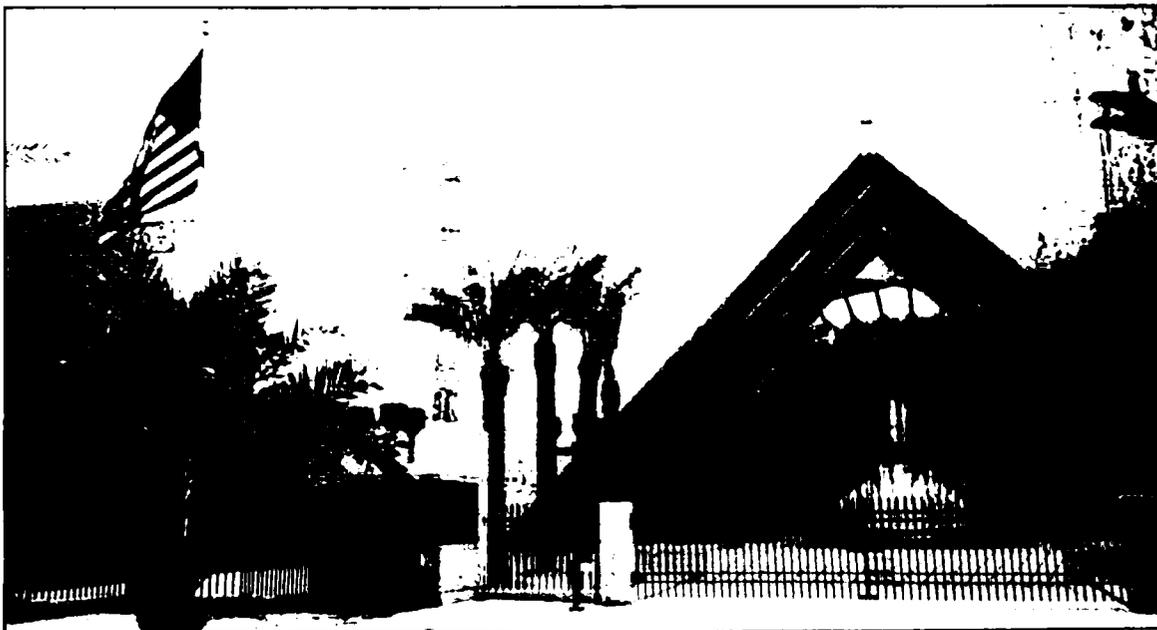
### USMTM's ROLE

The United States Military Training Mission to Saudi Arabia was formally established in 1953. It was a natural outgrowth of the friendship formed between our countries during World War II. Before the recent war with Iraq, USMTM managed the greatest portion of the U.S. in-country FMS system with almost 850 DOD military and civilian personnel who provided assistance and training throughout the Kingdom. Additionally, USMTM has cognizance over another approximately 1,100 U.S. Government personnel and 3,000 U.S. defense contractors who work for other DOD agencies providing support to the Saudi Arabian military.

As senior DOD representative in Saudi Arabia, the Chief, USMTM, has coordinating authority over the Air Force Logistics Command's Logistics Support Group (LSG), the Air Force Systems Command's Peace Shield Site Activation Task Force (SATAF), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Ordnance Program Division (OPD). The Chief, USMTM reports to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command (USCINCCENT), and is the senior military member of the country team advising the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.



Headquarters, USMTM is located at King Abdulaziz Air Base, Dhahran, on the Arabian Gulf coast. However, USMTM also maintains a major office in Riyadh, the capitol of Saudi Arabia. In Riyadh the USMTM compound shares a stretch of King Abdulaziz Road with the Ministry of Defense and Aviation, plus each of the Saudi Arabian military service headquarters, and also Riyadh Air Base. USMTM service section personnel share office space with their Saudi Arabian service counterparts in each of these headquarters. A number of Technical Assistance Field Teams (TAFTS), performing work in weapon system integration and training, are spread throughout the Kingdom supporting the Saudi Arabian military at the unit level.



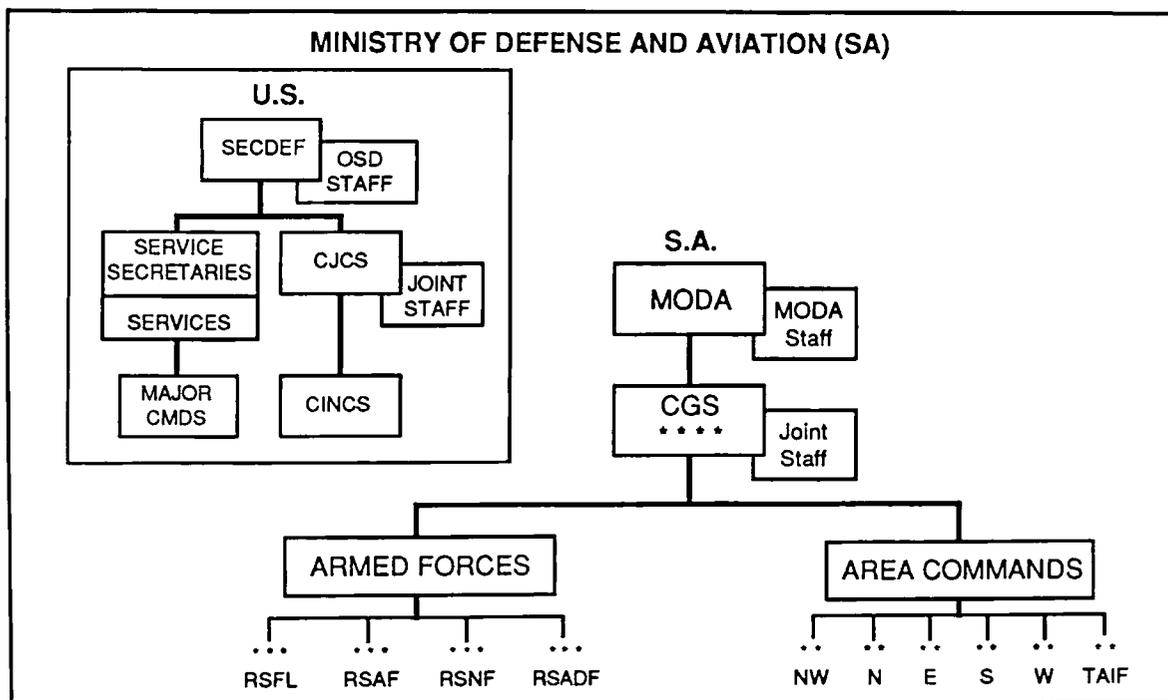
Front Entrance to U.S. Embassy Riyadh

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## NATIONAL SECURITY

To better understand the interface and relationship between USMTM and the Saudi military, we must first examine the national security structure of the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces, particularly the individual service components.

The national security structure of Saudi Arabia is remarkably similar to ours. It is under the control of the Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA), akin to our Department of Defense. Like our system, civilians control the MODA. Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz al Saud is the Minister of Defense and Aviation, and he is also the Second Deputy Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia. The only active four star general in the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces, General Mohammed Al-Hammad, serves as Chief of the General Staff and performs duties similar to our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



For military operations, Saudi Arabia is subdivided into six area commands. During the recent Gulf War, all Arab coalition forces, including some Saudi Arabian National Guard units, came under the control of a Joint Forces or Theater Command. The total Saudi Arabian military strength is approximately 150,000 men spread among its four branches: the Royal Saudi Land, Air, Naval, and Air Defense Forces, and the separate Saudi Arabian National Guard.

The Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) has 50,000 soldiers organized into armored, airborne, and mechanized infantry brigades. They have a wide assortment of U.S.-built armor, including recently upgraded M60A3 tanks. Other vehicles include armored personnel carriers, recovery vehicles, and howitzers. Additionally, they are supported by an aviation battalion equipped with UH-60 Desert Hawk and OH-58 Combat Scout helicopters. The RSLF will add AH-64 Apache helicopters to their inventory late next year.



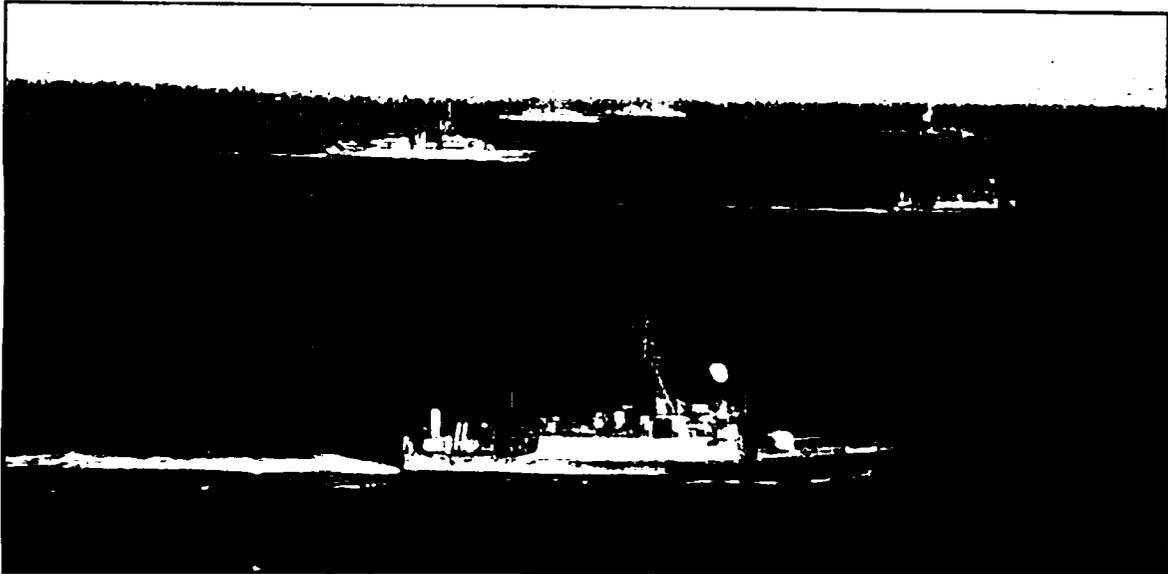
Bell 406 Combat Scout Helicopter belonging to the Royal Saudi Land Forces Aviation Battalion

Looking to the future, the RSLF will upgrade its armor forces with several hundred M1A2 Abrams tanks, the newest and most capable U.S. Army main battle tank. It is also modernizing its infantry forces with the M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle System. The aviation command will be integrating the AH-64 Apache helicopter and the artillery forces will incorporate the U.S. Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS).

The Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF), with a strength of 20,000 men, trains all Saudi Arabian Air Force officers and most of their pilots. They also train a limited number of pilots from friendly Arab states. Their flight training program uses Cessna 172, British Hawk and Strikemaster, and the Swiss PC-9 aircraft. Aircrew requirements are filled through the Air Academy which is administered under contract with British Aerospace. Several select students leave the Kingdom each year to attend formal U.S. and British flying training programs. The RSAF E-3 AWACS and KE-3 tanker aircraft support an array of tactical fighter aircraft. The RSAF inventory includes U.S. F-15C/D, F-5B/E/F, RF-5, and British Tornados. Most in-Kingdom logistical airlift support is provided by RSAF C-130 aircraft.

The Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF), with about 10,000 men (including Marines), is similarly outfitted with an assortment of western equipment. Not wanting to become heavily dependent on a single supplier, the RSNF has diversified its procurement of ships. The U.S. government, with extensive USMTM management and coordination effort, has provided corvettes, minesweepers, and an assortment of smaller craft. France equipped the RSNF with frigates and helicopters, Britain with minesweepers, and Spain with amphibious craft. Later this year, the RSNF will begin receiving a large shipment of U.S.-built Patrol Craft (PCFs).

The Royal Saudi Air Defense Force (RSADF) is a separate service, with a personnel strength of 16,000. It is organized into six Air Defense Groups, each group responsible for the defense of a specific geographic area within Saudi Arabia. The RSADF mainstay is the U.S. Hawk missile system. However, French, Spanish, and Swedish armaments, as well as the U.S. Stinger missile, all have an important role within the RSADF system. The RSADF is acquiring the Patriot air defense missile system to provide long-range air defense and anti-tactical ballistic missile defense for selected areas.



Royal Saudi Navy on Patrol in the Gulf  
U.S.-made patrol craft at right are equipped with Harpoon missiles. French-built frigates are trailing.

The Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) is a totally separate entity from the Ministry of Defense, and includes both active duty and reserve forces. SANG is basically comprised of tribal militia. Their mission is internal security and the protection of the Royal family. Their weapons include small arms and U.S. TOW and Stinger missiles. During the Gulf War, SANG was integrated into a Joint Forces Command, along with elements of the Ministry of Interior.

Saudi Arabia has an extensive Ministry of Interior that includes everything from civil police and customs agents to the Frontier Forces and Coast Guard. The French supply most of the Ministry of Interior's equipment and training. In the past USMTM has provided training only to elements of the Saudi Arabian Coast Guard.

MODA's Air, Land, and Naval forces, as well as the National Guard, each have their own service academies through which all officers receive their commissions. Follow-on professional education is obtained through a Joint Armed Forces Staff College or by sending officers to service schools in other countries. Attendance at the Joint Armed Forces Staff College or a comparable foreign course is considered essential for promotion. Each year the U.S. hosts several Saudi officers at U.S. mid- and senior-level courses, with 18 having attended in each of the last three years. In addition, the RSAF receives several quotas for the USAF Squadron Officer School.

The Saudi Arabian military sends hundreds of personnel to the U.S. each year for technical training. They send some of their brightest people for training in other countries as well. Currently, Saudi Arabian leaders believe very strongly in providing diverse educational opportunities at all levels. For example, a number of their officers attend Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) sponsored management programs each year, and the American Embassy in Riyadh processes more than a hundred requests for graduate studies in the U.S. every month.

## MAJOR EXPANSION PROGRAMS

Saudi Arabian military expansion began in earnest in the mid-1970s. The 1972 Saudi Navy Expansion Program (SNEP) involved not only ship purchases but also the construction of naval bases at Jubail and Jeddah.

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Meanwhile the RSAF began a series of long term projects under the sponsorship of the U.S. Air Force Logistics Command. The Logistics Support Group (LSG) serves as manager of these programs which over the past 20 years have totaled \$18 billion. The first tactical fighter program called Peace Hawk involved the sale of Northrop F-5s. Next came the purchase of F-15s through the Peace Sun program.

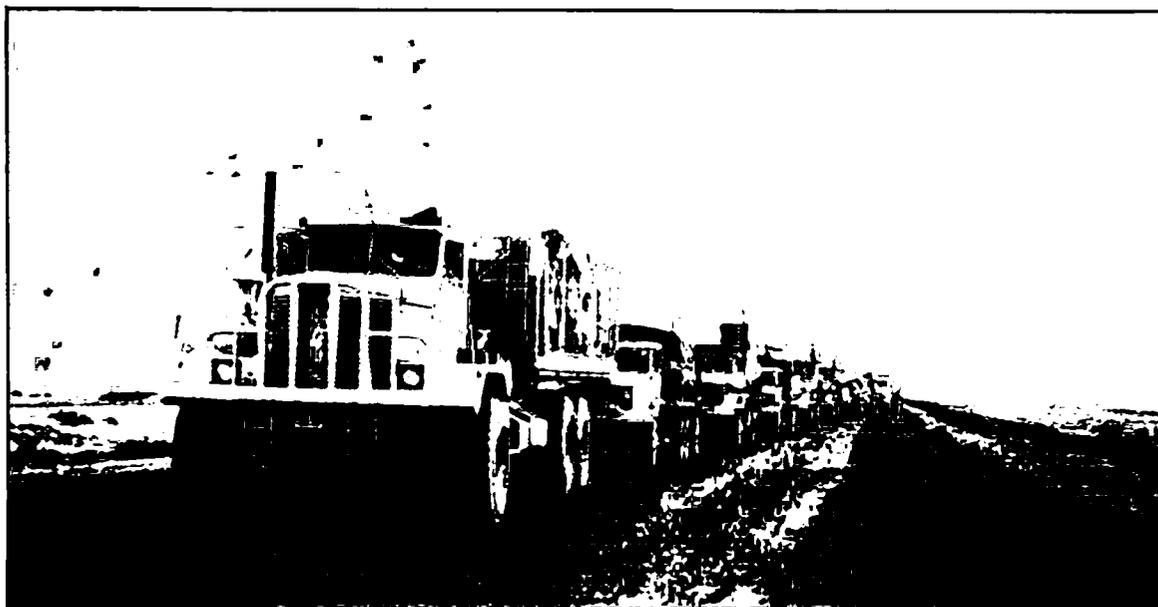
Two other programs, closely related, are Peace Sentinel and Peace Shield. E-3 AWACS and KE-3 refueling aircraft fall under Peace Sentinel. The Peace Shield program is designed to provide an underground command/operation center and a network of long-range radar sites throughout the Kingdom. Current estimates call for completion of Peace Shield in the mid-1990s. The Peace Shield Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) oversees this project.

The RSAF AWACS capability has been integrated in the Peace Shield operational design. RSAF AWACS received its first major test in 1987-89. During Operation Earnest Will, the U.S. reflagging of Kuwaiti oil tanker during the Iran-Iraq war, newly delivered RSAF AWACS provided surveillance for reflagged Kuwaiti oil tankers transiting the Arabian Gulf.

### **POINT GUARD ON THE ARABIAN PENINSULA**

Following the 6 August 1990 meeting between Secretary of Defense Cheney and King Fahd, which ushered in Operation DESERT SHIELD, USMTM took on the role of assisting deployed U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) staff while keeping alive an expanding FMS role. As Coalition Forces personnel and equipment poured into Saudi Arabia throughout the Gulf Crisis, USMTM continued to advise the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces at all levels, a role it has played since the early 1950s. Billions of dollars in equipment awaited delivery, including a \$3.4 billion case for Abrams tanks signed just two days before the Kuwait invasion.

By the end of August, President Bush authorized a \$2.2 billion sale of additional F-15C/D aircraft, Stinger missiles, M60A3 tanks, and tank ammunition. This was followed a few months later by U.S. Government approval to sell \$7.5 billion in additional military equipment that included Patriot missiles, M1A2 tanks, C-130 aircraft, and other military vehicles.



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Since Saudi Arabia has limited rail capability, it must rely heavily on its air and road infrastructure. Hence, truck deliveries, particularly heavy equipment transport vehicles, took on a high priority during Operation DESERT SHIELD. Men and material had to be moved from air and sea ports to the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait border, a distance of more than 1,000 kilometers from the key port of Jeddah on the Red Sea. Egyptian and Syrian divisions were arriving in Jeddah, while U.S. personnel and equipment came into King Abdulaziz Air Base in Dhahran and Dammam Port on the Arabian Gulf. The responsibility for getting more trucks into the Kingdom fell on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Ordnance Program Division (OPD). Their mission is to assist in maintenance and supply management for the Saudi Arabian Army Ordnance Corps (SAAOC). They also handle all FMS for SAAOC, and work closely with the Ordnance Corps Center and School in Taif. The SAAOC maintains approximately eighty percent of the military support vehicles in the Kingdom, including newly purchased ambulances.

Also approved in the 1990 Congressional Notification package was the purchase of UH-60 helicopters for the Medical Services Department (MSD) of MODA. During DESERT SHIELD, MSD modernized its field medicine program, previously constrained by an emphasis on fixed medical facilities. The addition of six MASH units and twenty-four Battalion Aid Stations gave them field surgical and hospitalization capabilities. When they receive their helicopters and additional ambulances, MSD will enjoy a dramatic increase in evacuation capability.



UH-60 Desert Hawk Helicopter belonging to the Royal Saudi Land Forces Aviation Battalion

During the Gulf crisis, the USAF 4409th Operational Support Wing, otherwise known as ELF-ONE, assisted in the integration of RSAF and deploying U.S. aircraft. It also assisted in the arrival of more than 1,100 MAC strategic airlift aircraft.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The U.S. has conducted a number of major security assistance studies over the years to assist Saudi Arabia in the evaluation of its defense needs. The first study occurred as early as 1950; however, more recent studies in 1974 and 1979 led to the major U.S. weapons buys we see today in Saudi Arabia. Based on a mutual agreement between our Secretary of Defense and Prince

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Sultan bin Abdulaziz al Saud, a Joint Security Review was conducted in April-August 1991. This study comes at a time of unprecedented confidence in American military hardware and training. Responsibility for assisting Saudi Arabia with the final results and recommendations of this study will fall directly on USMTM for implementation as it continues to stand ready to advise Saudi Arabia in its defense planning.

## USMTM Operations During the Gulf Conflict

During the initial developments following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, USMTM assisted the movement of Western refugees across the Kuwaiti/Saudi Arabian border and coordinated and supported the Saudi Arabian Government in its response to these developments.

In anticipation of a protracted involvement, USMTM transformed itself and its tenant units, LSG, OPD, SATAF, and ELF-ONE, into a team operationally capable of supporting any action required within the Kingdom. Each section or group was assigned a functional responsibility and given a mission that not only supported Operation DESERT SHIELD, but at the same time provided parallel timely support to the Saudi Arabian Government. Such direct support helped the Saudis monitor the situation in the Gulf with their AWACS aircraft and prepare for defensive operations.

The effective consolidation by USMTM of the U.S. military training units within the Kingdom put into motion the necessary steps to establish centralized control over every aspect of logistics, communications, operations, and contingency planning. By doing so, USMTM created the basis for what was later to become the initial cadre for the USCENCOM Forward staff. These actions proved to be both prudent and practical as they resulted in making the necessary resources available on a very short notice to support the USCENCOM Forward staff.

USMTM continued to keep abreast of the rapidly evolving situation in the AOR through intelligence briefings and operational advice of the key players on the joint staff. It was evident that the clear and present danger threatening the northern Saudi Arabian border could be a prelude to further military involvement. The insistence on up-to-date intelligence and operational information proved to be a cornerstone in USMTM's capability to support expanded U.S. operations.

On 5 August 1990, in-country U.S. representatives went to Jeddah to support high level meetings with U.S. and Saudi Arabian Government representatives. The meetings laid the groundwork for the decision to bring troops into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On the following day, the U.S. Secretary of Defense met with His Royal Highness Prince Sultan, Minister of Defense and Aviation, to make the final arrangements for the deployment of U.S. troops into the Kingdom, thus marking the beginning of Operation DESERT SHIELD. Following this Joint agreement, USMTM helped the lead elements of U.S. Central Air Forces (CENTAF) and 3rd Army (ARCENT) to establish the headquarters for USCENCOM Forward at USMTM, Riyadh.

With the commitment of troops to the AOR, USMTM implemented several measures that paved the way for the smooth reception of incoming forces. Two objectives were identified as needing to be completed before the arrival of the first troops and one additional objective was established that would be an ongoing project. The first objective was to set-up a staff for Lt Gen Horner, USCINCENT Forward, and the initial cadre of senior officers arriving from the United States. The second immediate objective was to prepare all USMTM-supported Saudi installations throughout the Kingdom for the reception of incoming forces and to support their requirement for morale, welfare and recreation, supply, housing, and cultural indoctrination into the Kingdom. The third continuing objective was to ensure that the SAO worked at its optimum to ensure that the

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sales, training, and resupply to Saudi Arabia was able to meet its surging wartime operational requirements.

To accomplish the first objective, USMTM orchestrated the use of the Saudi Arabian National Defense Operations Center located in MODA Headquarters for use as the USCENTCOM Operations Center and combined U.S.-Saudi War Room. At the same time, office space was acquired upstairs in the MODA Headquarters for use by the command section. This plan clearly separated the operational military activities from the critical diplomatic efforts required to produce a congenial working relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States. The next step was to expand the working Joint Operational Staff based on the plan USMTM had developed for the USCENTCOM Forward staff nucleus. Under this organization, each section and tenant unit provided the necessary equipment, supplies, and manpower to make its staff components work efficiently.

To achieve the second objective, USMTM initiated reception procedures at Dhahran, Riyadh, and at its six detachments throughout the Kingdom. The purpose of these measures was to ensure local commanders interfaced with their Saudi Arabian counterparts and prepared their airfields and port facilities for arriving US forces. Specific guidance was to use all available resources and to make whatever arrangements were needed for billeting, messing, transportation, and personnel assistance.

At each location, USMTM team members expedited accomplishment of their critical tasks and time sensitive requirements. Units provided office space, phones, computers, printers, copying machines, office supplies, and administrative assistance so the developing mission would not be bogged down simply from a lack of basic support. Unit personnel augmented the new staffs as they arrived, providing site survey teams for deployed aircraft beddown, compiling management plans for air defense sectors, and assisting in the installation of the Patriot missile system. Around-the-clock efforts to supply vital items such as food, water, and latrines were crucial in the final beddown of incoming forces.

With effective systems in place to meet the first two objectives, USMTM was ready to put the SAO back together to support any upcoming hostilities. Stringent ground rules were established to ensure the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces would receive whatever training and equipment were necessary in the fastest possible means.

Once again, each USMTM service section intensively began a reconstruction of its past FMS cases and started to work on new cases critical to this unprecedented build-up for future hostilities. Section personnel worked at a fierce pace, meeting with their Saudi Arabian counterparts and visiting remote sites to determine existing and future demands. As the build-up continued, each section took a major role in working with the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA) and the Military Departments to quickly resolve any problems.

While the service sections worked the FMS arena toward achievable goals, USMTM was called upon to augment the Central Command Headquarters and the Central Command's Coalition Coordination, Communication, and Integration Center (C3IC), establishing the coalition structure, preparing plans, developing air and ground assault missions, and providing intelligence updates and daily CINC executive summaries.

When Operation DESERT STORM was initiated, USMTM intensified its mission support role and security assistance operations to best support the war effort. Previous USMTM-MODA-developed training and exercise programs bore fruit as the Saudi military forces successfully executed their war time missions.

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The Army Section's Aviation TAFT which trained Saudi pilots in Desert Hawk and Combat Scout helicopters saw them carry out attack helicopter operations, aerial observations, and reconnaissance missions.

The Air Force Section's F-15 and AWACS TAFTS provided the training to Saudi pilots who conducted tactical air interdiction, combat air patrols, reconnaissance sorties, and refueling support missions. USMTM facilitated the details for the munitions exchanges between the RSAF and coalition forces which enhanced coalition war fighting capabilities.

The Navy Section's aggressive training programs, such as USN-RSNF mine counter-measures, were successfully implemented. Additionally, USMTM facilitated the development of a Marine Corps TAFT, requested by the Saudi Arabian Government to establish, instruct, and train its fledgling Royal Saudi Marines. This TAFT provided the training and assistance needed by the Saudis during combat operations at Khafji and in the Kuwait Theater of Operations.

Furthermore, USMTM personnel continued to play a vital role in the C3IC performing essential tasks such as search and rescue coordination, ATO reviews, and air defense early warning for SCUD launches.

USMTM took advantage of its 40-year security assistance relationship with the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces not only to better prosecute the war, but to further enhance the strong U.S.-Saudi ties of cooperation.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Major Jim Dart served with USMTM as Training Advisor to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Defense and Aviation from July 1989 to July 1991. He is currently serving as a Branch Chief and Training Case Manager for Air Force Security Assistance Training (AFSAT), Randolph AFB TX.