

# **THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

## **OVERVIEW**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), a federation of seven emirates located on the Arabian Peninsula, has a coastline and seaports both inside and outside the Straits of Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. The total area of the UAE is about the size of Maine. The seven emirates are: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Qaiwain, Fujairah, and Ras Al Khaimah. Each emirate is ruled by a Sheikh who not only retains control within his emirate over natural resources, including oil, but also regulates commercial activity. Since hydrocarbon reserves and thus revenues are not equally distributed, the seven emirates are not equal in terms of wealth, power, or level of economic development. Abu Dhabi, the largest oil producer, is the wealthiest and most powerful, followed by Dubai, the federation's commercial center and second largest oil producer.

The ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, is the President of the Federation and Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is the Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces. The UAE's external military threats are defended against by the Federal UAE Armed Forces/General Headquarters (GHQ) based in Abu Dhabi.

Until December 1997, a separate entity called the Central Military Command (CMC) was responsible for the defense of the emirate of Dubai, but upon the instruction of Lt. General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who is both the Dubai Emirate's crown prince and its federal defense minister, the CMC was integrated into the federal forces and ceased to exist as a separate entity. The Ministry of Defense is largely a political entity headquartered in Dubai and headed by Lt. General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum as Minister.

## **Defense Industry Environment**

The combined UAE Armed Forces including that of CMC numbers about does not exceed 65,000 active members, 70% of whom are UAE nationals, the other 30% being mostly from Egypt, Oman, Sudan and sometimes Pakistan. Of this number, about 59,000 are in the Army, 4,000 in the Air Force, and 1,500 in the Navy. Most of the senior advisors to the Armed Forces are from the U.K. followed by the United States, France, and Germany.

The United Arab Emirates has defense cooperation agreements with France and the United Kingdom. In 1991, the UAE Armed Forces established the Emirates Institute for Strategic Studies to review various aspects of military relations with the outside world, military technological advancement, regional issues, and basis of international defense cooperation.

The United States and the United Arab Emirates have also enjoyed close ties since diplomatic relations were established in 1971. Strategically located on the Persian Gulf, the UAE is an entrepot of huge trade volume between the Far East, the European Community and the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (AGCC) [which includes the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain], Iran, and the subcontinent countries of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. With an annual import volume exceeding US \$27 billion, the UAE is the second largest Middle East importer of U.S. goods and services after Saudi Arabia. U.S. non-military exports to the UAE in 1997 reached US \$2.6 billion. It is easy to see why the U.S., with a 9.6% share of imports is the UAE's largest trading partner, followed by Japan, the U.K., and Italy.

Like other neighboring countries, the UAE does not announce its defense budget or its long-term defense procurement requirements. Most defense purchases are either made on a special-purpose basis or through private invitation to tender. The UAE's spending on defense procurement roughly constitutes an average of 8.5% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which in turn is dominated by earnings from oil and gas. This translates into a 1998 military spending budget of US \$3.7 billion. The UAE has a US \$2.5 billion Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program with the U.S which has existed for the past 10 years. The UAE signed new FMS cases, amendments, and modifications that resulted in procurement for FY 1997 of US \$56 million.

In 1991, the UAE Armed Forces/GHQ introduced an offset program applicable to military sales greater than US \$10 million, and the UAE joined the eighty-odd countries with offset programs in place. To date, over US \$500 million worth of projects have been instituted under the program. Some prominent features of the offset program are:

- The UAE Offsets Group (UOG) oversees all aspects concerning the offset programs.
- The aim of the offset program is to enhance security by leveraging off defense procurement to fulfill simultaneously both military and economic objectives.
- It is designed to generate wealth among the UAE people and assist with the global integration of its economy by the creation of commercially viable ventures through partnerships and strategic alliances between domestic private sector and international businesses.
- Offset performance will be measured by achievement or output and not by the cost of resources or input, i.e., the program should be profitable and the profits shared and returned to the shareholders.
- Offset proposals are evaluated independently of the technical proposals related to the procurement.
- Contracts are awarded to bidders whose proposals constitute the best combination of technical and economic offering.
- An investment amount equal to 60 percent of the defense contract in the UAE should be made by the foreign contractor.
- The terms of investment and amount are subject to negotiation with the UAE offset office which must approve each investment project.
- The fulfillment term is seven years with milestones at years three and five.
- No offset investments in the oil, gas, petrochemicals, and other utility sectors, such as

power and water, will be accepted.

- Offset commitments are contractually binding and subject to a separate contract.
- Some prime examples of existing offset programs are: Abu Dhabi Ship Building (Newport News Shipbuilding), Centre for Applied Research and Training (Westinghouse and Lucent Technologies), Solex (US Department of Energy), Berlitz Language Center (Boeing), Ghantoot, Superseal Engineering Systems & Maintenance Company, Oasis International Leasing Company, Combined Cargo UAE, Franserres UAE, Gam-Aero, and Giralda.
- US companies that have so far carried out their offset or pre-offset programs include Lockheed Martin, Westinghouse, McDonnell Douglas, and Newport News Shipbuilding.
- World Trade Center (Abu Dhabi) and numerous IPOs are also on the drawing board.

## **Defense Opportunities**

The UAE Armed Forces/GHQ comprising of the Army, Navy and Air Force is the largest military entity and the only principal entity in the United Arab Emirates engaged in the procurement of military equipment. Its Chief of Staff is Lt. General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, son of Sheikh Al-Nahyan, the UAE President. Under current US government policy, Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and commercial sales of items on the munitions control list, may take place only between federal governments.

In line with the guidelines of the UAE President, the UAE Armed Forces are keen to acquire state-of-the-art defense equipment. Major military contracts are awarded on political grounds, price, and technological factors. Although most procurement decisions may take several years before they turn into a contract award, the UAE has had no funding problems for its military purchases. Delays in awarding contracts are attributed to factors such as technical evaluations, compliance to UAE Offsets Group (UOG) requirements, R&D, technical superiority, and whether the manufacturing country is willing to transfer technology (components and data).

Due to the growing pressure on budgets from rising populations and fall in oil revenues due to the drop in oil prices, combined with the general state of the economy worldwide, analysts expect the UAE defense budget to be somewhat more conservative in 1999 and beyond. Furthermore, as early equipment orders are being delivered, emphasis and resources are being shifted to their integration into the armed forces. Logistics, information management, training, and simulation will be playing a more important role in the defense budget for the coming years.

At present, the UAE is seriously considering the purchase of military hardware for which RFPs have been invited. The following is a list of major pending contracts, including previously awarded contracts where there may be opportunities for U.S. firms:

### *Air Force*

- 80 Lockheed Martin F-16 Block 60 fighter aircraft (May 1998 - US \$7 billion). Contract was awarded in May 1998. Supporting this procurement will be the acquisition of

Raytheon AIM-120 AMRAAM air to air missiles; GEC-Marconi PGM standoff munitions; Northrop Grumman APG-68 radar; and General Electric F110 or P&W F100 engines.

- 30 - 50 Turboprop Trainer Aircraft (cost unknown). U.S. contenders are Raytheon T-6 Texan II. Competition is the Pilatus PC-9, Embraer EMB-312 Tucano and EMB-314 Super Tucano. Contract is pending.
- 20 Apache AH-64A attack helicopters (US \$600 million). U.S. contender is Boeing/McDonnell Douglas. This was an RFP for an upgrade from the AH-64A to the AH-64D Longbow as an alternative to the purchase of AH-64Ds. The UAE already has 30 AH-64As in operation. Contract is pending approval of a control code issue.
- New air base to accommodate 40 fighter-bombers (US \$1 billion). U.S. contender is Raytheon. Competition is Giat Industries (France) and Nedam (Netherlands). Contract is pending.
- Tactical ballistic missile air defense system (US \$1 billion). U.S. contender is Raytheon Patriot (FMS). Competition is Russian SA-10/SA-12 and Thomson CSF (Aster/Arabel). Contract is pending. The project involves 10 Patriot Fire Units and 530 Patriot missiles.
- Long range radar (US \$300 million). U.S. contenders are Lockheed Martin and Westinghouse. Competition is GEC Marconi and Thomson-CSF. Contract is pending despite the project being more than five years old. The UAE Air Force Technical Committee members have visited the sites of all the firms and attended detailed demonstrations. In anticipation of winning the contract and expressing its commitment to the market, Lockheed Martin has completed a US \$12 million pre-offset project in Abu Dhabi - The Gulf Diagnostic Center - in a joint venture with a local firm. Project interest has recently been revived.

#### *Army*

- 200 Tank transporters (cost unknown). The main contender is a UK company. Competition and contract status are unknown.
- EADGE project-supply of PBX equipment (US \$15-25 million). U.S. contenders are Northern Telecom and AT&T. Competition is Alcatel (France). Contract is pending.

#### *Navy*

- 6 Ocean-capable fast patrol boats (US \$600 million). U.S. contender is Newport News Shipbuilding. Competition is Vosper Thornycroft (Britain), Direction des Construction Navales (France), and Lueresen Werft (Germany). Contract is pending. These 65-meter vessels are to replace the 33.5 meter Ardhana class patrol craft purchased in the 1970s

from Vosper Thornycroft. Tender was reissued twice.

- 6 Navy 85-95 meter corvettes (small frigates) under the Liwa-2 program (US \$1.8 billion). U.S. contender is Newport News Shipbuilding. Competition is Dutch Marine Consortium, Vosper Thornycroft (British), DCN International (France), Luerssen Werft, and Blohm & Voss (Germany). Contract is pending.
- Mine-hunter vessels (number of ships and cost unknown). There are no known U.S. contender. Competition is Kvaerner Mondal (Norway), Karlskrona (Sweden), Luerssen and Abeking & Rasmussen (Germany), DCN International (France), Intermarine (Italy), Australian Submarine Company (Australia), and Vosper Thornycroft (Britain). Contract is pending.
- 8 Marine Turbines. U.S. contender is GE Marine & Industrial Engines. Competition is Rolls Royce (UK). Contract is pending with the final decision dependent upon the purchase of frigates.

#### *Ministry of Interior*

- 8 Armored Personnel Vehicles (US \$4 million). U.S. contender is Textron Marine & Land Systems. Competition is Mercedes (Germany) and an Egyptian company. Contract is pending. The Ministry is holding the contract award pending UAE Armed Forces approval for financing of seven additional vehicles and the necessary budget appropriation.
- Coastal radar and other border security surveillance equipment to eliminate drug trafficking and illegal entry to the country. No additional information on this procurement is available.

The most promising prospects for defense sales are in the following areas:

- Aerospace Parts & Accessories
- Military Aircraft Engines
- Avionics
- Communications & Telecommunications (C3)
- Gas Turbines
- Heavy Duty Armored Trucks
- Security & Safety Equipment
- Military Uniforms

The major supplier of military equipment to the UAE is France followed by the U.S., the U.K., and Italy. Germany, Russia, and Brazil are making inroads along with the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Indonesia. France has a defense pact with the UAE and significantly dominates UAE's Air Force and air defense market. Soon after the Gulf War, GIAT of France sold US \$3.5 billion worth of LeClerc battle tanks against its U.S. rival, General Dynamics. The U.K. dominates the military electronics and systems integration market within the Armed Forces.

Three major defense trade events are held every two years in the UAE. The International Defense Exhibition (IDEX) and Dubai Air Show are the largest exhibitions and attract not only UAE businessmen and end users but also a large number of visitors from neighboring countries. Certified by the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. firms should consider participation in both of these events. IDEX '01 will be held in March 2001 and the Dubai Air Show 2000 on November 14-18, 1999. The third defense trade event is the Triple International Defense Exhibition (TRIDEX). TRIDEX 2000 will be held on March 5-9, 2000. For additional information about these trade shows, the following may be contacted:

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The UAE is part of the GCC unified defense program named "Hizam Al-Ta'awon"

(Cooperation Belt) for the provision of an early warning defense and communication system network among the GCC Higher Military Commands. Offers from U.S. and European companies are being evaluated for this project. A Special Forces program called “Dir’u Al-Jazira” (Peninsula Shield) was established by the GCC countries and conducts regular live munitions training.

Prominent U.S. defense firms with presence in the UAE market include Westinghouse, Lockheed Martin, Boeing/McDonnell Douglas, United Technologies International and its Pratt & Whitney division, General Electric (aircraft engines), Raytheon, AT&T, Newport News Shipbuilding, and Hughes. There are more than a dozen U.S. manufacturers of non-lethal military goods and services who are currently selling to the UAE Armed Forces either directly or through their local representatives. The linkage of the local currency to the U.S. dollar offers the opportunity for further substantial penetration by U. S. suppliers in this growth industry.

## **Defense Procurement Process**

The Directorate General of Purchasing at the UAE Armed Forces/ GHQ in Abu Dhabi is the combined three-forces central purchasing organ within the UAE Armed Forces. It is responsible for the pre-qualification of defense contractors and suppliers and the placing of final procurement orders on behalf of the UAE Armed Forces. Its responsibilities include preparation of tender documents and overseeing all legal aspects and contractual obligations.

The Army, Navy, and Air Force are independently responsible for conducting technical evaluations of the desired equipment and services and making final recommendations to the Chief of Staff. Normally, for every sizeable procurement, a technical committee is formed to assist the head of the agency, makes final recommendations to the Chief of Staff who in turn is the final decision-maker.

### *Offsets*

All foreign vendors interested in pursuing a project greater than U.S. \$10 million are required to submit a proposal outlining an offset joint venture project. These projects must be both economically viable with participation by a local firm for reinvestment of contract proceeds to generate profits of at least 60 percent of the contract value over a seven year period. An offset project can be a pre-offset project in that a firm may wish to show its commitment to the market by establishing an offset venture before winning a military supply contract. All offsets related matters and projects must be approved by the UOG in advance.

Domestic production of military equipment is so far confined to only military uniforms under the UAE's Offsets program. The manufacturing of military equipment and/or its components are forbidden. However, assembly of certain parts of a non-lethal nature in association with a commercial enterprise or existing government entity is allowed.

### *Payments by Defense Agencies*

The defense procurement agencies in the UAE follow their own payment procedures toward supply contracts. At least 25% of the amount is paid upon opening a letter of credit, 25% is paid upon the arrival of goods, 40% is paid upon installation, and 10% is withheld pending completion of the contract. UAE's defense agencies have a history of very prompt payment.

#### *Repatriation/Transfer of Funds*

There are no restrictions on the transfer of funds into or out of the UAE, except that the currency of Israel can neither be bought nor sold in the UAE. All other currencies are traded freely at market-determined rates. No license is required to change money. The UAE Dirham has been pegged to the Dollar at 3.671 Dirhams per Dollar since 1980. At present, there is a divergence of about 2.0 percentage points or more in U.S. and UAE inflation rates. Despite this, the authorities are under no pressure to adjust the peg.

#### *Dispute Settlement*

All disputes arising in connection with military sales contracts or otherwise, involving the military agencies, if not amicably resolved between the parties, will be settled under the rules and regulations of conciliation and arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce. The arbitration will take place in Lausanne /Switzerland and the arbitrators will have the powers of amiable compositor. The decision of the Arbitrators will be final, binding, and enforceable on the parties.

The regulatory and legal framework favors local over foreign investors in any non-lethal equipment sales of goods, regardless of whether the sale is made to the military or civilian authorities.

#### *Employment of Local Representation*

UAE Armed Forces/GHQ regulations specifically prohibit the use of middlemen, commission agents, mediators, etc. in any transactions involving the purchase of lethal weapons. GHQ also now appears to strongly proscribe use of middlemen in non-lethal military equipment procurement, particularly for major procurements.

A guidance issued on December 9, 1986, called the "Khalifa Directive", governs sales of weaponry and/or weapons systems to the GHQ. Sale of dual-use items is a gray area and foreign companies are advised to request guidance from the UAE Armed Forces. This directive has a three-point objective: the prohibition of facilitation or promotional activity with a view to a weapon or weapons system contract being awarded to a particular supplier, the prohibition of bribes and/or inducements being offered to members of the UAE Armed Forces, and ensuring there are no obligations of a conditional or covert nature binding upon the seller in accordance with either of the two previous objectives.

Foreign commercial bidders, including some U.S. companies, often try to ensure success even before receiving an RFP from GHQ by contacting a local individual believed to have



influence and promising him ancillary business if they win the contract. The Embassy advises against this practice. U.S. defense firms are advised to submit RFPs directly to GHQ and if successful, the U.S. firm can then take steps to establish a local presence. Firms supplying lethal-based equipment will be sponsored directly by the GHQ.

U.S. firms wishing to do business with the GHQ must register their interest with the Directorate General of Purchasing. Only pre-qualified lists of registered firms will be invited to respond to RFPs or open tenders.

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