



U.S. Military Bases and Facilities in the Middle East



American Security Project



Fact Sheet

Matthew Wallin

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Introduction

This fact sheet provides a rough overview of U.S. military bases and facilities in the Middle East. Compiled from publicly available information, this listing presents a picture of a variety of facilities the U.S. either maintains or retains access to throughout the region. Due to the fluctuating nature of U.S. military operations in the region, it is not possible to put together a complete picture of the entirety of U.S. forces' deployment. As the wars in Iraq and against ISIS have ebbed and flowed, so has the U.S. presence in the region.

In countries like Iraq and Syria, the U.S. undoubtedly occupies pre-existing facilities or operates hastily constructed temporary bases that are not publicly acknowledged for operational security reasons. Many of these have been observed through commercial satellite imagery. The growing role of unmanned aerial vehicles in U.S. operations, whether by intelligence agencies or the U.S. military, also presents a challenge to identifying where Americans are currently based. This fact sheet does not document instances of unacknowledged facilities.

Additionally, it can sometimes be difficult to identify what should qualify as a "U.S." base or facility. Many facilities, ports, and airstrips serve primarily as civilian and commercial infrastructure. For instance, the U.S. Navy frequents a number of ports around the world. These ports often have facilities and infrastructure capable of supporting these military vessels, but are not U.S.-specific, and therefore are not considered to be a "base." However, some of these ports do support the resupply and repair of U.S. vessels, making their classification vague.

Bahrain

The United States operates in Bahrain by means of a Defense Cooperation Agreement signed in 1991,¹ and a Status of Forces Agreement originally signed in 1971.² There are over 7,000 U.S. military personnel based in Bahrain, and the U.S. has maintained a naval presence in the country since 1948.³ The U.S. 5th fleet is based in Bahrain, and patrols an area of responsibility covering the Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, the Red Sea, and the Arabian Sea, including the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb.⁴

Naval Support Activity Bahrain

- U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.
- Headquarters of the U.S. 5th Fleet.
- Close to Khalifa Bin Salman port, which is capable of berthing U.S. aircraft carriers.⁵
- The U.S. has spent \$580 million between 2010-2017 on expansion of the facility, and a total of \$2 billion since establishing a presence.⁶



Naval Support Activity Bahrain. Google Earth.

ASP would like to thank the Embassy of Qatar for its support of this research.

Shaikh Isa Air Base

- Recently improved with \$45 million in U.S. funding. Hosts F-16s, F/A-18s, and P-3 aircraft.⁷
- 12,467 ft runway.⁸

Muharraq Air Base (Navy)

- The Combined Task Force 53 aviation unit is based here.⁹
- Part of Bahrain International Airport.
- In 2011, saw a monthly average of 1,600 tons of cargo and mail, and 3000 personnel in transit.¹⁰
- 13,005 ft runway and 8,300 ft runway.¹¹



Muharraq. Google Earth.

Djibouti

U.S. military presence in Djibouti was established in 2003 with a formal agreement that provides access to the airport through Camp Lemonnier and the port facilities.¹² Since that time, Djibouti has hosted the only combat-capable U.S. military base in Africa, a fact that is changing with the construction of a U.S. base in Niger.¹³

Camp Lemonnier

- Formerly a French Foreign Legion base.¹⁴
- Hosts 4,000 U.S. troops. Tasked with fighting the Somalia-based Al Shabaab and conducting counter terror operations in Somalia.¹⁵
- Considered a Navy facility,¹⁶ shares runway with Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport.
- 10,335 ft runway.¹⁷
- Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa operates out of Lemonnier.¹⁸
- Operations using manned and unmanned aerial vehicles have been based out of Lemonnier, including missions into Yemen.¹⁹
- China recently opened its first overseas military base adjacent to the Doraleh Port, and very close to Camp Lemonnier. It is believed China will deploy around 1,000 personnel.²⁰ In May 2017, China began constructing a 330+ meter pier to support its naval vessels.²¹



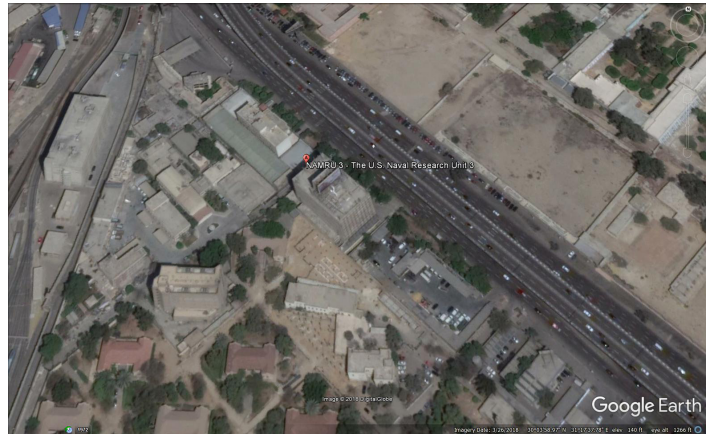
Camp Lemonnier. Google Earth.

Egypt

The U.S. military does not maintain combat basing in Egypt, despite the historically robust military cooperation between the countries since the conclusion of the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. The only U.S. military facility in Egypt conducts medical research.

Naval Medical Research Unit Three (NAMRU-3)

- Based in Cairo.
- Facilities for conducting infections disease research and prevention.²²
- Runs syndrome, pathogen, and vector surveillance networks in Egypt and the region.²³
- Largest DoD overseas laboratory with bio-safety level 3 bio-containment space.²⁴



NAMRU-3. Bing Maps.

Iraq

Since the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 2011, the U.S. has not maintained permanent facilities in Iraq. As the U.S. presence in Iraq has evolved during the conduct of Operation Inherent Resolve, the primary U.S. presence appears to be located at Al Asad Air Base.

Al Asad Air Base²⁵

- Task Force Lion (aka Task Force Al Asad) operates out of Al Asad Air Base in Iraq's western Anbar Province. Task Force Lion advises, assists and “enables” the Iraqi military. Has elements of four of the armed services.²⁶
- Colloquially known as “Camp Cupcake” during the Iraq war, due to the prominent amenities. Many of these amenities are no longer available.
- Two 13,124 foot runways.²⁷
- Some Danish military personnel part of training mission for the Iraqi Security Forces.²⁸



Al Asad. Bing Maps.

Israel

The U.S. has long maintained a security relationship with Israel, and in recent years has partnered to develop systems like the Iron Dome air defense system.²⁹ Ships of the U.S. 6th fleet frequently makes port visits to Haifa,³⁰ but the building of U.S. facilities in Israel new. U.S. deployments to Israel are small and intended to support anti-ballistic missile emplacements.

Dimona Radar Facility

- AN/TPY-2 Radar system, a type of X-Band Radar.³¹
- Used to spot potential incoming ballistic missiles from Iran.

Mashabim Air Base / Bisl'a Aerial Defense School

- Run by EUCOM.³²
- Contains a “Living Facility,”³³ which houses 40 soldiers serving the missile defense mission.³⁴



Dimona Radar Facility. Google Maps.

Jordan

The U.S. presence in Jordan has expanded with the evolution of Operation Inherent Resolve against ISIS, with forces located at Muwaffaq Salti Air Base. Publicly available commercial satellite imagery indicates the presence of potential U.S. reaper drones at other bases in Jordan, but this is not acknowledged by the United States.

U.S. military cooperation with Jordan is close. Most recently, U.S. troops participated in the “Eager Lion” exercises, involving several thousand U.S. Marines training alongside Jordanian troops.³⁵

Muwaffaq Salti Air Base (Azraq)

- U.S. allocated \$143 million for upgrades and expansion in 2018.³⁶
- The pace of operations against ISIS has strained physical capacity of the base. Limited ramp space restricts operations, and facilities for handling cargo and personnel are limited as well.³⁷
- Hosts multiple coalition partners, including Germany,³⁸ the Netherlands, and Belgium.³⁹
- Two runways, 9,015 ft and 9,777 ft.⁴⁰



Muwaffaq Salti. Google Earth.

Kuwait

The U.S. has maintained a Defense Cooperation Agreement with Kuwait since 1991 Persian Gulf War.⁴¹ As such, Kuwait holds major non-NATO U.S. ally status.⁴² Since 2011, troops garrisoned in Kuwait are primarily intended to support Operation Spartan Shield, a mission to “deter regional aggression and stabilize countries within the region.”⁴³ The military currently maintains a force of 2,200 MRAPs in Kuwait.⁴⁴

Ali Al Salem Air Base

- Two 9,805 ft runways.⁴⁵
- 386th Air Expeditionary Wing is a primary occupant, operating C-17 and C-130 cargo aircraft.⁴⁶
- Base operates as a way station for troops.



Ali Al Salem. Google Earth.

Camp Arifjan

- Serves as U.S. HQ in Kuwait.⁴⁷
- Built by the Kuwaiti government at a cost of \$200 million to replace temporary basing structure originally used since the Gulf War.⁴⁸
- Features a Joint Military Mail Terminal.⁴⁹



Camp Arifjan. Google Earth.

Camp Buehring

- Broke ground on \$3.7 million living facilities expansion in 2017.⁵⁰
- Has precision approach radar capability, allowing for low-visibility landings.⁵¹
- 5,215 ft runway.⁵²



Camp Buehring. Google Earth.

Camp Patriot

- U.S. Army Facility.
- Shares space with Kuwait Naval Base.⁵³
- For the 2003 Iraq invasion, Navy Seabees constructed a temporary pier, known as an elevated causeway system modular (ELCAS/M), to support the offloading of equipment.⁵⁴



Camp Patriot/Kuwait Naval. Google Earth.

Oman

The U.S. maintains an ability to use Omani bases through the Oman Facilities Access Agreement, originally signed in 1980, and most recently renewed in 2010.⁵⁵ This accord made Oman the first country among the Persian Gulf States to explicitly partner militarily with the U.S.⁵⁶ According to the agreement, the U.S. can request access to these facilities in advance for a specified purpose. Some of the bases listed in this section are those the U.S. may access, but not necessarily where a presence is maintained. Oman has allowed 5,000 aircraft overflights, 600 landings, and 80 port calls annually.⁵⁷ During the early stages of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (in late 2001), the U.S. relied considerably on Omani air bases. However, in the subsequent years, U.S. presence in Oman has dwindled significantly.⁵⁸

RAFO Masirah

- 10,005 foot runway, and 8,446 foot runway.⁵⁹
- Located on Island of Masirah.



Masirah. Google Earth.

Muscat International Airport

- Formerly known as Seeb Air Base.⁶⁰
- Usable under the Facilities Access Agreement.
- Two runways recently extended to 13,123 ft.⁶¹
- War reserve materiel stored at this location.⁶²



Muscat Int'l. Google Earth.

RAFO Thumrait

- 13,123 foot runway.⁶³
- War reserve materiel stored at this location.



Thumrait. Google Earth.

Al-Musannah Air Base

- Airlift apron designed for C-5 and C-130 aircraft.⁶⁴
- War reserve materiel stored at this location.⁶⁵



Al Musannah. Google Earth.

Port of Duqm

- The recently opened British-Omani Duqm Naval Dockyard was designed with the intent of hosting ships from friendly nations for repair and maintenance.⁶⁶
- Recently expanded facilities at Duqm have allowed for the repair and maintenance of U.S. Navy vessels.⁶⁷
- Capable of supporting U.S. aircraft carriers and submarines.⁶⁸
- Duqm is attracting the interest of many countries, including India,⁶⁹ Iran,⁷⁰ the U.K., the U.S., and China.⁷¹

Port of Salalah

- Largest port in Oman.
- The Defense Logistics Agency operated a recently opened material processing center here. This facility provides “material aggregation, trans-shipment, short-term storage and delivery functions for visiting U.S. Navy vessels and other U.S. customers in the U.S. Central Command AOR.”⁷²



Port of Salalah. Google Earth.

Qatar

Qatar hosts approximately 10,000 U.S. service personnel, mostly at Al Udeid Air Base.⁷³ Since the 1990s, Qatari base construction strategy has been deliberately intended to attract the United States to its facilities. As the U.S. withdrew the majority of its forces from Saudi Arabia in 2003 following the initial invasion of Iraq, basing in Qatar allowed for the permanent redeployment of those assets. The U.S. has relied heavily on its basing in Qatar to conduct the counter-ISIS military mission, Operation Inherent Resolve.

Al Udeid Air Base

- Biggest U.S. base in the Middle East.
- Home to U.S. Combined Air Operations Center, U.S. Air Forces Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command Central Forward, and CENTCOM Forward HQ.⁷⁴
- Built in 1996 at a cost of \$1 billion before Qatar had an air force,⁷⁵ and a total of \$4 billion to fund the base since.⁷⁶
- Qatar is currently expanding the base with 200 additional housing units.⁷⁷
- The existence of the Al Udeid air base allowed for the relocation of U.S. assets previously stationed at Prince Sultan Airbase, Saudi Arabia in 2003. This move addressed a common grievance against the U.S. amongst Muslim populations.
- Two 12,000+ foot runways,⁷⁸ capable of supporting all aircraft in the U.S. arsenal.



Al Udeid. Google Earth.

Camp As Sayliyah

- An Army operated facility that can store joint equipment.
- Serves as a prepositioning point for one brigade's worth of armored equipment.⁷⁹
- Features a large number of climate controlled warehouse units.⁸⁰
- Also featured a Stryker Damage Repair facility which repaired hundreds of Stryker vehicles damaged in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan until the repair facility's closure in 2014.⁸¹



Camp As Sayliyah. Google Earth.

Saudi Arabia

The U.S. withdrew the vast majority of its forces in 2003, as the invasion of Iraq eliminated the need for a troop presence in Saudi Arabia. Today, many of the American military personnel still in Saudi Arabia are part of the U.S. Military Training Mission, and do not provide an operational combat capability. Undoubtedly, USMTM personnel travel and work at different Saudi bases to complete their mission, but the primary “basing” point is Eskan Village near Riyadh.

Eskan Village

- Features fully furnished villas for U.S. personnel.⁸²
- Serves as a housing facility for U.S. military personnel, primarily those assigned to the U.S. Military Training Mission.⁸³
- Also hosts Army personnel of the Saudi Arabian National Guard Modernization Program and Ministry⁸⁴ of the Interior-Military Assistance Group.⁸⁵
- Base not intended for combat operations. Base security provided by 341st Military Police Company.⁸⁶



Eskan Village. Google Earth.

Turkey

Turkey is the only NATO member in the Middle East region. Its geographic position was used as a point of strategic leverage against the Soviet Union during the Cold War, particularly with regards to nuclear forces. It has also served as a critical launching point for U.S. military operations in the Middle East. Though Turkey has been historically vital for America's nuclear deterrence mission, strained ties with the Erdogan government have brought this role into question.

Incirlik Air Base

- U.S. stores upwards of 50 B-61 nuclear gravity bombs at Incirlik.⁸⁷
- Construction on the base started by the U.S. in 1951.⁸⁸
- Base has been used heavily for operations against ISIS, but U.S. was denied sortie rights for the 2003 Iraq invasion.⁸⁹
- 10,000 foot runway.⁹⁰
- In the wake of the 2016 coup attempt, the Turkish Government cut power to the air base for several days⁹¹ and closed the airspace around the base.⁹²
- Approximately 2,500 U.S. military personnel based at Incirlik.⁹³



Incirlik. Google Earth.

Izmir Air Station

- Located adjacent to Çiğli air base, a Turkish-run base.
- Home of 425th Air Base Squadron, a detachment of the 39th Air Base Wing out of Incirlik Air Base. Administers the Çiğli AB Loan Agreement. Supports numerous U.S./NATO missions in the Izmir Area, including NATO Allied Land Command Headquarters.⁹⁴



Izmir. Google Earth.

United Arab Emirates

The U.S. maintains approximately 5,000 personnel in the UAE under a defense cooperation agreement.⁹⁵ The security relationship between the U.S. and UAE is robust, and has featured combat operations in Afghanistan in which UAE aircraft provided close air support to American troops on the ground.⁹⁶

Al Dhafra Air Base

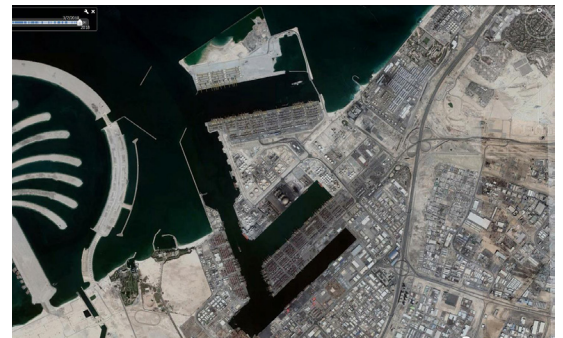
- U.S. presence at this base not publicly acknowledged until 2017.
- Host the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing, including such aircraft as the F-22 Raptor,⁹⁷ KC-10, RQ-4 Global Hawk, E-3 Sentry, and U-2 Dragon Lady.⁹⁸
- Two 12,012 foot runways.⁹⁹
- An estimated 3,500 U.S. personnel stationed in 2015,¹⁰⁰ upwards of 3,800 in 2016.¹⁰¹
- Busiest U.S. base in the world for surveillance flights.¹⁰²
- Hosts a joint Air Warfare Center used by the U.S. to train personnel from multiple countries in aspects of combat and interoperable missions.¹⁰³



Al Dhafra. Google Earth.

Port of Jebel Ali

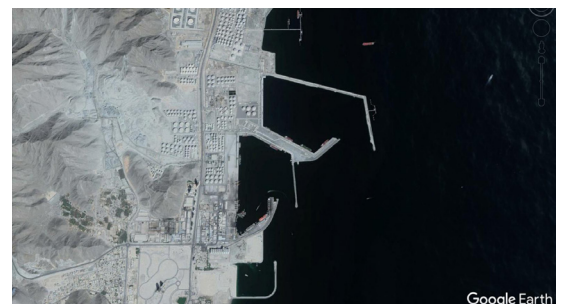
- Busiest U.S. Navy port of call.¹⁰⁴
- Largest manmade deep-water harbor in the world.¹⁰⁵
- Capable of berthing U.S. aircraft carriers.¹⁰⁶
- No ships supported or permanently based, and U.S. Navy ships do not take priority over commercial vessels.¹⁰⁷



Port of Jebel Ali. Google Earth.

Fujairah Naval Base

- Located on the outside of the Persian Gulf, before crossing the Strait of Hormuz.¹⁰⁸ Offers a logistical “land link” to Jebel Ali should the Strait of Hormuz be closed.¹⁰⁹



Fujairah Naval Base. Google Earth.

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