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## BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE

American airmen sit back to watch the Turkish Stars aerobatic team perform across the desert skies at WDS – a scene that symbolises the international nature of this year's second edition of the show that has grown 25% since its inaugural event in 2022.

"We have been delighted with the attendance at the show so far with people coming from more than 100 countries," said Andrew Pearcy, chief executive of the event.

The show continues until tomorrow.

More than 770 exhibitors have participated, and a steady stream of international businesses have been signing memoranda of understanding for partnerships with Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI) throughout the week to help make the industrialisation strategy in Vision 2030 a reality. ▲



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## Barzan plans growth with QEAF support

In recent years, the world has witnessed an unparalleled rapid expansion of the Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) combat air element, which went from a single fighter squadron with just 12 Mirage 2000s to an eight-squadron force with 36 Boeing F-15QAs, 36 Dassault Rafales and 24 Eurofighter Typhoons. Abdullah Al-Khater, the CEO of Barzan Holdings, aims to drive similar growth in Barzan.

Barzan is fully-owned by Qatar's MoD and established in 2016 to develop a local defence and security industry ecosystem with a number of global partners – all specialized in separate areas. It aims to provide strong support for the QEAF

in a number of areas – including military MRO services, where the first contract that Barzan received, in 2019, was for MRO support for the Pilatus PC-21.

"We are also aiming to support weaponized platforms in the future," Al-Khater said, acknowledging that this is still some way off, since the QEAF's new combat air platforms were all purchased with associated support and sustainment packages. In the meantime, Barzan is supporting the Qatari Ministry of Defence's research experiment and development office, working at the later stages of the research and development cycle, building prototypes and supporting testing.



▶ Aiming to support weaponized platforms in the future – Abdullah Al-Khater

## Boeing mulls over quandary of resurgent customer demand

The Boeing C-17 Globemaster III, an aircraft out of production since 2015, dominated a Boeing media roundtable at WDS.

Asaad AlJomoai, president of Boeing Saudi Arabia, explained that the aircraft had been demonstrated in the Kingdom, flying the then-defence minister from King Faisal air base at Tabuk to King Abdullah air base at Jeddah. "Everybody was expecting of

that the decision to buy would follow sometime soon after, but for some reason, it took a little bit longer."

By the time the purchase decision was made, production had ended and the remaining 'white tails' had been sold to the UAE, Qatar, Australia and India. With no C-17s available to sell, Boeing acknowledges that it has effectively ceded the market for tactical airlifters with strategic payload

and range to the rival A400M, which Airbus hopes to sell to Saudi Arabia.

Torbjorn Sjogren, Boeing's vice-president and general manager, Government Services, said the company had periodically looked at restarting the production line. "If we still had even a lukewarm production line, there are a number of customers that have expressed interest in the aircraft," he said.

Some fear a similar situation is developing with the P-8A Poseidon. Production for the US Navy is nearing its end, and a relatively small number of export orders remain to be fulfilled.

Vince Logsdon of Boeing Defence, Space and Security, noted: "We talked about the C-17 production line and how we have a lot of what could have been potential customers coming back after the fact and saying: 'Boy, I wish we could go in and buy a C-17!'"

"I believe the P-8 could be the next C-17. So we are out there marketing the P-8. And it is the best of breed."



▶ From left: Boeing's Torbjorn Sjogren, Asaad AlJomoai and Vince Logsdon

## Wallan Group gets KingAir approvals

Operators of the special mission Beechcraft King Air turboprops in the region received a boost with the approval of Saudi Arabia partner Wallan Group as an authorised service facility for the type.

"Wallan Group continues to be an enduring, trusted partner with a proven track record of providing quality maintenance and excellent service to our Cessna Citation customers," Bob Gibbs, vice-president, special mission sales for Textron Aviation, said at WDS.

"With an established and growing base of King Air aircraft in the Kingdom, this latest authorisation provides an even greater level of convenience and in-country support," he said.

The multi-mission variants include four KingAir 260 and one King Air 360CHW aircraft in service with Saudi Arabia's National Centre for Meteorology fitted with the newest technologies in cloud seeding and atmospheric sciences instrumentation that were ordered last summer. Wallan Group has been an authorised service facility for Cessna Citation jets since 2008.



Visit our newsroom in Hall 1 S4 and S5 – just opposite Estonia pavilion – or email us at [ella@aecomm.aero](mailto:ella@aecomm.aero)

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## Aselsan progresses airborne jamming with a Global 6000

Aselsan's Bombardier Global 6000 Hava SOJ airborne stand-off jammer programme – also known as the radar and communications electronic support/electronic attack system – is progressing well, a company spokesperson said at WDS.

The Turkish air force requirement to stop enemy radar and communication systems from

functioning during offensive operations will allow offensive aircraft to enter safe zones. The Hava SOJ will stay airborne during operational missions for up to eight hours.

The three main onboard communications systems, comprising a communications jammer, radar jammer and communications intelligence/electronic intelligence

(COMINT/ELINT), have all been developed by the Turkish company.

Testing was completed on the test-bed simulator last December and the system will be integrated into the first Global 6000 at Ankara-based Turkish Aerospace, which is partnering with Aselsan on the programme.

First flight awaits certification, a



Aselsan is working on two Turkish armed forces jamming programmes, involving a Global 6000 and Akinci UAV

lengthy process that is expected to take up to two years.

Factory acceptance for the second and third Hava SOJs is expected this year, and integration will then follow the first example. All four Hava SOJ Global 6000s ordered in this configuration should be delivered to the Turkish air force by 2028.

In another similar project, known as IHA SOJ Hedet (UAV, stand-off jammer, communication electronic warfare), two Bayraktar Bayraktar Akinci unmanned aircraft systems are being developed for jamming operations as well. One example will house a COMINT system and a COMINT jammer, and the other a ELINT system and ELINT jammer, with the ability to stay airborne for 17-18 hours.

Contracted in late 2023, both versions should be delivered by late-2026. Aselsan has also worked on a Bayraktar TB2 jammer that was delivered in 2022 and which the company says is already combat-proven. Equipped with a 11 kg electronic attack pod under each wing, the system operates in three different frequencies.



Autoflight's Federico Nordenstahl aims to see its eVTOL flying in Saudi Arabia this year

## AutoFlight angling for KSA eVTOL demo

Before year-end, AutoFlight's electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, making a surprise guest appearance on the Mobily Business courtyard stand, will undertake a demonstration flight programme in Saudi Arabia this year, Federico Nordenstahl, managing director EMEA of the Chinese-owned aircraft manufacturer, told Show Business.

AutoFlight is cooperating with Saudi telecommunications giant Mobily at WDS as the next stage in a drive to bring its eVTOL technology to this region, said Nordenstahl. "After China, our next target is the Middle East for development as a sales market, plus – in the future – assembly, manufacturing and research," he said.

"Certification of the aircraft starts with China and then

our journey is to go to the first technology-friendly countries looking for innovation in this market," said Nordenstahl. The firm is "almost done" with certification of its first eVTOL version of the aircraft in China.

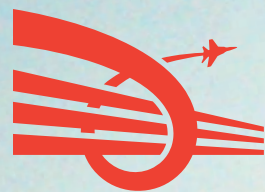
AutoFlight is "very open" about which country it will select in the Middle East and showed the aircraft at the Dubai airshow in November 2023. "Being close to where your demand sits is a smart move," said Nordenstahl.

At WDS, AutoFlight has been pleased with the interest in its innovative aircraft, especially from VIPs looking for air taxi passenger services, in addition to interest in cargo and fire-fighting versions of the machine, said Nordenstahl. The eVTOL is not aimed at any military applications, he added.

### Getting real with firearm training

Training with an actual firearm can feel almost real with the solutions from Ultimate Training Munitions (UTM). By converting pistols, assault rifles or machine guns in seconds, UTM (Hall 1 stand G10.1C) allows military trainees to fire their respective special rounds. They experience actual weapon recoil and can see where the 'bullet' marks the target that could even be a fellow trainee. This adds to the experience of simulated close combat.





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Omar Al Romaih said Saudi Flags Company is at WDS to highlight manufacturing in the Kingdom and to support Vision 2030

## Flagging up individual brands and values

Flying the flag for Saudi Arabia in Hall 2 is Saudi Flags Factory. The Riyadh-based company was set up in 1978 and claims the title of the largest manufacturer of flags, military uniforms and accessories in the Middle East. Its customers include the military and military schools in the GCC and North Africa.

Marketing manager Omar Al Romaih said the company offers a wide range of flag styles, sizes and designs for any purpose, and can create customised designs to suit individual identities and values. "The company was founded on the belief that flags are more than just pieces of cloth – they are symbols of pride, unity and history," he said. "Our team consists of experienced designers, seamstresses and quality-control specialists who work together to produce flags that are durable, vibrant and eye-catching. We use only the best materials and the latest techniques to ensure that our flags are of the highest quality and built to last."

## KC-390 targets new pod option

Embraer is displaying a model of a KC-390 fitted with a targeting pod at its stand in Hall 3 – the first time this option has been seen. The Brazilian air force is apparently keen to fulfil such roles as search and rescue, humanitarian relief as well as tactical missions. With the service already operating the Rafael Litening pod, it is obviously an option for the aircraft when required. Other KC-390 customers including Czechia, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal and South Korea could also be interested.



## Meal time at WDS

The demand for self-heating meals has become increasingly urgent, especially in humanitarian crises and military operations, where access to hot food can be challenging. Taking a step to address this, Tempra Technology, a US-based provider of thermal packaging solutions, and Jordanian company Loyalty Support Services (LSS), which produces life support services, signed a licence agreement at WDS for self-heating ready-to-eat military meals (MRE).

## Three-way dogfight for Saudi fighter order

A long-standing Royal Saudi Air Force fighter requirement is now being contested by the Dassault Rafale, the Boeing F-15EX, and the Eurofighter Typhoon.

Previously it had been assumed this requirement would be for a new batch of Eurofighter Typhoons, but KSA has been looking at other options following a German ban on exporting the type to Saudi Arabia.

Because the Typhoon was developed and built by a quadrinational consortium, consisting of Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK, any partner nation can block an export sale; a 2018 contract for 48 aircraft was delayed by the German refusal to support the proposed sale.

That block has now reportedly been lifted.

Saudi Arabia had received an initial batch of 72 Typhoons between June 2009 and June 2017, under a UK/Saudi government-to-government agreement.

Last October, Saudi Arabia officially requested a detailed quote from Dassault for 54 Rafale fighters with a deadline of 10 November.



One of the RSAF current Typhoons likely to be upgraded if new batch is ordered

At WDS this week, Boeing's Vince Logsdon, vice-president global business development and strategic marketing, said the company was offering 54 Boeing F-15EX Eagle II fighters to meet the same requirement. He said Boeing was also exploring conversion of 84 existing F-15SA aircraft to EX configuration, and perhaps also the 84 F-15S aircraft now being converted to the SA standard.

This would obviously give improved fleet commonality, while the F-15EX also offers a more advanced radar, and improved self-protection capabilities.

BAE Systems and the British Government have been unwilling to talk about the Typhoon offering to Saudi Arabia, though BAE updated its statement about "current and potential new requirements" being "part of long-standing agreements between the UK Government and Saudi

Arabia," to an acknowledgement that the company was actively "supporting the UK Government to respond to the statement of requirements issued by the Saudi Arabian Government for a future requirement for Typhoon aircraft."

This would suggest that there is a definite Saudi requirement for new Typhoons.

BAE Systems has not confirmed the number of aircraft being offered, nor the exact standards/configurations. It is, however, understood that the requirement is for 54 aircraft.

Supplying European common radar system (ECRS) Mk0-equipped Typhoons – similar to those being supplied to Qatar – could allow quick deliveries, with potential to upgrade these, or older Typhoons, to carry the more advanced ECRS.Mk2 radar, and to have large area cockpit displays, new mission computers and Striker II helmets.

# Lockheed Martin sees Saudi leadership role in vertical lift

Saudi Arabia could be a trail-blazer in future vertical lift capabilities, a senior Lockheed Martin executive said yesterday.

Stephanie Hill, Lockheed Martin's president, rotary and mission systems (pictured right), told a session of the Future Defence Forum that during the show Lockheed Martin had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Investment to look at potential investment in the field.

Lockheed Martin is currently

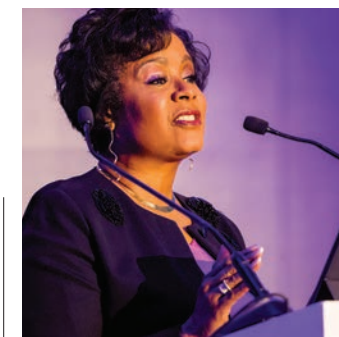
working to scale up its X2 programme, which covers a range of technologies for future vertical lift programmes. The X2 work is being undertaken by Lockheed Martin subsidiary, Sikorsky.

X2 technologies are incorporated into the Sikorsky Raider X, one of two contenders for the US Army's future attack reconnaissance aircraft (FARA) programme, which is scheduled to provide a replacement for the now-retired OH-58 Kiowa scout helicopter around 2030.

The Raider X is a compound helicopter featuring two, stacked coaxial rotors and a rear pusher propeller that will allow the aircraft to achieve speeds in excess of 200kts, considerably faster than current-generation helicopters.

Hill said that aerospace and defence were being promoted by Saudi Arabia as foundational aspects of the country's Vision 2030 project, aimed at diversifying the country's economy away from hydrocarbons.

"We can help deliver the safe



and prosperous future for Saudi Arabia and its allies around the world," she said. However, to do that, countries had to evolve their defence posture. The accelerating use of powerful dual-use technologies by certain countries was rapidly eroding the ability of peaceful nations to ensure their security.

## RSAF takes on space mission

The Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) is considering the acquisition of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance satellites as it seeks to extend its remit beyond the atmosphere, writes Tony Osborne.

Current military reforms to be finalised around 2028 will see the RSAF and the Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces (RSADF) combine to form the Royal Saudi Air and Space Force. The linkup aligns with similar evolutions elsewhere – notably in Europe, where air arms have expanded into space operations.

Military officials said it was undecided how and when the RSAF space mission will be rolled out, and whether it will take the form of a command within the air force or separate squadrons. But the initial priority for the service will be to build space domain awareness.

Officials would not comment on the timing for the creation of the new service or indeed when it could invest in space-based capabilities, but they are likely to materialise in the 2030s.

The efforts build off the back of the 2018 creation of the Saudi Space Agency, formerly known as

the Saudi Space Commission.

Saudi Arabia has a proud heritage of spaceflight. Prince Sultan bin Salman Al Saud was an astronaut on the NASA Space Shuttle in 1985, and Ali al-Qarni – an RSAF F-15 pilot – flew to the International Space Station in 2023 along with Rayyanah Barnawi, a stem cell researcher. Both are Saudi nationals.

The creation of the Royal Saudi Air and Space Force is one of several reforms under way across the Saudi military to improve governance, procurement and its ability to operate within coalitions.

## Indra selected for Saudi MMSC

Spanish electronics and technology company Indra has won the contract with Lockheed Martin to provide a state-of-the-art electronic defence system for Saudi Arabia's new multi-mission surface combatant (MMSC) ships. The MMSC is a derivative of the US Navy's Freedom-class littoral combat ships. The Royal Saudi Navy has ordered four. Lockheed Martin is prime contractor for the project. Indra will supply its Rigel electronic support system, which can identify any platform within range by its radar emissions and classify it according to threat level.



Pilot Sebastian Maudanz from FAST in the eVTOL MR Series X flight simulator

## FAST tips mixed reality as future of pilot training

Future Aviation Simulation Technologies (FAST) is displaying its mixed reality flight simulator in Hall 2 on the Space Age stand, offering delegates a chance to experience its state-of-the-art training device.

The German company is working with its Saudi Arabian partner Space Age, which produces space-related electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) technology in-country.

"Our new eVTOL MR Series X is a flight simulator combining the highest

standards with the latest mixed reality technology to provide a realistic flying experience," said Soren Brand, PR and marketing manager.

"Our goal is to revolutionise training efficiency, flight safety and training quality by providing our customers with state-of-the-art flight training devices. We believe in the technology of mixed reality for the future of pilot training, which is why we equipped our eVTOL mixed reality full-flight simulator with this technology."



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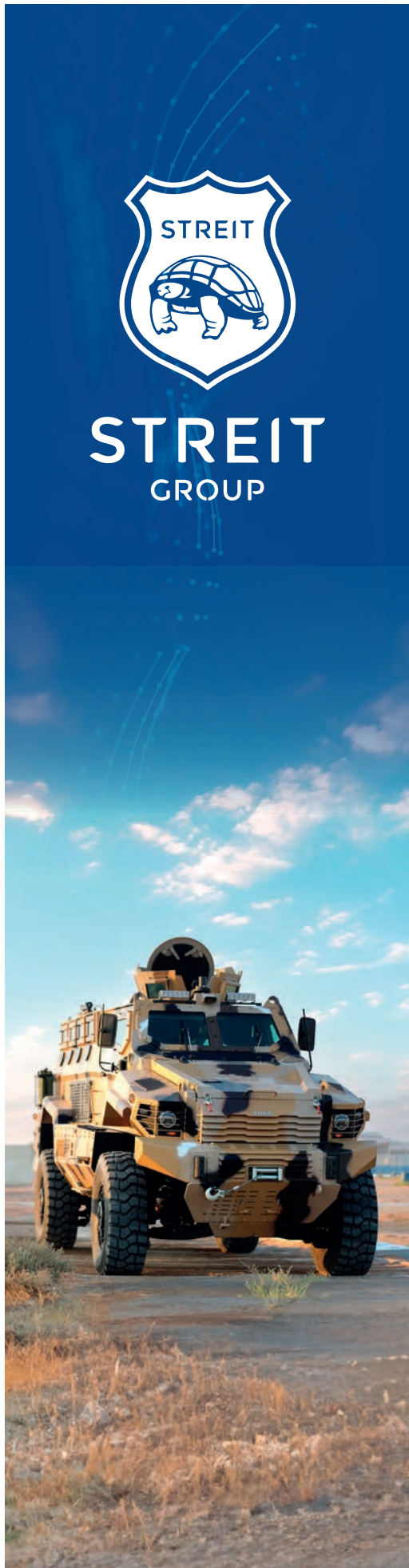


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## Speed of build propels new Fincantieri frigate design

Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri is showing its new FCX30 light frigate design, which aims to cut production time and get vessels into service faster at a time of geo-political instability.

With the industry at the start of an investment cycle in defence, “I strongly believe that extra expenditure on defence has to be explained to taxpayers,” said Fincantieri’s chief executive, Pierroberto Folgiero. That meant demonstrating that the construction process is as efficient as possible.

The FCX30 is a development of Qatar’s Al Zubarah class, which gives the new design the advantage of being the derivative of a proven platform, rather than a new ‘paper design’, said Folgiero.

Additionally, through increasing use of modularisation – for example, in the integration of sensors into a modular mast that allows space to ease maintenance and allow for midlife updates – the construction period can be cut to



32 months. “Most importantly, modularisation means time to market. In a world where we need to strengthen our defence capacity at sea, it must be done in a way that innovation takes the form of shortening lead time for construction.”

The vessel will be designed to use

data from operational vessels to feed into a ‘digital twin’ of the ship, to optimise its development.

The FCX30 is a 107m vessel of 3,200 tons full load. It is designed for survivability, with engines and critical systems distributed in compartments throughout the ship, so

that a hit from a single missile or shell will not knock out all power.

It is being offered in three versions: a patrol ship suitable for roles such as anti-piracy missions; an anti-submarine variant; and a ‘full configuration’ with anti-air and strike capabilities.

LIGHT  
FANTASTIC

Fincantieri’s new FCX30 light frigate design aims to cut production time and get vessels into service faster

## Chinese uncrewed trimaran ‘1-2 years’ from stand-up

Uncrewed vessels are rapidly entering the consciousness of the world’s navies, with several countries carrying out trials of both surface (USV) and underwater (UUV) vehicles.

One of the first to enter operational service may be that currently under construction by China Shipbuilding Trading Co (CSTC).

A model on the CSTC stand shows the general design of the USV, which officials say is likely to be ready for use in “one to two years”.

The vessel – a trimaran – is a 60m design with a range of around 2,000nm, says the company.

Whereas most current USVs



A model of CSTC’s trimaran USV

under trial around the world are designs aimed at testing the basic viability of the uncrewed concept, CSTC’s model is designed as an operational combat vessel.

Its small superstructure houses flush radar antennae plus eight common vertical launch cells that can house either surface-to-air or anti-ship missiles.

A remote-control weapon system with a small-calibre cannon is housed in a retractable mounting in the bow, while a flightdeck aft can carry an uncrewed helicopter for reconnaissance, to extend the range of the vessel’s sensors.

Company officials decline to say for whom the vessel is being built.

## Will-Burt masts rise to new heights

With more than 75 years providing elevation solutions, Will-Burt (Hall 1 stand J17), has a range of products for the military and other sectors. Each family of elevation solutions is designed and manufactured with characteristics tuned to optimise payload performance.

The Will-Burt Stiletto carbon-fibre electromechanical mast features a top combination of high strength, low weight, and great stability. A lightweight mobile solution, the company says it is ideal for rapid automatic deployment and high directional pointing accuracy.

The pneumatic heavy-duty non-locking and super heavy-duty non-locking masts offer a lightweight solution with high payload lifting capacity. They are described as inherently safe, as the payload sits on a cushion of air, enabling better absorption of shocks on-the-move.



The air and land displays at WDS 2024 are the highlight of the show as the region's armed forces and leading manufacturers show off their best moves

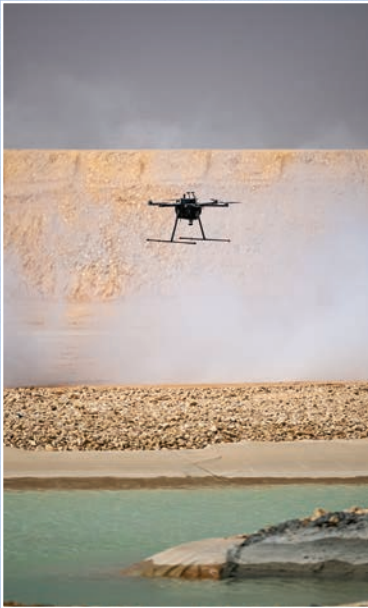
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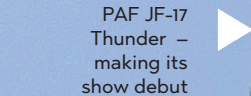
TAF 'Turkish Stars' aerobatic team



IAG's light patrol vehicle (LPV) based on a Toyota Land Cruiser platform



Above: Hazim drone capable of detecting gas and chemicals



PAF JF-17 Thunder – making its show debut



Below: US Navy Boeing P-8A Poseidon – which flew in just for the display



Above: RSF 'Saudi Hawks' aerobatic team



USAF A-10C Thunderbolt



People's Liberation Army Air Force August 1st aerobatic team, flying six Chengdu J-10s, both made their debut at WDS.

Another aircraft making its debut at WDS is Pakistan's JF-17C.

Not as loud, but equally notable, was the land display, which saw a range of vehicles and platforms being put through their paces.

The display also featured a trio of drone demos, rounding off a strong demonstration of military equipment performance and capability from all involved.

Right: RILA MRAP from International Armour Group (IAG)



Below right: WAWASH 8x8 IFV from Calidas



Above: The Tatra T158 6x6 from SAMI

Below: Ubayyah II 4X4 from SAMI

Above: PLAAF 'August 1st' aerobatic team



Left: SAMI's FAJR Storm II 4x4 armoured vehicle



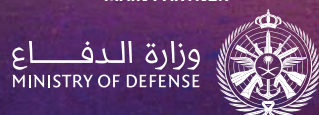


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## KSA 'key market' for Airbus Helicopters



The head of Airbus Helicopters reaffirmed at WDS that Saudi Arabia remains a key market for the European OEM, with a strong military presence and a growing civil market.

Bruno Even noted the company had been in Kingdom for more than 40 years. It supports some 100 helicopters flying in Saudi Arabia, including 45 civil H145s and 10 H160s, together with a military fleet of 17 Dauphins and Panthers, 20 Super

◀ Airbus Helicopters chief executive Bruno Even: Saudi Arabia is a key market

Pumas and 17 Cougars.

Even was keen to highlight the company's efforts in building local partnerships, including with SAMI, and Saudia Technics, and with its construction of a local logistics hub which is already operational.

Looking to the future, Even saw an opportunity for the NH90 NFH naval helicopter, whose 'polyvalent' (multirole) capabilities include anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, and search and rescue.

He also predicted a potential market for up to 100 H175M helicopters in Saudi Arabia.

## Boeing seeks to cement Saudi position with KSA investments

Boeing traces its relationship with Saudi Arabia back nearly 50 years. Currently the Seattle airframer is working with the country's leadership, ensuring it meets the needs of Vision 2030.

Much of that responsibility falls to Dr Brendan Nelson, president Boeing Global, who has been in the role since February 2020. "It's a vibrant country and we strongly support the vision of Saudi Vision 2030, including localisation," he said. "We are investing in the country, capability development, research and development, collaborations and manufacturing."

Boeing has supplied more than 400 defence aircraft to the Saudi Arabian armed forces and has invested in partnerships with key players in the Saudi aerospace ecosystem including the Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI), the General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI), the Royal Saudi Air Force and the National Guard.

During WDS, Boeing and SAMI signed a preliminary agreement to form a Saudi Arabia-focused joint venture to provide maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO), and sustainment services for the military rotorcraft platforms

operated in the Kingdom.

Nelson, an Australian and physician, said: "We have partnerships and relations with 15 research institutes across the country and participate in seven joint ventures."

Yesterday we signed a joint venture with Bahri Logistics and its special integrated logistics zone – we are now going through a close

examination of its freight forwarding inventory and performance-based logistics to see if we could have a presence in the zone."

Boeing's future lies in globalisation. It has more than 30,000 employees outside of the USA; in Saudi Arabia there are 2,000 employees, headed by Saudi leadership.



▶ Dr Brendan Nelson, president Boeing Global, is overseeing the globalisation of the company's defence business

Nearly 30% of Boeing's defence revenue is generated outside the USA, and while Nelson could not provide a figure for Saudi Arabia alone, he did confirm that the Kingdom's military has the largest number of US platforms outside of the USA.

Technology transfers (TT) doesn't appear to be an option though, and as Nelson added, while Boeing can consider TT, it is sensitive and has to be considered in the confines of US government policy.

Boeing is currently considering a request from the Saudi government for the pricing and availability for 54 F-15EX Super Eagles. "Saudi Arabia currently flies more than 200 F-15s and it is an ideal platform – modern cockpit, AESA, modern missile payload and complimentary to the existing fleet when it comes to training and logistics," he said.

"In terms of Saudi Arabia's defence and security needs, it has been demonstrated since 1978 that the F-15 is the ideal platform for the country and the F-15EX takes it to a whole new level of capability. We will do everything to support them as a customer, but it will always need US government approval."



**SAMI**

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# ELEVATING THE FUTURE OF DEFENSE

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## Thales promotes 'smart' integrated air defence systems

Protecting citizens from drone and ballistic missiles is becoming an increasing priority in the Middle East. Iran-backed militias including the Yemen-based Houthis have been wreaking havoc with such tactics for nearly a decade.

So having an efficient and capable air defence is a priority, and it isn't just against drones and missiles, but supersonic missiles, attack aircraft, attack helicopters and cutting edge fourth/fifth-generation fighters.

Thales believes it has the solution, which it is demonstrating outside of France for the first time at WDS. Herve Dammann, executive vice-president Land and Air Systems, explained: "The threats we face today are much more complex than they used to be – fast, slow, small and big ones – and you cannot

defeat those threats by using just one system, you need an integrated air missile defence system (IADS) with different kinds of sensors and effectors to cover all threats."

Firing \$500,000 Patriot missiles at relatively cheap \$10,000 drones – as has been seen in the region – is financially unsustainable. Now governments and their militaries are looking for more cost-effective solutions.

Said Dammann: "Our IADS is an open architecture system that interfaces into an open control-and-command system connected by different kinds of sensors [to deflect the threat] and effectors [to kill the threat]."

In other words, the sensors will select an appropriate missile to shoot down the target. And in the future, artificial intelligence (AI)

could provide the operator with the appropriate solution much quicker.

"We are already using AI for some of our systems to analyse a given situation that increases the capability of the sensor itself and even removing false information to allow a quicker decision," said Dammann.

One solution Thales is offering is the so-called ForceShield system and lightweight multirole missile (LMM) effectors to address the traditional threat as well as asymmetric threats.

ForceShield is built around the company's ControlView command-and-control centre, the RapidRanger and lightweight multiple launcher – next-generation launchers, and the Ground Master GM200/Ground Master 400



Herve Dammann is keen to support Saudi Arabia's defensive needs

radars that incorporate Starstreak and LMM missiles. However as Dammann said, "we can customise [for] our potential customers' needs to both meet the threats and their budget."

## Take it as red: ExtremV built for any challenge

Prominent on the Singapore Technologies (ST) Engineering display (Hall 1 Stand F1) is the bright red ExtremV, a civil version of the successful Bronco military all-terrain tracked carrier (ATTC).

Designed for disaster relief and rescue missions, the ExtremV offers multiple essential capabilities

ranging from emergency rescue and medical evacuation to logistics transportation and firefighting.

For its part, the Bronco, a double-chassis multi-purpose articulated tracked vehicle, was designed to fulfil a function that lies part way between offensive combat and logistical support. The first-generation

Bronco was delivered to the Singapore armed forces in 2001, followed by the Royal Thai Army deploying the vehicle in 2007 for tsunami recovery efforts.

A second-generation Bronco named the Warthog was delivered to the British Army two years later for deployment in Afghanistan. A

key priority of the British customer was for heavier armoured protection to resist mine blasts and IEDs.

This Warthog was also tasked with navigating dusty desert terrain with its inherent obstacles and ditches, as well as the extreme climatic conditions.

Thanks to its design, the Bronco is able to conquer more than 80% of the world's terrain under adverse conditions, operating in temperatures ranging from -49°C to +50°C.

Alongside the ExtremV vehicle is the combat-proven 40AGL Mk2 automatic grenade launcher, capable of delivering accurate and intense firepower against enemy personnel and light armoured vehicles.

ST Engineering boasts a diverse portfolio of businesses across the defence and public security, aerospace and smart city segments. The group harnesses technology and innovation to provide solutions for a more secure and sustainable world. Headquartered in Singapore, it has operations spanning Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the US, serving customers in more than 100 countries.



The ExtremV offers multiple essential capabilities ranging from emergency rescue and medical evacuation to logistics transportation and firefighting



## Otokar brings Gulf success story to WDS

Making its debut at WDS this week, Otokar from Türkiye (Hall 1 stand B4 and outdoor Courtyard CY-7) is showing no fewer than nine of its renowned vehicle platforms and turret systems.

“Seeing that more than 33,000 Otokar military vehicles are serving in more than 40 countries on five continents, it was important for Otokar to highlight its standing in the military and security field in this region,” said general manager Serdar Görgüç.

Various types of Otokar armoured vehicles have been successfully operated by the military and security forces of the Gulf countries for a quarter of a century. For Görgüç WDS presents a significant opportunity to strengthen the company’s ties with Saudi Arabia and the wider region.

“Through our subsidiary, Otokar Land Systems, established in 2016, Otokar strengthened its presence in the GCC to be physically closer to our users.”

Among the systems on display are the Tulpar medium tank with the Leonardo Hitfact MkII 120mm turret, the Arma 8x8 infantry fighting vehicle (IFV) with Mızrak 30mm turret, the Akrep II 4x4 reconnaissance vehicle with 90mm John Cockerill turret, and the Cobra II 4x4 armoured personnel carrier (APC) with 12.7mm remote-controlled weapon system (RCWS). Several other Cobra vehicles are displayed alongside the Tulpar-S amphibious tracked APC and Ural 4x4 armoured patrol vehicle.

Otokar is also exhibiting its new-generation Akrep II with a John Cockerill 90mm turret.

Built on Otokar’s initial Akrep developed in the 1990s, this vehicle is designed as an armoured reconnaissance and surveillance vehicle. With its large calibre weapon, it combines high firepower and survivability in a low silhouette, meeting current and future needs of modern armies.

“Over the past eight years, Otokar Land Systems has conducted important successful projects,” Görgüç said. “Our

technology transfer and local production desire in the Gulf, coupled with strong design, development, technology and engineering capabilities, ensured Otokar’s solid footprint here. At WDS, we aim to reinforce this position and forge new partnerships.”



Otokar's Arma 8x8 infantry fighting vehicle

Billypix



### SHOW BUSINESS

Yousif Mahmoud, director general of BIAS, invites the industry to Bahrain for November's show spectacular

## Bahrain promises 2024 airshow extravaganza

Bahrain’s ruler, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, this week inaugurated the newly introduced Bell AH1-Z Cobra attack helicopters into the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) as part of the Bahrain Shield project.

The inauguration was part of the 56th anniversary celebrations of the BDF and was the latest in a series of acquisitions that has seen ongoing development of the force. The Royal Bahrain Air Force is the first to operate the AH1-Z Cobra outside the USA.

And the helicopter, along with other hardware with the BDF, will lead the flying festivities at this year’s Bahrain International Air Show (BIAS) which takes place at the Sakir air base on 9-11 November.

The show has grown in size and reputation since it launched in 2010, and Yousif Mahmoud, director general of BIAS, is at WDS to encourage the defence industry and its supply chain to be part of the event.

“The current trend in the region is to create a local defence industry with each country now planning for the

products or technology to be used, rather than just to order from outside,” Mahmoud said.

“I think there are a lot of projects for joint venture discussion and the environment we have created at the show since the beginning makes it very comfortable for these discussions. I think it is more about how to get cooperation and joint ventures and projects rather than selling and buying equipment.”

Major OEMs already signed up include BAE Systems which inked a contract at WDS this week.

The Bahrain show features a spectacular flying display – at three hours, one of the most impressive on the show circuit. This year will feature a packed display from both civil and military aircraft, including a show-topping flying pyrotechnic spectacular from aerobatic aircraft as the sun sets over the Bahrain desert.

Sakir has its own airspace, allowing exhibitors the opportunity to prove their capability and manoeuvrability to the crowds.

## The appliance of science: Growing local capability

Seeing a dearth of real design, engineering, and manufacturing capability in the local defence domain, the founder and chief executive of Science Technology for Development and Investment (Hall 2 stand P6) set up the company in 2017 in line with Saudi Vision 2030.

“We started modestly with solutions that are widely required in the military and security fields, such as composite material body armour products,” said Idris Ahmed Alzakari. “Besides not requiring a licence, we could invest in materials manufacture to quickly expand into domains like aerospace where the same composites are widely used.”

He said the resultant light aircraft-type drone is totally homegrown.

From here, Science Technology

invested in and built a forging plant for 155mm artillery projectile bodies, which required a world-class metallurgy capability. In turn, the metallurgy capability enabled further product development by the group, in keeping with a key theme of Vision 2030, namely the improvement of the quality of local content.

Science Technology today comprises a number of individual businesses, focused on munitions, soldier protection, including a CBRN capability and vehicle decontamination, and aerostat support, also referred to as persistent threat detection system (PTDS). They operate under the umbrella of the Science Technology holding company.

“Having a deep understanding of the Saudi military and defence sector’s current and strategic



needs, we align the Kingdom’s strategic vision of the military and defence with our own strategy,” he

said. “Ours is an organic growth enterprise, which opens fresh avenues as time goes on.”

### ORGANIC GROWTH

Science Technology chief executive Idris Ahmed Alzakari posing at a newly developed remote weapon system

## Innovative systems on display from MBDA

MBDA is showcasing its range of state-of-the-art systems in support of air, land and naval defence.

The systems on show range from the very short-range capability of the Mistral family, through to medium air defence represented by the CAMM family, and up to the newly evolved Aster B1 all displayed at WDS.

MBDA’s innovative Sky Warden system is designed to manage the full C-UAS kill chain from detection to neutralisation, operating as an integrated component in a layered air defence architecture, or in a standalone configuration. It is a modular, scalable and evolvable system able to match specific complex operational scenarios.

Meteor, a capable beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile, is already integrated on the Eurofighter Typhoon, Dassault Rafale and Saab Gripen and is undergoing integration onto the Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter.

Alongside Meteor on the MBDA



stand (F12.1), Storm Shadow and Spear are also featured.

The naval domain is well-represented by Exocet MM40 B3C and Sea Venom, while VL Mica NG is displayed at the SAMI booth together with Mistral and CAMM; while land systems on show include Brimstone and the

▲ MBDA’s stand is packed with technology and innovation

new Akeron MP.

Akeron, the only fifth-generation combat-proven missile in service, has been operationally tested and proven in extreme climates including desert and sub-Arctic conditions.

### ▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

## Red Cat flies man-portable drone at WDS

US drone tech company Red Cat, which is using its first appearance at WDS to introduce its products to the defence and security market in the Middle East, is flying its Teal 2 unit in the daily land demonstration.

Teal 2 is manufactured in the US by Red Cat subsidiary Teal Drones and is a man-portable drone solution. Its fully modular design features a night vision camera, multi-vehicle control and artificial intelligence capabilities.

The drone is designed to support US and allied military operations, public safety organisations and government agencies in a variety of environments.





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