Summary

- During this reporting period, Houthi forces in Yemen launched a number of missile attacks on strategic locations in the south of Saudi Arabia. These were noted on 6, 9, 11, 14 and 15 May respectively. The targets included the Riyadh Dry port, and other targets in the south of the kingdom, including Jizan and Najran. All missiles were intercepted, and no human casualties or material damage was reported.

- On 4 May, Saudi security forces killed a wanted suspect who was believed to be involved in the shooting of a number of border guards in the Asir region. The individual was killed during a security operation near the Namas area, Asir province.

- On 5 May, Saudi Arabia announced its support of the American withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, which was announced by President Donald Trump earlier in the month. The Saudi foreign minister also announced the intention of Saudi Arabia to seek nuclear weaponry, should Iran recommence their nuclear weapons program.

- On 2 May, it was announced that Saudi border guards had confiscated over 600kg of cannabis across the Najran and Jizan regions, and arrested seven smugglers, six of whom were Ethiopian and one who was Eritrean.

- On 7 May, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) signed a financial grant in collaboration with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The deal includes USD 20 million to fight human suffering in Yemen, and comes following a number of sizable donations to other programs in Syria and Yemen earlier in the year.
Significant Events: 1 - 15 May 2018

Saudi Arabia Bi-Weekly Summary

Asir: 5 May
The man who killed four police officers in Asir province earlier this year was killed in an operation by security forces in al-Ohda, Namas, Asir province.

Jizan: 9 May
Saudi air defence forces intercepted a missile fired toward Jizan. No other details were given by the Saudi government.

Jizan: 11 May
A ballistic missile was fired toward Jizan. No injuries or material damage were recorded.

Jizan: 15 May
A ballistic missile was fired toward the King Faisal military base in Jizan, but was intercepted.

Najran: 6 May
Saudi air defense forces intercepted two ballistic missiles fired by Houthi forces toward the city of Najran. Fragments of the missile fell on residential areas but did not cause damage.

Jizan: 14 May
A ballistic missile fired toward Jizan was intercepted. No casualties or material damage were recorded.

Saudi Arabia Country Threat Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations &amp; Ratings</th>
<th>Saudi Arabia</th>
<th>Riyadh</th>
<th>Jeddah</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Rating</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Saudi Arabia support US decision to withdraw from Iran deal

On 6 May, US President Donald Trump announced that he would withdraw the United States from the Iran nuclear framework deal. This deal was signed in 2015 and limited the Iranian nuclear program to civilian use and stipulated that Iran nuclear activity would be subject to inspection from the international community.

In short, Trump believes that the Iran deal falls short of addressing Iran’s behaviour regionally and its missile program. Iran is currently involved in a number of regional conflicts in Syria and Yemen, providing funding to groups that the US oppose.

Saudi Arabia has welcomed this announcement, with a government spokesperson saying that the country also supports the reinstatement of economic sanctions on the Iranian regime, which were suspended under the agreement.

Saudi Arabia previously supported the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, based on the conviction that all possible steps must be taken to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The current feeling now is that Iran took advantage of the economic benefits afforded by the lifting of sanctions, and used them to continue to destabilize the region by developing ballistic missiles and supporting groups such as Hezbollah and the Houthi militia.

COMMENT: Following this, and an attempted missile attack on Riyadh, which was seen as a declaration of war, Saudi foreign minister Adel al-Jubeir said the country would seek to develop its own nuclear weapons program if Iran do the same.

The reimposition of sanctions on Iran could make it more challenging for Iran to continue to fund proxy groups such as Hezbollah and the Houthis, which could lead to a reduction in missile attempts against strategic locations in Saudi Arabia. That being said, even before the nuclear deal, when the country was crippled with multilateral and unilateral economic sanctions, the Iranian regime continued to support militias, proxies and terrorist groups. Therefore, it is likely that funding would continue even after sanctions. COMMENT ENDS.

KSA grants USD 20mn to UN relief agency

On 7 May, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) signed a financial grant in collaboration with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The agreement was co-signed by Abdullah al-Rabeeah and Rashid Khalikoy, the general supervisor of KSRelief and the UN assistant secretary-general for humanitarian partnerships with the Middle East and Central Asia.

Al-Rabeeah said that the USD 20mn was provided on the directive of King Salman, and would be in support of coordination with the partnership’s activities to alleviate humanitarian suffering.

Al-Rabeeah also said that the grant would support OCHA humanitarian activities in Yemen and part of the funds would support OCHA
humanitarian partnerships with the Middle East and Central Asia.

**COMMENT:** The Saudi aid comes within Saudi Arabia’s efforts to support humanitarian and relief works around the world without discrimination, and in response to UN appeals.

KSRelief has already donated millions of dollars to projects in Yemen, to fight the ongoing humanitarian suffering there, including a severe cholera epidemic.

A medical team from the KSRelief based in Yemen performed 27 surgeries on sick people on 2 and 3 May, as part of the wider aid project in Yemen. **COMMENT ENDS.**

**KSA and South Korea expand mutual cooperation**

The Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Khalid al-Falih’s three-day visit to South Korea has provided a new impetus to bilateral relations.

Al-Falih met South Korean President Moon Jae-In and Minister of Trade and Energy Paik Un-gyu to expand bilateral cooperation in energy and other key sectors.

Moon sought to promote South Korean nuclear energy technology, noting that his country had safely built nuclear power plants for more than 40 years.

**COMMENT:** Saudi Arabia is looking to diversify its energy sources away from petrochemicals under the Vision 2030 strategy. Therefore, it is likely that the two countries will develop a number of new, small or medium sized reactors. Saudi Arabia is also hoping to invest in the joint development of electric and other eco-vehicles with Korea. **COMMENT ENDS.**

**KSA condemns Israel for firing on Palestinian protesters**

Tens of thousands of Palestinians protested the opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem on 14 May. Violent escalations resulted in Israeli troops firing tear gas and live ammunition at the demonstrators, with the latest reports suggesting 55 were killed and a further 2,200 injured.

According to a source in the Saudi Foreign Ministry, Saudi Arabia has strongly condemned Israel’s forceful dispersal of the Palestinian protesters and reiterated the country’s firm stance in support of the Palestinian cause, rejecting the US Embassy move. Similar sentiments were expressed across the Arab world, including Kuwait, who stated it was considering calling an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council. Similarly, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also rejected and condemned the Embassy move, stressing it put international peace and security at threat.

**COMMENT:** Pan-Arab protest activity is likely to persist for at least the short-medium term over the US Embassy move, particularly with the anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel on 15 May. This day is commemorated as Naqba (the Catastrophe) Day by Palestinians. Activity associated with Naqba and the upcoming International Quds Day (an annual event held to express support for the Palestinian cause), on 8 June, will be heightened due to the high number of deaths recorded on 14 May. Civil action in support of Palestine may be observed in Saudi Arabia, though it will likely remain peaceful. **COMMENT ENDS.**
SECURITY UPDATE

On 10 January 2018 the US State Department updated its travel warning for Saudi Arabia, reiterating its call for US citizens to carefully consider the risk of traveling to the country, due to continuing threats from terrorist groups and the threat of ballistic missile attacks on civilian targets by rebel forces in Yemen. Yemeni forces regularly fire artillery at Saudi border towns and launch cross-border attacks against Saudi military personnel. The warning once again confirmed the prohibition of government personnel travelling within 50 miles of the Yemeni border, as well as to the cities of Jizan and Najran in the south, and to the towns of Qatif and Hofuf in Eastern Province, without prior permission.

Yemen updates

Overall, the situation along the Yemeni-Saudi border remains volatile, with little to no noticeable change from the last reporting period in the number of significant activities being recorded.

However, the situation in the southern border regions of Jizan, Najran and Asir remains extremely volatile.

Significant incidents over the reporting period include:

- **On 2 May**, Houthi forces in Yemen allegedly fired eight Badr-1 ballistic missiles towards the southern city of Jizan. This was not confirmed by the Saudi government, who usually confirm missile attempts perpetrated by Houthi forces.
- **On 2 May**, a Houthi sniper allegedly shot a number of Saudi soldiers in Jizan province. This has not been confirmed by the Saudi government.
- **On 4 May**, Houthi forces allegedly attacked a contingent of Saudi soldiers in Jizan. No further details were provided, and the incident has not been confirmed by the Saudi government.
- **On 4 May**, Houthi forces allegedly ambushed a Saudi military convoy in the Najran province. This has not been confirmed by the Saudi government.
- **On 5 May**, a Houthi sniper allegedly shot down two Saudi Arabian drones in the Jizan region. This has not been confirmed by the Saudi government.
- **On 5 May**, Houthi forces allegedly destroyed a Saudi tank with an anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) in Jizan. This was not confirmed by the Saudi government.
- **On 6 May**, Houthi forces allegedly killed two Saudi troops at the Haskul military base in Jizan. This was not confirmed by the Saudi military.
- **On 6 May**, the Houthi forces allegedly killed two Saudi troops at the Haskul military base in Jizan. This was not confirmed by the Saudi military.
- **On 6 May**, according to Houthi media, an ATGM was fired into a crowd of Saudi soldiers in Najran, killing an unspecified number. This was not confirmed by the Saudi government.
- **On 6 May**, an Al Zalzal 2 missile was fired at the Ain al-Thwareen base in Asir, destroying the base. This was not confirmed by the Saudi government.
On 7 May, according to local reporting, forces in Yemen fired at least four shot-range missiles at a Saudi-run military base in the west-central Sana’a province of Yemen, causing heavy losses. This has not been confirmed by the Saudi government.

On 8 May, Houthi forces allegedly shelled a Saudi army border post in Najran province. No further information was given and this was not confirmed by the Saudi government.

On 9 May, Houthi forces destroyed a number of Saudi military vehicles with an anti-tank guided missile in the Asir province of Saudi Arabia. This was not confirmed by the Saudi government.

On 11 May, a Houthi artillery strike destroyed a Saudi military vehicle in Yemeni province of Hajjah, reportedly killing all of its crew. This was not confirmed by the Saudi government.

On 12 May, Houthi forces shelled Saudi military sites in Jizan and Najran, destroying five military vehicles. This was not confirmed by the Saudi government.

On 14 May, Houthi forces targeted Saudi military bases in Jizan and Najran with artillery fire, reportedly killing several soldiers and destroying a military vehicle. This was not confirmed by the Saudi government.

On 14 May, Houthi air defences reportedly shot down a Saudi-led coalition drone in the Jizan province of Saudi Arabia. Houthi media sources also claimed to shoot down two other Saudi-led coalition drones near Jabal al Doud in Jizan “over the past few days”. Neither incident was confirmed by the Saudi government.

On 6 May, Saudi air defense systems intercepted two ballistic missiles that were fired by Houthi forces in Yemen towards the southern city of Najran. Fragments from the intercepted missiles fell on a number of residential areas, but did not cause damage to property or people.

On 9 May, Saudi air defense forces intercepted a missile that was fired toward the southern city of Jizan. No other information was given by the Saudi government, so it is not thought that this missile caused any damage to people or property. Later, on the same day, two ballistic missiles were fired towards economic and residential areas of Riyadh. One of these missiles was intercepted, whilst the other fell in a desert area, south of Riyadh. According to Houthi media, one of the targets of the missile was the Riyadh Dry Port, in the As Sinaiyah district of the city.

On 11 May, Saudi air defense systems intercepted a ballistic missile fired at the southern city of Jizan. No material or human damage was recorded.

On 14 May, Houthi forces in Yemen launched a ballistic missile towards the southern city of Jizan, allegedly targeting a Saudi Aramco facility in
the city. According to Houthi media sources, the Badr-1 missile struck its target, though this was refuted by the Saudi military, who claimed it landed in an uninhabited desert area.

Finally, on 15 May, a Houthi ballistic missile, reportedly launched from Saada in northern Yemen, was targeted towards the King Faisal military base in Jizan city. According to the Saudi government however, air defense units intercepted the missile, causing no casualties or property damage.

**COMMENT:** There has been a slight decrease in missile attempts by the Houthi forces towards Saudi Arabia compared to April. April had the most attacks since the missile attempts started three years ago. This slight reduction does not necessarily indicate a decrease in the capability or intent of Houthi forces to launch attacks against strategic targets in Saudi Arabia however.

In the 6 May attempt, the missile was fired from the Amran province of Yemen, whilst the remainder of the attacks originated from the Saada province of Yemen. Saada is the origin point for the majority of Houthi missiles fired into Yemen.

The missiles fired at Riyadh were of the Burkan-2H missile class, as this is the only one in the Houthi arsenal with enough range to reach Riyadh. Additionally, the missiles fired at Najran and Jizan are believed to be of the Badr-1 class of missile.

It currently remains unclear if the missile attack against the military base in Jizan on 15 May was successful or not. Despite claims by the Saudi government that the missile was intercepted, evidence of an interception has yet to be disclosed, as is typically the case. **COMMENT ENDS.**

**Saudi Arabia to begin nuclear weapons program if Iran resumes its own program**

In an interview with CNN, Saudi Arabia’s Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir stated that if Iran acquires nuclear capabilities, Saudi Arabia would do the same. He also praised US President Donald Trump’s announcement on 8 May that the US was quitting the Iran nuclear deal. Al-Jubeir added that the nuclear deal was flawed in that it did not address Iran’s ballistic missile program nor the country’s alleged support of terrorist organizations.

**Security forces shoot wanted terrorist**

On 5 May, Saudi security forces shot and killed Khalid Al-Shahri, who was accused of attacking a checkpoint in Asir province at the end of March. Four security guards were shot and killed during this attack, as well as Al-Shahri’s two accomplices. The investigation led Saudi security forces to Al-Shahri’s residence in Al-Ohda, near Namas, Asir province, where he open fired on security forces, prompting an exchange of fire that led to his death.

**Border guards arrest a number of drug smugglers**

On 4 May, it was reported that the Saudi border patrol had seized over 617kg of cannabis after foiling a number of drug-smuggling attempts near the southern cities of Jizan and Najran between 22 April and 4 May. According to reports, six Ethiopians and an Eritrean were arrested.
EASTERN PROVINCE SECURITY SUMMARY

Following decades of discontent, Shia majority areas in Eastern Province are at growing risk of instability. Numerous risk factors need to be closely observed.

Shia militancy. Low-level but relentless small arms fire attacks on security forces in Qatif and Dammam continue to sour relations between the local community and security forces, in turn driving youth radicalization. With villages such as Awamiya having existed under a prevailing state of emergency since popular protests in 2011, there is a growing risk that confrontations between Shia militants and the Saudi state will escalate. On 1 August 2017, hundreds of people fled Awamiya, due to government forces fighting Shia gunmen. Tensions had been escalating since May 2017, due to authorities’ attempts to tear down the old quarter to prevent fighters using the narrow streets to evade capture.

Popular mobilization. There is an enduring risk that discontent among Shia communities will translate into popular protests such as those seen in 2011. On 2 January, residents of Awamiya reportedly took to the streets to commemorate the first anniversary of the execution of Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr. Al-Nimr – a revered cleric and the spiritual leader of Shia dissent in Saudi Arabia – was extremely popular with disaffected Shia and his execution has helped further alienate the community. Other local issues such as the planned demolition of historic homes in Mosawara may combine with the growing militancy of the youth to trigger wider protests with little warning.

Regional rivalries. The situation in Shia areas of Eastern Province is sensitive to developments in Bahrain, which is currently witnessing a period of significantly heightened tensions. Most recently, on 27 February there was a bomb attack on a police bus, wounding five officers. Against a background of growing militant attacks, Bahraini authorities have been escalating their prosecution of leaders of the Shia protest movement, fuelling further dissent. The House of Saud strongly supports Bahrain’s ruling family in its confrontation with elements of the Shia population, which it sees as part of the broader conflict with Iran.
KSA 300km/h Haramain train to start service in September and plans for new airports

The first high-speed electric trains between Makkah and Madinah will be running by September 2018, according to the Transport Minister Nabil bin Mohammed Al Amoudi.

The high-speed electric train is designed to travel at speeds of 300km/h and is considered to be the fastest in the Middle East. The railway will be able to carry 60 million passengers a year by the time it is fully operation this year.

The 450 kilometer main line will travel through the King Abdullah Economic City with a short branch line to the new King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah.

Transport is a main pillar of the national economy and a key driver of the economic renaissance that will take place under Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 strategy, according to Al-Amoudi.

Aside from the Makkah-Madinah railway, the other major transport project is the new airport in Jeddah, the minister said. It will begin operations this month, with a limited number of domestic flights. Further domestic flights will be added in July and September, along with six new gates for international flights.

KAIA will be fully operational in the first three months of 2019, with a total of 46 gates. It will be five times the size of the existing airport, with a capacity of 30 million passengers a year, according to Al Amoudi.

Al Amoudi added that the first phase of the airport’s operational plan will begin in May and will include a limited number of domestic flights through six gates. Other domestic flights through five gates will be added in July. In the third phase, beginning in September, the designed number of domestic flights will be completed and a number of international flights will be added through six new gates, increasing the total number to 17 gates.

Egypt and KSA seek increased trade and economic cooperation

Trade and coordination of joint positions in international and regional forums were highlighted during the 16th Saudi-Egyptian Joint Committee meeting that concluded in Riyadh on 4 May. Following a series of bilateral meetings over the past two days, five working groups were formed to discuss issues in the economic, commercial, investment, industry, cultural, educational and training fields.

The two sides stressed the importance of continuing coordination of joint positions in international and regional forums, especially within the framework of the World Trade Organization, the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. They also highlighted the importance of enhancing cooperation in the intra-trade movement between the two countries, and small and medium enterprises.

The volume of trade exchange between the Kingdom and Egypt for 2016 amounted to $5.841 million. The Kingdom’s exports for the same year reached approximately $3.726 million while imports amounted to $2,841 million.

The meeting was co-chaired by Saudi Minister of Commerce and Investment Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qassabi and Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry Tariq Qabil in the presence of a number of senior officials from both countries. Al-Qassabi highlighted the efforts exerted by the governments of both
Saudi Arabia and Egypt in improving trade relations and exploiting investment opportunities, overcoming the obstacles and difficulties hindering the flow of bilateral investments, and increasing the volume of trade exchange between the two countries.

**Aramco launches initiative for Saudi women**

Saudi’s top oil producer, Saudi Aramco, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University to promote a working program for Saudi women.

Aramco aims to increase job opportunities for women in line with Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030. The agreement will seek to increase female participation in employment from 22% to 30%, and by this initiative boost the Saudi economy.
Between 1 and 15 May 2018, Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Health (MOH) reported three additional cases of MERS-CoV.

According to the MOH, the latest figures for 2018 bring the national total to 1,670 MERS-CoV cases, including 64 asymptomatic cases, 707 deaths and 7 patients still receiving treatment. On 5 January 2018, it was reported that a 57-year-old male died in Riyadh after being infected by MERS. Notably, accurate accounting of MERS-CoV cases remains generally difficult because of historically poor reporting by officials and slow international confirmation.

The US CDC maintains an “Alert - Level 2” travel advisory for Saudi Arabia due to the risk of MERS infection. The CDC’s “Alert – Level 2” advisory is the second of three advisory levels, notifying travelers of elevated risk at a destination, often associated with specific risk factors. This level also encourages travelers to take specific actions and emphasizes the need for travelers to enhance their usual health precautions - predominantly ensuring all vaccinations are current and diligence in personal health precautions, in the case of MERS. People with diabetes, renal failure, chronic lung disease, and immunocompromised persons are thought to be at highest risk and are advised to avoid contact with camels, consuming raw camel milk or camel urine, and eating meat that has not been properly cooked.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 May – 15 Jun 2018</td>
<td>Ramadan*</td>
<td>Religious observance – reduced working hours for public sector and some commercial organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Jun 2018</td>
<td>Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)*</td>
<td>Public and religious holiday – widespread office closures</td>
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<td>11 Sep – 12 Sep</td>
<td>Islamic New Year*</td>
<td>Public holiday</td>
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<td>23 Sep</td>
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<td>21 Nov</td>
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* Muslim holidays are often determined by local sightings of lunar phases; dates given are approximate.
About Constellis

Saudi Arabia Bi-Weekly Summary

Constellis is a leading provider of risk management, protective security, crisis management and enabling support services to governments, international organisations and major corporations across the globe. We specialize in serving the energy, construction, extractives, critical infrastructure, development and national security sectors—assisting our clients in understanding risk and in conducting their operations safely and securely, no matter their location. Constellis takes pride in our strict adherence to an exacting code of ethics and rigorous focus on standards and compliance—reinforcing the pioneering role we play in fostering stability, efficiency and sustainable economic development.

Representing client interests around the world, we maintain operations in more than 25 countries as well as a global network of strategic and local partners. Connected via our state-of-the-art operations command and control centres, we provide a rapid response capability spanning North America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Constellis is headquartered in just outside Washington, D.C. in the United States, and possesses regional offices in the UAE, UK, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Kenya. The core values underpinning our operating philosophy are the provision of international best practices while conducting all activities with respect for people, cultures and traditions; to uphold the principles of integrity, reliability and trust; to build capacity through knowledge transfer and to strengthen and empower local economies and communities.

Ultimately, our commitment is to prioritize local talent and local suppliers and to develop a profound understanding of the societal, legislative and operational situation ‘on the ground’. This affords us and our clients a unique freedom of movement and enables us to create safe and secure environments in a discrete and sustainable manner.

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