

## Country Listing

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#### The Role of the United Arab Emirates in the Iran-Iraq War and the Persian Gulf War

The attitude of the UAE during attacks on international shipping in the Iran-Iraq War was ambivalent. The emirates were profiting from a brisk reexport trade with Iran; furthermore, they felt vulnerable because their offshore oil facilities were exposed to the danger of Iranian attack. Dubai and Ras al Khaymah in particular, with a substantial number of Iranians and native Shia, leaned toward Iran and were reluctant to abandon their neutrality. Abu Dhabi, however, as the richest oil state, adopted a pro-Arab stance in the war favoring Iraq. An offshore oil platform belonging to Abu Dhabi was hit by Iranian missiles in 1987; although denying responsibility, Iran paid an indemnity. The Department of State credited the UAE with supporting the United States Navy during its convoy operations despite Iranian threats of retaliation.

Reversing its earlier policy of avoiding collaboration with foreign military powers, the UAE, according to the Department of State, was the first Gulf state to propose combined military action to deter Iraq when it threatened war against Kuwait. An air refueling exercise between United States and UAE aircraft one week before the invasion of Kuwait was intended as a warning signal to Iraq. During the Persian Gulf War, UAE troops, reportedly numbering several hundred, participated in the conflict as part of the GCC Peninsula Shield force that advanced into the city of Kuwait. United States aircraft bombed Iraqi positions from the UAE, and United States ships, including aircraft carriers, operated out of UAE ports. The UAE air force also carried out strikes against Iraqi forces. A total of six UAE combat deaths were reported as a result of the fighting.

The UAE defense budget remained fairly stable at about US\$1.6 billion between 1988 and 1991. However, an additional US\$3.3 billion represented UAE contributions and pledges in 1991 to other countries in connection with the war. Total UAE support to other countries participating in the Persian Gulf War was reported to have reached US\$6 billion by mid-1991; payments of nearly US\$3.8 billion had been made to the United States, US\$500 million to Britain, and US\$1.4 billion to Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, and seven other nations, combined, to offset their economic losses from the war. Oil prices and UAE oil production rose significantly after the outbreak of the Gulf crisis; exports rose from US\$15.5 billion in 1989 to US\$21.0 billion in 1990. However, the balance of payments was negative for the first time as a result of UAE contributions to other countries affected by the crisis and large capital transfers out of the country during the period.

Data as of January 1993

