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PolicyWatch 1069

Map Wars: The UAE Reclaims Lost Territory from Saudi Arabia

by [Simon Henderson](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Brief Analysis

After years of quiet diplomatic frustration, the oil-rich Persian Gulf federated state of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has publicly reopened a dispute with neighboring Saudi Arabia over two parts of their common border. A map in the 2006 edition of the official UAE Yearbook shows the UAE extending westward as far as Qatar, across territory currently controlled by Saudi Arabia ([download](#) a PDF copy of the map). (The map in the 2005 edition does not show this.) Less obvious, but also depicted, is a southern border that extends to include most of the Shaybah Oil Field, Saudi Arabia's newest oil production area.

Washington will not want to be asked to take sides, but any diplomatic row or brinkmanship could directly jeopardize American commercial interests -- U.S. companies are heavily involved in both states. Militarily, the UAE's al-Dhafra Air Base is used by U.S. transport and reconnaissance aircraft, partly replacing the now closed U.S. facilities in Saudi Arabia, and the UAE's port of Mina Jebel Ali is frequently used by American naval ships.

The map published in the "Map Room" of the official UAE Ministry of Information and Culture ❖

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