

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 58816

Title: Deterrence by Assets: How UAV Localization Under Saudi Vision 2030 Reshapes Gulf Security Architecture,

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality			✓	
Clarity			✓	
Significance	✓			

Reviewer's ID: Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

General Overview

The manuscript titled "Deterrence by Assets: How UAV Localization Under Saudi Vision 2030 Reshapes Gulf Security Architecture" provides an insightful, policy-oriented analysis of Saudi Arabia's defense industrial strategy. The author argues that localizing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) production under Vision 2030 marks a structural transition in Gulf security from alliance-dependent security toward "deterrence by assets". By establishing domestic sovereign control over UAV manufacturing, maintenance, and software modification, the Kingdom aims to build supply chain resilience, mitigate external political leverage, and flatten the cost curves of asymmetric air defense.

The study uses qualitative policy analysis, theoretical synthesis, and comparative strategic frameworks. It incorporates a case study examining the reverse-engineering of Iranian-derived loitering munitions (such as the Shahed-136) and the development of low-cost counter-tier platforms like the U.S. LUKAS system. The paper explores how massed, low-cost loitering munitions exploit the high marginal cost of traditional Western air defense interceptors, creating a depletion problem for defenders. Through the institutional mechanisms of the General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI) and Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI), local UAV production serves as both a deterrence multiplier and a diplomatic bargaining tool within a multipolar regional order.

The paper addresses an important intersection between defense industrial policy and strategic deterrence theory. However, significant revisions are required prior to publication. The submission suffers from a

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major chronological and factual error regarding a future war scenario presented as historical fact, lacks empirical grounding regarding current Saudi production figures, contains repetitive narrative segments, and exhibits notable reference formatting errors.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Conceptual and Fact-Checking Revisions

- **Address Factual/Temporal Anachronisms:** Section 3.3 presents a hypothetical "2026 Iran-American conflict" as a past historical event. Treating an unverified future scenario as empirical evidence compromises the paper's academic integrity. The author must reframe this discussion as a conceptual or simulated scenario evaluating swarm depletion dynamics rather than an actual historical event.
- **Ground Industrial Claims in Empirical Context:** While the paper details the theoretical framework of "deterrence by assets," it provides sparse empirical detail on actual Saudi industrial output. The manuscript would benefit from incorporating concrete data regarding current SAMI/GAMI joint ventures, specific localized UAV models (e.g., Karayel-SU, Sky Guard), and actual local content percentages achieved to date.

2. Theoretical and Methodological Depth

- **Refine the Cost-Curve Analysis:** The discussion on the economics of attrition and air-defense depletion in Section 4 is compelling but would be strengthened by introducing explicit mathematical or comparative models (e.g., comparing the cost per intercept of a Patriot PAC-3 or NASAMS against a low-cost loitering drone).
- **Address Institutional Barriers:** The paper paints a somewhat optimistic picture of SAMI and GAMI. The manuscript should offer a more critical assessment of structural impediments, such as domestic human capital deficits, dependency on foreign sub-components (such as microprocessors and specialized sensors), and intellectual property constraints.

3. Narrative Structure, Formatting, and Citations

- **Reduce Conceptual Redundancy:** Multiple sections repeat the core theoretical premise that "drones are cheap, interceptors are expensive, and localization builds resilience". Streamlining Sections 3.1, 4.1, and 4.2 will significantly improve narrative momentum.
- **Clean Up Textual Artifacts and Citations:** Remove draft artifacts like "UNDER PEERREWIN JAR" or "UNDER PEER REVIEW IN IJAR" within the body and references. Additionally, ensure all references adhere strictly to a single citation style, as several entries in the references list lack complete publication details or display inconsistent capitalization.

Recommendation to the Editor

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Recommendation: Minor Revision

The manuscript offers a timely conceptual framework—"deterrence by assets"—that meaningfully contributes to the literature on Gulf security and defense industrial policy. The integration of economics, attrition warfare, and institutional governance provides a strong analytical foundation. However, the inclusion of a hypothetical 2026 conflict framed as historical reality is a critical flaw that must be corrected. Provided the author grounds the analysis in actual empirical data, reframes hypothetical scenarios, removes narrative redundancies, and cleans up the reference section, the paper will be suitable for publication.