

# GULF MILITARY AFFAIRS



October – November 2017 (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter)

**By Antonino Occhiuto**

5-October— The US Department of Defence announced a 173USD million contract to deliver 200 JSOW glide bombs to Qatar. The JOWS is a precision glide bomb that has a range up to 130 km when launched from high altitude.

6-October—Saudi Arabia and Russia signed an agreement for the procurement of S-400 long-range air defence systems that will be partly built in Saudi Arabia by Saudi Arabia Military Industry(SAMI). The agreement also involves the production in Saudi Arabia of Kornet-EM anti-tank missiles. The agreement fits the double purpose of enhancing the kingdom's security vis a vis Iran's ballistic threat and fostering the development of an indigenous arms industry in Saudi Arabia.

9-October—The US state department approved a 15USD million sale to provide Saudi Arabia with seven THAAD batteries. The THAAD is the only system capable of intercepting missiles outside the atmosphere. Such purchase reflects Saudi Arabia's authorities increasing fear of Iran's missile capabilities.

10-October—Qatar purchased from the UK 24 Eurofighter Typhoon fighters and 6 Hawk jet trainers. Qatar recently agreed with the United States the purchase of 36 Boeing F-15QA and ordered 24 Dassault Rafafels from France. This latest additions will cause the Qatar Emiri Air Force to increase its frontline fighter force from 12 to 84 aircrafts.

23-October—The Italian company Piaggio Aerospace, in conjunction with the Italian Air Force, is developing the P.1HH HammerHead unmanned aircraft to serve the needs of the UAE Air Force which already ordered eight platforms. The project is being developed in association with the Italian firm Leonardo.

3-November—Emirati media unveiled details of an unmanned maritime vehicle confiscated by the Arab coalition fighting to restore legitimacy in Yemen. Iranian-backed Houthi militias are starting to use remote controlled suicide explosive boats to target supplies and assets of the coalition. Iranian made cables evidence the degree of logistical supply that Tehran is providing to the Houthis.

16-November—Russian industry representatives at the Dubai Airshow spoke of the UAE's advanced interest in purchasing between 10 and 20 Su-35 multi-role fighter aircraft. Notably, Russia sent over 260 senior political and military representatives to Dubai including Russia's Deputy Prime Minister, Dmitry Rogozin and President Putin's chief advisor on arms export policy, Vladimir Kozhin.

18-November—The UAE started the construction of a naval base in Berbera, a port town located Somalia's separatist region of Somaliland. This comes as part of a wider project to establish a permanent military presence in the Gulf of Oman and the Red Sea. The UAE already uses the port and airport of Assab, Eritrea to support its military operations in Yemen.