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Abstracts

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The largest ever arms deal between Saudi Arabia and the US looks set to cement the two countries' relationship. The proposed US\$60bn arms package to Saudi Arabia, includes 84 new F-15 fighters (manufactured by Boeing), with upgrades for 70 more, and three helicopter types – 70 Apaches, 36 Little Birds (both also made by Boeing), as well as 72 Black Hawks (made by Sikorski). In addition, the US is discussing a US\$30bn package to upgrade Saudi Arabia's navy.

The landmark arms deal between Saudi Arabia and the US is viewed as a win-win situation for both parties. The US will benefit from job creation, while Saudi Arabia will strengthen its position vis-à-vis Iran. The Saudi Arabian royal family depends on steady oil revenues and Western support to maintain its tight grip on the population. The loss of either one of these could lead to substantial unrest and potentially regime change over the long term.

Security risks in the region have been heightened by recent bomb threats. The discovery of two highly sophisticated devices in October 2010, hidden in printer cartridges, highlights the risks posed by al-Qaida in the region.

Saudi Arabia has generally seen improving relations with other neighbouring states following its consistent support Pakistan in the wake of the serious floods in that country. The main exception is Iran, which can be considered to be the main geo-strategic rival to Saudi Arabia in the Middle East. We forecast economic growth recovering from 2011 onwards in Saudi Arabia, benefitting from the massive uptick in government spending and gross fixed capital formation. Vast infrastructure plans and a record budget over the coming five years will boost Saudi Arabia's economy through 2014, with real GDP projected to expand an average 3.2% between 2011 and 2014.

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BMI Methodology

How We Generate Our Industry Forecasts

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