

WORLD DEFENSE SHOW 2024

MEDIA COVERAGE ANALYSIS



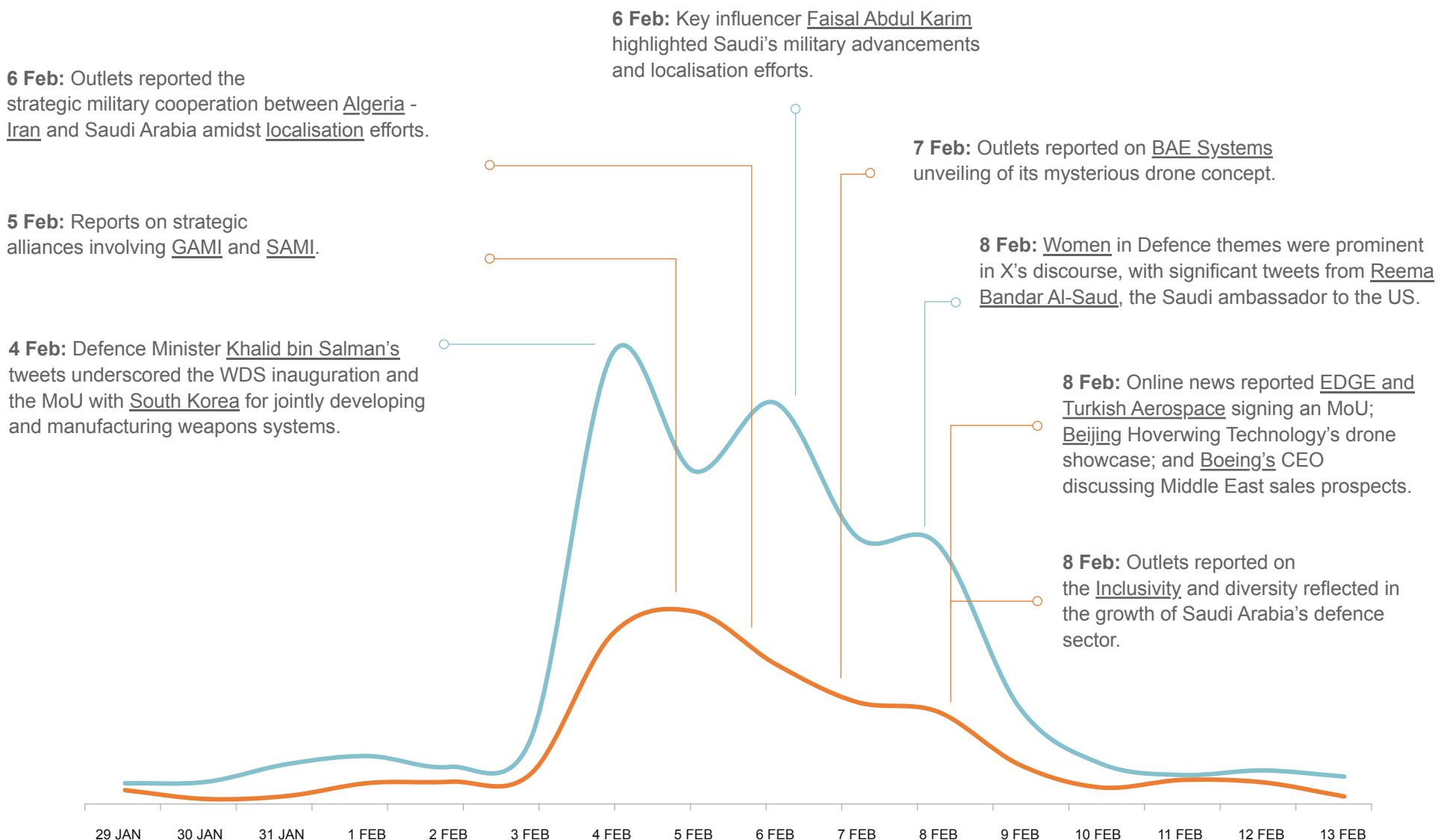
Defence Sector Trends Towards Localised Production,
AI Integration, and Unmanned Systems

JANUARY 29, 2024 - FEBRUARY 13, 2024

WDS 2024 highlighted Saudi Arabia's push for defence self-sufficiency through localisation, key global partnerships, and inclusivity, as seen in media and social engagement spikes.

Media Coverage Volume Trend

— Online Media
— X (Twitter)

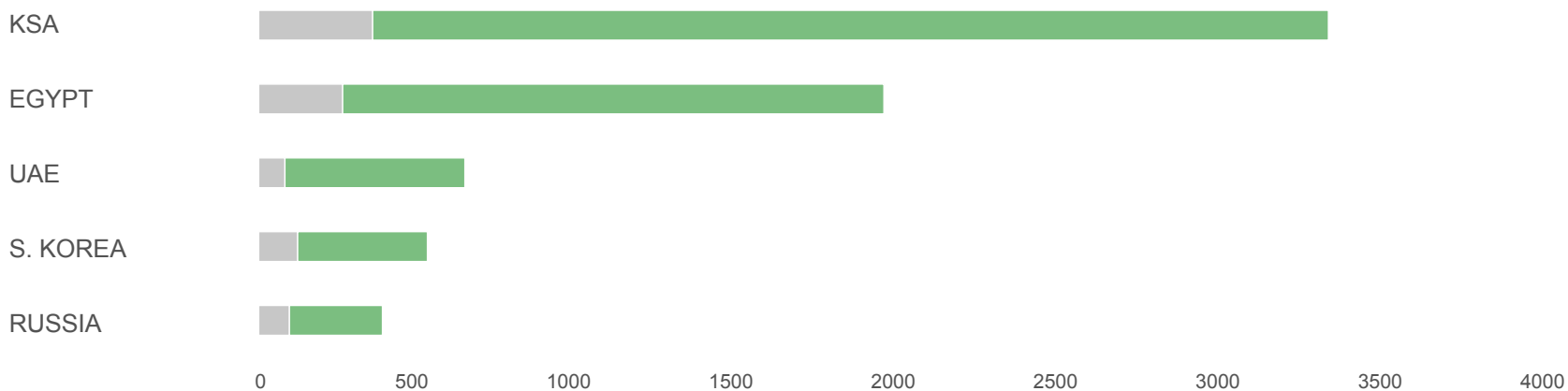


Global headline analysis revealed a positive reception of Saudi's defence initiatives, reflecting regional factual reports. 'Women in Defence' garnered even greater positive attention globally, particularly in India.



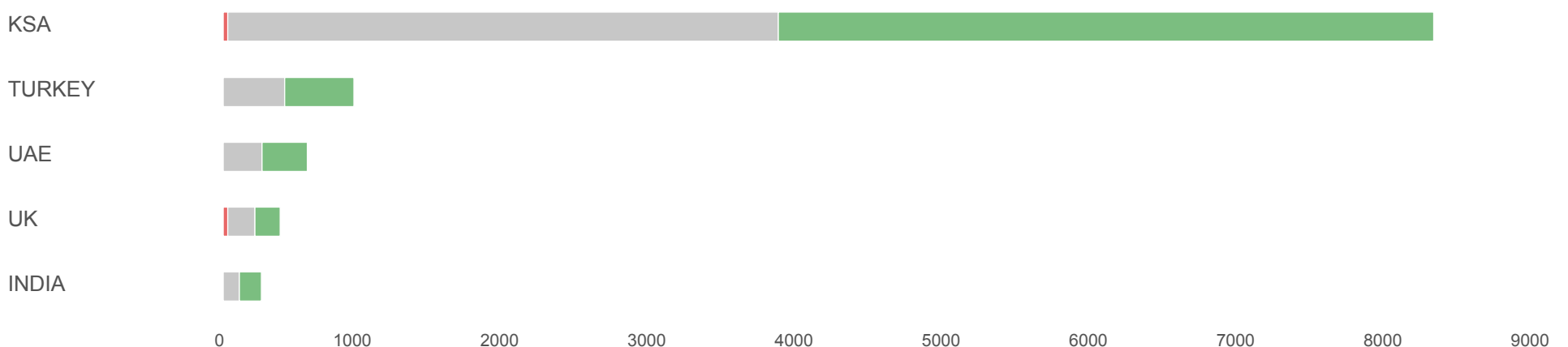
Online media sentiment indicated strong domestic support for Saudi Arabia's initiatives, aligning with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 strategy. Regional and global online coverage is characterized by factual reporting of the event, spotlighting defence technology announcements and international partnerships.

Volume Sentiment Analysis Across Countries In Online Media



X's critiques from the UK, mainly in response to Defence Secretary Grant Shapps's [tweet](#), focused on Saudi Arabia's [human rights](#) record and [Yemen](#) involvement, while domestic Saudi concerns highlighted public service [corruption](#).

Volume sentiment analysis across countries on X (Twitter)



Headline sponsors dominated coverage and focused reporting on Saudi Arabia's international partnerships, while global defence players used the show to spotlight new capabilities.

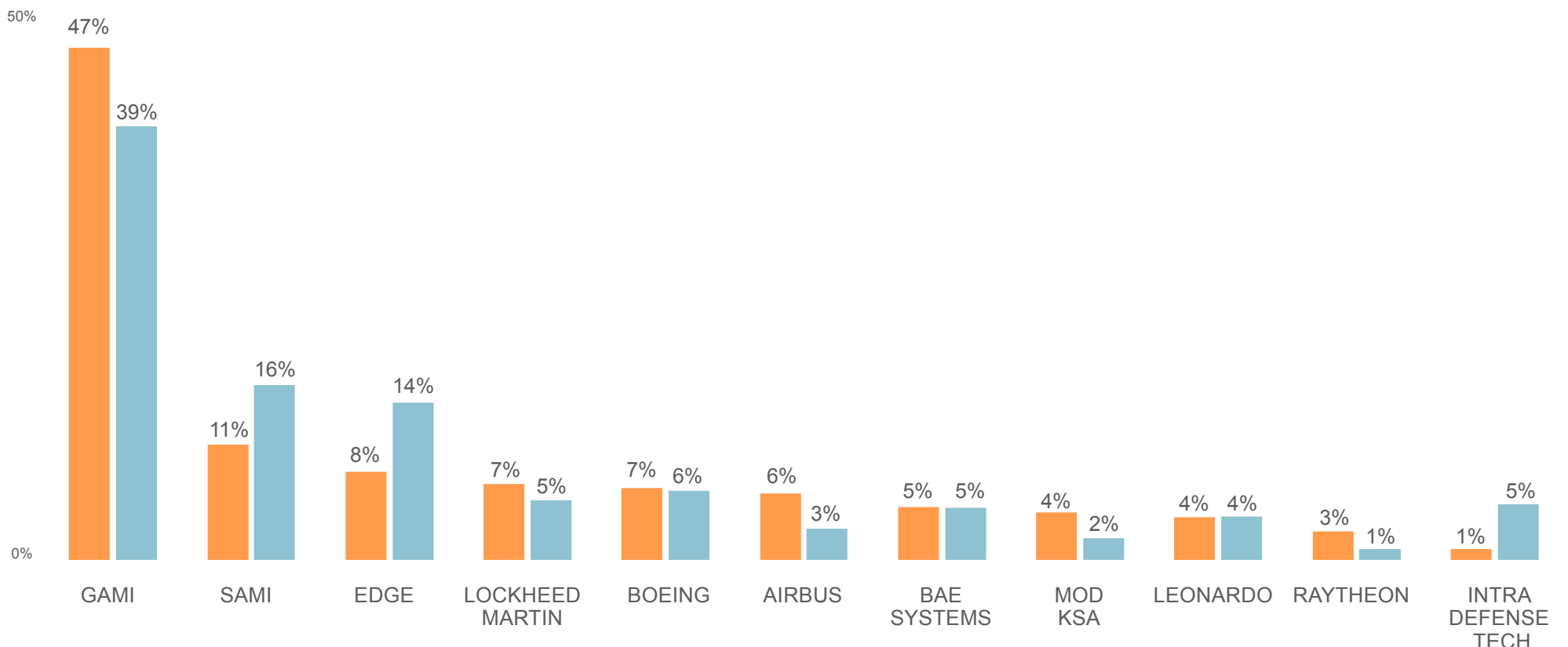
GAMI and **SAMI** were highlighted as key Saudi entities for advancing KSA's defence industry, particularly through UAV/drone production, and their consistent international partnerships, driving Vision 2030's progress.

Lockheed Martin & EDGE's media portrayal emphasised defence collaborations in missile tech & autonomous systems underlining innovative leadership.

Airbus & Boeing were spotlighted for enhancing Saudi defence capabilities with airlift solutions, whereas **BAE Systems** was noted for unveiling cutting-edge autonomous UAV technology.

Most Mentioned Entities Share of Voice (SOV) in Media Coverage

— Online Media
— X (Twitter)



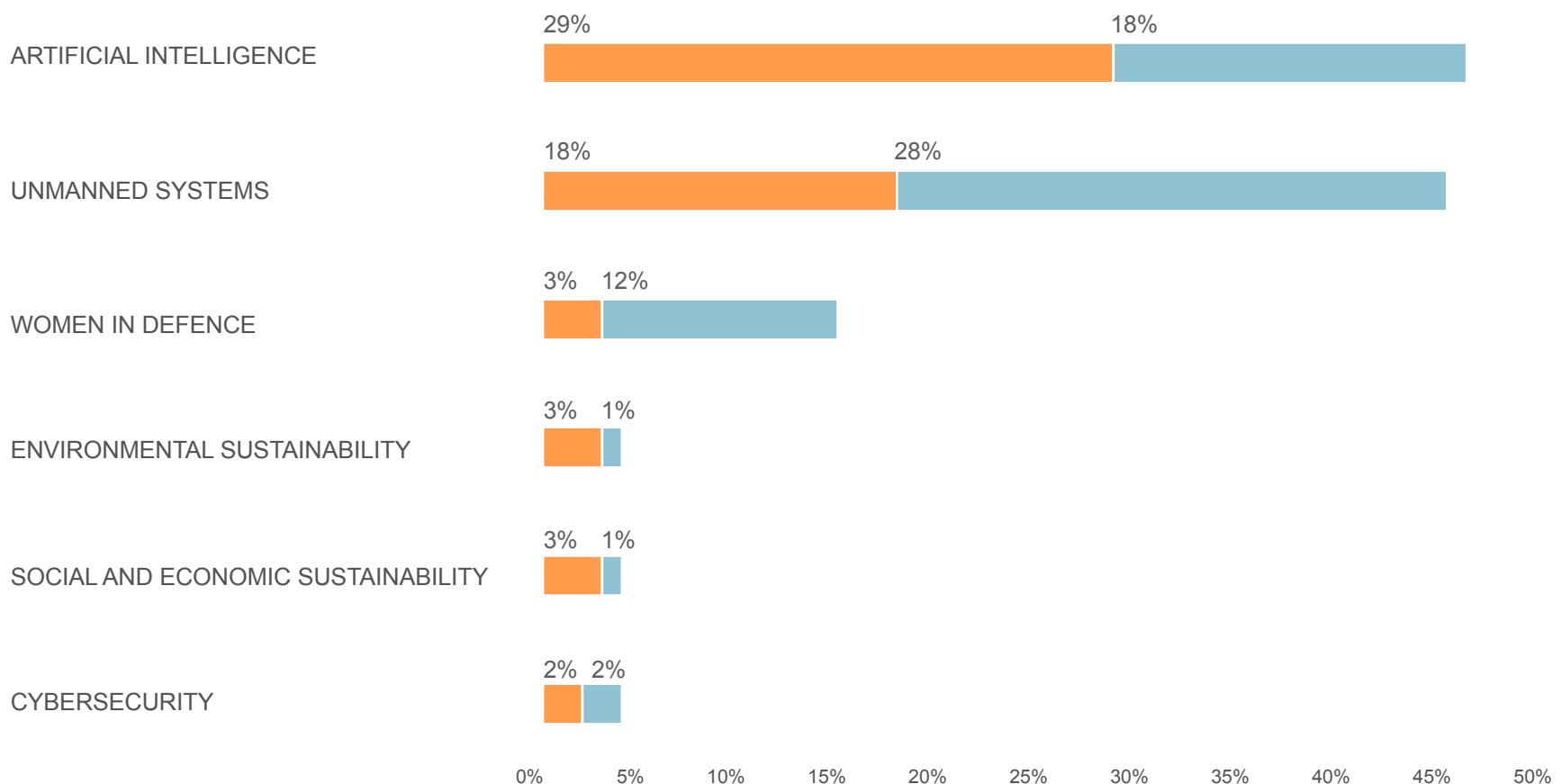
Thematically, coverage underscores a tech-oriented defence emphasis, with an emerging focus on inclusivity and sustainability.

SCMP and Reuters detailed the unveiling of advanced drones by China and Turkey, while Arabian Business discussed EDGE's MoU with Turkish Aerospace Industries, emphasising AI advancements in drones.

Hindustan Times and Times of India referenced Indian women's participation in the event reflecting WDS's focus on gender equality. Ocean Aero, INTRA Defense Technologies, and MEMR's partnership aimed at maritime technology and cybersecurity was widely covered by outlets as a commitment to social, economic and environmental sustainability.

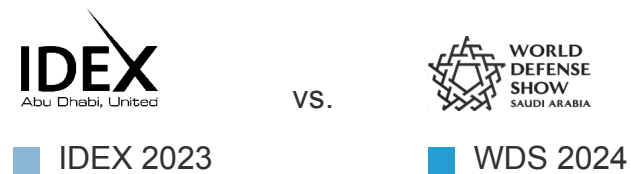
Themes Share of Voice (SOV) in Media Coverage

— Online Media
— X (Twitter)

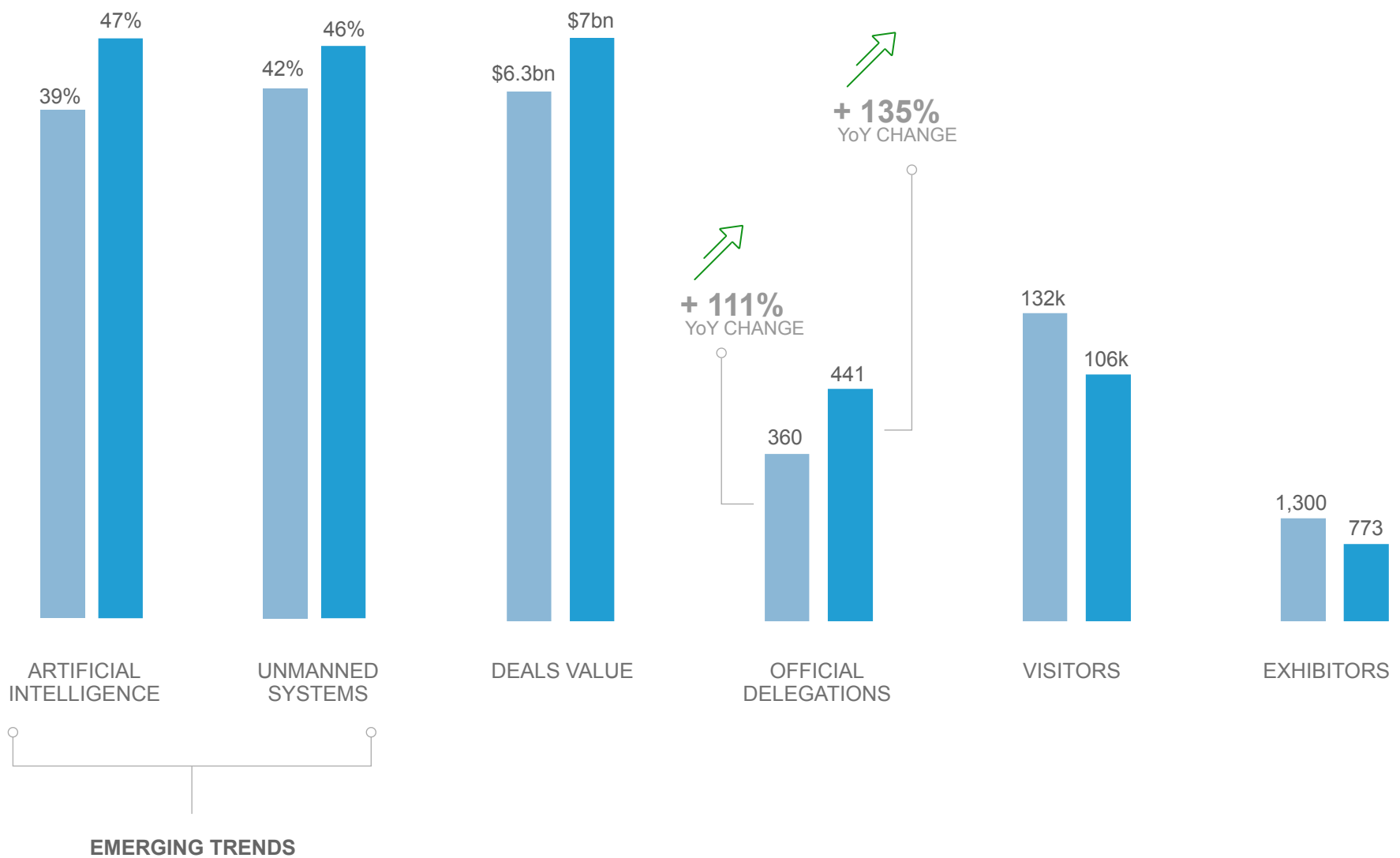


Despite IDEX's broader participation, WDS boasted larger deals, highlighting quality and quantity in engaged strategic partnerships.

Media coverage of WDS 2024 highlighted a 10% thematic increase in technology and AI compared to IDEX 2023 and underscored a pronounced emphasis on inclusivity, particularly concerning women in defence. Additionally, in just two years, the contract value of WDS surpassed that of IDEX by 12%.



A Comparative Analysis



Recommendations based on media coverage: (what now?):



Orla Graham
Insights Consultant

Strong regional coverage for Saudi Arabia, with opportunities to boost global perception:

The World Defense Show 2024 offered a strategically important opportunity for Saudi Arabia to showcase its technological advancements in the defence industry and to harness international partnerships in the promotion of its Vision 2030 strategy.

At first glance, traditional media coverage reflected this, with broadly positive reporting on the show and high volumes for Saudi organisations GAMI and SAMI. When we delve deeper, however, we can see that the majority of reporting was overwhelmingly from the MENA region (the top markets by volume of traditional coverage were KSA, Egypt and the UAE).

This suggests that while there is strong regional interest and engagement with Saudi Arabia's move to further its international collaboration, perhaps more needs to be done to engage a broader, global audience on the same – particularly in the West. Indeed, social media saw criticism (mostly from Western audiences) of the UK's cooperation and partnership with Saudi Arabia, indicating the need for nuanced conversation on the Kingdom's vision for the future.

Technology an increasingly central theme within defence

The shift towards AI, autonomous and unmanned systems within the defence sector was clearly evident, as these were the leading themes in media coverage. This is in line with media reporting on IDEX 2023 (in fact, both topics made up an even greater share of coverage for WDS than for IDEX), demonstrating the growing role of cutting edge technology in defence.

Bearing in mind the potential for public unease at the use of such technologies in defence, communicators should ensure that announcements of products and partnerships explain the reliability, security and rigorous testing involved in bringing these products to market, to allay any fears over the potential for misuse, error or lack of accountability.

Bold communication on inclusivity and diversity can bolster reputation in uncertain times

The International Women in Defence Programme during the show was more popular on social media than in traditional media. Whilst this may not be surprising (as topics around inclusivity and diversity are, by their nature, more likely to stimulate conversation and debate on social media, thus boosting volumes), it does suggest an important opportunity for defence communicators to emphasise this topic across channels.

Such themes can often be seen as 'HR topics' with minimal impact or interest, and therefore belonging to the realm of social media posts, but demonstrating the progress being made – and the progress still needed – in such areas can allow brands to stand out as leaders in their industry, attract new talent pipelines, and can boost reputation on social sustainability at a time when global geopolitical instability is placing the defence industry in a precarious position.



CARMA

What's Next

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Methodology

The analysis drew on data from January 29th to February 13th, 2024, leveraging 10,947 online media articles and 23,849 social media posts from X (formerly known as Twitter). This data was sourced through Boolean searches utilizing CARMA's global online media crawler for online outlets, and similar searches on X for social volumes.

Note: The identification of countries mentioned in the boycott on social media (X) depends exclusively on geolocation data from X users. This does not represent the entire sample analysed, as it only includes users who have activated geolocation. Furthermore, the analysis focused on a select group of 21 defence entities, not encompassing all that participated in the forum's events.

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