The Drop in Global Arms Deliveries

International arms deliveries have plummeted in recent years. In part, this reflects the winding down of major conflicts—the Iran-Iraq War and the war in Afghanistan, to name two. The most important causes, however, were the economic collapse of the USSR in the late 1980s and its political breakup in 1991—events that reduced and then ended Moscow's generosity toward clients. Russia now sells for hard currency, and many of its former buyers cannot afford to pay for weapons at true market prices.

These charts show that of all major exporters, the US has suffered least. The outstanding performance of US weapons in Operation Desert Storm and the competitive pricing of its systems have solidified its former client base and brought the US new business, meaning it has actually increased market share. Large deals—a $9 billion sale of F-15 fighters to Saudi Arabia, a $7 billion sale of F-16 fighters to Taiwan, and a $3 billion sale of F-16s to Turkey—entail deliveries over many years.
