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La Política Exterior de Qatar Qatar's Foreign Policy

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Introduction

Over the last two decades or so, Qatar has emerged as one of the most influential countries of the Persian Gulf region and the Middle East, a measure of influence that is quite incommensurate with its size, demography, and history. For a country established only in 1971 and with one of the smallest geographic and demographic sizes in the Middle East, Qatar became a surprising powerbroker throughout the late 1990s and the 2000s, using its financial muscle to project power and influence across the Middle East and North Africa among both state and non-state actors.

This influence, exercised through a hyperactive diplomacy, was facilitated by a confluence of four main developments. The first of these factors included inordinate financial wealth at the disposal of the state, a result of a second oil boom that started in the early 2000s and lasted up until 2008. Unlike the first boom of its kind in the early 1970s, during the second boom Qatar and other states in the region held on to the financial windfalls themselves and used their sovereign wealth funds as instruments of influence and prestige. This fed into a second development, namely the ability of the Qatari leadership to capitalize on emerging opportunities as they presented themselves. Qatar's leaders at the time, especially the ruling emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani (r. 1995-2013), was a true visionary, someone who believed that with the right resources and proper guidance, his country could turn into the Singapore of the Persian Gulf and thrive in a post-oil era. To that end, the Qatari state invested heavily in infrastructure, education, cultural endeavors, and the basics of a knowledge economy. This same vision applied also to the field of international relations, where the emir sought to place Qatar at the center of international cross-currents and a key player in regional and global affairs.

The third and fourth developments were outgrowths of fortuitous structural factors. Qatar's small size and political tradition lend themselves to a small ruling clique, and the Al Thani state has been particularly centralized. This centralization of decision-making, involving literally no more than a handful of individuals, gave the Qatari state tremendous agility in capitalizing on opportunities as they emerged, or, alternatively, on making opportunities happen when and as needed. This leadership agility and speedy decision-making was in turn reinforced with a remarkable degree of social cohesion in Qatari society that makes Qatar far more easily governable as compared to most if not all of its neighbors. Qatar does not have the sectarian divide of Bahrain, or the confederate governing structure of the United Arab Emirates, or a divided state with a parliament that causes the paralysis for which Kuwaiti politics is famous. Social cohesion and political agility and centralization, along with wealth and opportunity, went a long way toward enabling Qatar to emerge as a regional powerhouse in the late 1990s and the early 2000s.

With the eruption of the Arab uprisings in late 2010 and early 2011, the regional landscape changed, and Qatar's fortunes also began changing as well. The relatively swift collapse of the Qaddafi regime in Libya, in which Qatar played a direct and decisive role, led Qatari policymakers to believe that the apparent success of the Libyan campaign could be replicated in Syria. By the time the assumption proved false, around 2013, Qatar had already overcommitted its resources and reputation to the overthrow of Bashar Assad. It had also alienated its neighbor and frequent competitor Saudi Arabia to the point that the latter orchestrated a campaign to isolate Qatar from the Gulf Cooperation Council over its alleged support of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Egypt and elsewhere. The differences were eventually patched up, and Qatar, now under the leadership of the much younger Sheikh Tamim Al-Thani, Hamad's son and heir apparent, decided to pursue a lower-profile and less confrontational foreign policy.

The articles in this volume shed light on the different facets of Qatar's foreign policy during the height of the country's era of hyperactive diplomacy. Each of the five articles, written by experts on the international politics of the Middle East

or Qatar, focus on a specific aspect of the country's foreign policy and international relations. The collection begins with the analysis of the different eras of Qatari foreign policy by David Roberts. Roberts traces the evolution of Qatari foreign policy from one content to bandwagon with Saudi Arabia to one of hyper-diplomacy and finally to what it is today, pointing to the dilemma of being stuck between path dependency on the one hand and the need to control the impulses of over-stretching and over-committing the country on the other.

Had it not been for the country's enormous wealth, of course, Qatar would not have been able to emerge as an influential and central player in regional affairs. Gawdat Bahgat focuses on the role of energy as a key driver of Qatari foreign policy, both as a source of wealth and a main consideration in a highly competitive global market. Bahgat examines both the role of revenues at a time when oil prices were at their peak, in the mid-2000s, and following their sharp decline in 2014. To be certain, the apparent retraction we are currently witnessing in the country's regional and global profile is partly, perhaps even largely, a product of the slump in the global oil and gas markets.

Two articles in the volume focus on Qatar's relations with the economic and security powerhouses. Inordinate wealth may be an important source of confidence in international politics, but even more important is a sense of security that enables leaders to take initiatives they would not otherwise take. Fred Lawson focuses on Qatar's special security relationship with the US, focusing on the "mutually beneficial form of bilateral hierarchy" that has practically turned Qatar into a "protectorate" of the United States. This has empowered the Qatari state with a certain amount of autonomy from regional constraints to pursue its agendas, so long as those agendas meet broadly with American priorities and objectives. One of these broader American objectives is closer relationship with the European Union. Rory Miller and Khalid al-Mansouri focus on Qatar's multi-dimensional engagement with the EU in areas such as technology transfer, sustainable diversification, human capital development, and investments.

The volume ends with Kristian Coates Ulrichsen's contribution, which draws our attention to the internal and external security dimensions of Qatari foreign policy, particularly insofar as the Syria file is concerned. Few expected the Syrian revolution, started in earnest in early 2011, to devolve into the bloody civil war that it is today. From the start, Qatar placed itself at the heart of the conflict, controversially supporting non-state actors of various coloring and persuasion, in the process at first competing and then cooperating with Saudi Arabia in the Syrian theater. Coates Ulrichsen's highlights the perils of over-stretch, highly personalized decision-making, and insufficient institutional capacity.

Together, the articles in this special issue of the journal paint a complex and nuanced picture of one of the most critical players in the international relations of the Middle East in central decades. From the mid-1990s onward, Qatar has been at the central of many of the dramas unfolding in the Middle East in general and the Persian Gulf region in particular. The small state has been an enigma for many, a maverick whose policies and posture have been incommensurate with its size and stature. This issue marks a useful step toward unpacking the riddle that is Qatar.

Mehran Kamrava



THE FOUR ERAS OF QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY

Las cuatro etapas de la política exterior de Catar

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For the first two centuries of Qatar's modern history its leading Sheikhs secured security by allying with at least one more powerful political entity at a time, while maintaining a largely inoffensive and muted posture. But an emerging leadership in the 1980s had new ideas. Security was still predicated on one central protective relationship, but this dependency was diversified as Qatar embedded itself into energy, security, financial, and political dynamics, if not also the wider consciousness, of key states around the world. Additionally, the state cultivated a reputation as a relatively neutral actor so that, overall, Qatar was well positioned for the eventual departure of its central ally. Yet Qatar's reputation as an uncontroversial, peaceable, quasi-neutral state was undermined as its leadership systematically chose sides during the Arab Spring. Without the capacity, resources, or experience to effectively involve itself in the Gordian conflicts that emerged from the Spring, Qatar gained a reputation as a dangerous dilutant, stoking anger among key allies in the Arab and western worlds. Its young Emir must now navigate a hazardous path, stuck between path dependency promoting the maintenance of old associations and the reality that Qatar struggles to control and use these relations effectively.



Abstract

Qatari Foreign Policy; Qatar Arab Spring; Tamim Foreign Policy; Qatar Islamists
política exterior de Catar; Primavera Árabe de Catar; política exterior de Tamim; islamistas cataríes



Key words

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Fechas

Durante los dos primeros siglos de la historia contemporánea de Catar, sus jeques dirigentes mantuvieron la seguridad mediante alianzas con al menos una entidad política más poderosa cada vez, mientras mantenían una postura mayormente inofensiva y silenciada. Pero el liderazgo emergente en los años 1980



Resumen

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trajo nuevas ideas. La seguridad aún se basaba en una relación central de protección, pero esta dependencia se diversificó mientras Catar se integraba en dinámicas energéticas, de seguridad, financieras y políticas, y también en una toma de conciencia más amplia, con estados clave alrededor del mundo. Además, el estado cultivó una reputación de relativo actor neutral por lo que, en conjunto, Catar estaba bien posicionado para una posible marcha de su aliado central. Sin embargo, la reputación de Catar como un estado no conflictivo, pacífico y casi neutral se vio socavada al escoger bando sus líderes durante la Primavera Árabe. Sin la capacidad, recursos o experiencia para implicarse eficazmente en los conflictos gordianos que surgieron tras la Primavera, Catar obtuvo una reputación de peligroso dilataador, avivando ira entre aliados clave de los mundos árabe y occidental. Su joven emir debe ahora recorrer una senda peligrosa, atrapado entre el camino de la dependencia que promueve mantener antiguas asociaciones y la realidad que Catar forcejea para controlar y usar esas relaciones eficazmente.

The historical record suggests that foreign policies of the leading Sheikhs on the Qatari Peninsula can be divided into four distinct phases without much contention. In turn, each era is characterised by a central idea which dominates policy practice.

According to an aphorism of expatriate lore in the Persian Gulf, until the millennium the State of Qatar was known for being unknown and not much else. Such a sentiment characterises the initial phase of Qatar's foreign policy. Indeed, it took two centuries of development for the rudimentary aims of the state's policies to significantly alter away from subsistence, basic development, and securing regime and state security through basic alliance-forming. Neither swapping local powers as allies (the al-Khalifah, Wahhabis, the Sultan of Muscat) for region and world-spanning Empires (the Ottomans and the British) nor the onset of independence from Britain fundamentally altered the state's basic orientation.

The second phase of Qatar's foreign policy emerged with a new generation of leaders in the 1980s who had profoundly different ideas as to the state's orientation. Though the then-Crown Prince, Hamad bin Khalifah al-Thani, pursued the installation of one central ally to guarantee Qatar's security like leaders before him, he augmented this plinth by actively and aggressively diversifying Qatar's dependency on its security guarantor as never before. His plan to assiduously augment Qatar's importance to key international states was accomplished by developing a reputation in impartial conflict mediation, as a region-leading educational hub, opening-up international relations with Israel and Iran, founding the al-Jazeera TV station to spread Qatari soft power, establishing the state's sovereign wealth fund, and founding and quickly expanding Qatar's liquid natural gas industry (LNG). Qatar's history amply demonstrated that the suzerain power – whomever and however powerful that may be – disengaged eventually. The policy of this era thus meant that Qatar was well placed to consider replacing its unitary-sourced security guarantee with a multi-party-sourced security "guarantee".

But with the 2011 Arab Spring, Hamad bin Khalifah actively sought intervention in foreign conflicts by overtly supporting one side, in stark contrast to Qatar's amelioratory and relatively neutral historical stance. This third revolutionary era of Qatari foreign policy covers the state's failed policies particularly appositely in Syria, Libya, and Egypt. The actors that Qatar tended to support were often – though not always – to be found on the Islamist spectrum, a facet that was to enrage local allies leading to a crisis with Qatar's fellow Gulf states, another part of the overarching foreign policy's failure.

Though Hamad bin Khalifah's son took over in 2013, he is yet to put his stamp on state foreign policy. Not only is there no evidence that Tamim bin Hamad has a particular interest in foreign affairs, but the legacy of his father's policies is likely to broadly direct policy for some time. Nevertheless, the fourth era of Qatari foreign policy under Tamim bin Hamad, the post-revolutionary era, will soon emerge and its foundations need to be examined.

Plotting how and why each of these eras evolved is the overarching goal of this article, which will allow for a historically-informed reflection on Tamim bin Hamad's future foreign policy options. It highlights that balance has been a central feature of Qatar's foreign policies until Hamad bin Khalifah sought to actively intervene during the Arab Spring. This era of Qatari foreign policy activism has, in the short and medium term at least, failed. It is questionable whether Qatar's small and inexperienced bureaucracy – or indeed any bureaucracy however experienced – could possibly manage such a changeable, complex situation. As Tamim bin Hamad slowly defines foreign policy under his auspices, he might profit from heeding the history of his father's first foreign policy era. Then, Qatar was establishing a strong reputation built primarily on the fonts of its soft power. Once again, these attributes, and not the hard power tools of the military, are – history suggests – best placed to secure Qatar's regional ambitions.

1. Qatari foreign policy: emergence

Sparse historical records of activity on the Qatari peninsula led one Arab author to conclude that prior to the mid-18th century “its inhabitants led a peaceful life and confronted no major events thought worthy of historical recording” (Al-Rashid, 1981). Qatar's modern history began with the migration of members of the Utub tribal confederation from Kuwait to the peninsula in the 1760s (Rentz, 1997). A competitive dynamic that characterised wider socio-political life on the peninsula emerged between the newly immigrated tribes of the Utub (primarily the al-Khalifah) and those that existed on the peninsula previously, primarily the al-Musallam (Al-Rashid, 1981).

The reason that the Utub migrated south in the first place was to farm and profit from the pearling beds off Bahrain. Unable to settle there as the land was already claimed by proxies loyal to Persian forces, they settled nearby on the Qatari peninsula's west coast, barely forty kilometres away. The town they took over from the al-Musallam, Zubarah, soon benefitted from regional developments. One of the region's great ports – Basra – was closed by a devastating plague in 1773 and a Persian blockade from 1775-1779. This diverted trade elsewhere and Zubarah grew largely because it was established as a free port (i.e. with no taxes). Thus ensued decades of minor skirmishes for control of Zubarah and then, as the 19th century progressed, the wider peninsula.

This central dynamic of squabbling competition and skirmishes over towns and other assets was the determining feature of political relations in the region. This was what drove the nascent foreign policy of the leading Sheikh in Qatar at that time. Specifically, the al-Khalifah leaders and their successors faced one central, perennial problem: they were relatively weak.

Much of the Qatari peninsula was a hostile environment, devoid of tillable land or generous springs. *The Times* of London describes the clash between the pre and post-oil rich Arab world as being felt more in Qatar than anywhere else: “in this barren promontory [Qatar]... For centuries it was a symbol of desolation. Nothing grows in Qatar's flat wastes” (Editorial, 26 October

The reason that the Utub migrated south in the first place was to farm and profit from the pearling beds off Bahrain

1960). Indeed, until to this day, as the Qatar Airways inflight magazine curiously boasts, Qatar is the only country in the world “with no natural surface water” (Magazine, 29 March 2011). Such adverse conditions placed a basic limit on the life that the peninsula could support, a key factor underpinning why the forces on the Qatari peninsula were so often relatively weak and outnumbered. This weakness forced Qatar’s leaders to seek alliances and with regional powers to secure security with as much autonomy as they could muster.

In the face of marauding raids from Wahhabi forces in the 1790s, the al-Khalifah were driven from Qatar to Bahrain and lost the prosperous Zubarah to the Wahhabis. But in Bahrain they were attacked by forces of the Sultan of Muscat. Grasping the need for a suzerain, the al-Khalifah reputedly paid a tribute to Persian forces for protection (Warden, 1856). This was not successful, and some returned to Qatar to engage the Wahhabis in their new fight for Bahrain against the Sultan of Muscat. This pact was successful and the al-Khalifah won the day in Manama and submitted to joining a Wahhabi “tribal commonwealth” by 1802 (Al-Rashid, 1981).

Though this Wahhabi support was crucial, the al-Khalifah soon chafed under its rule. In 1805, they sought but failed to swap Wahhabi for British protection, but by the end of the decade, they had stopped paying their tribute to Diriyah, the Wahhabi capital. After the Wahhabis reasserted their control, the chased and weakened al-Khalifah sought help from the Sultan of Muscat, their erstwhile enemy, to relieve themselves of the Wahhabi yoke (Lorimer, 1915). This was successful, and the al-Khalifah returned to the thrones in Bahrain and Qatar under the Sultan of Muscat’s aegis, until they began chafing under the Sultan’s rule and sought further changes in their overarching suzerain relationship.

This dynamic continued to characterise the foreign relations of those ruling on the Qatari peninsula (Abdulla, 1981). As the nineteenth century developed, Qatar’s leaders swapped smaller regional suzerains for extra-regional, more powerful ones: the Ottoman and British Empires. Though there was a vast difference in material power between, for example, the Ottomans and the Sultan of Muscat, the basic dynamic was the same. Qatar’s leaders, still weak and vulnerable to regional raids, continued to need protection. To secure it, they signed up to agreements with the Ottomans and then the British who in return would secure Qatari interests, while placing their own demands on local rulers.

Just as with the Sultan of Muscat or the Wahhabis, though Qatar’s leadership needed and appreciated the protection afforded to them, they chafed and resented the demands placed upon them. Indeed, Qatari rulers transposed their local tactics to this new quasi-international level, attempting to play London and Istanbul off each other in the 1880s and 1890s (Rahman, 2005). Though this was not immediately successful given that the UK government was concerned about unduly antagonising the Ottomans, it made the transition to the UK sphere of influence with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire swift and easy: in 1916, Qatar signed up to most of the statutes in the UK’s Trucial States agreements and officially became a cog in the British Empire.

Qatar rested relatively contentedly under British aegis for over half a century. During this time its leadership was primarily concerned with domestic development, something that only meaningfully began in the decades after oil was first exported in 1949. Though Qatar ebbed and flowed with the waves of pan-Arabism in the 1950s and 1960s, taking in – like all Gulf states – dozens of educated member of the exiled Muslim Brotherhood to build their nascent ministries (Roberts, 2014), Qatar’s external relations remained limited.

In the face of marauding raids from Wahhabi forces in the 1790s, the al-Khalifah were driven from Qatar to Bahrain and lost the prosperous Zubarah to the Wahhabis

Without any discernible clamour for independence, in 1968 Qatar and its fellow Trucial states were informed that the UK was pulling out of the Persian Gulf region three years hence. This energised its leadership to engage with regional allies to consider joining together in a proto-United Arab Emirates (Smith, 2004). The bitter Bahrain-Qatar historical rivalry was one important factor precluding such an arrangement so Qatar became an independent nation in 1971.

Yet the state's vulnerability remained. But by this time, the de facto leader, Khalifah bin Hamad al-Thani, had been conducting various bilateral meetings in Saudi Arabia focusing on their joint border. Within six months of independence, Khalifah bin Hamad took over power and implemented his plan. He had arranged for Saudi to acquiesce to his usurping of the sitting Emir and for the Kingdom to provide some unspecified vestiges of protection for Qatar. In return, Khalifah would defer to and support Saudi Arabia as Emir (Roberts, 2008).

This sequence of events is testified to by interviews conducted in Doha (Roberts, 06 November 2012), open-source documentation referring to Khalifah's meetings in Saudi Arabia (Boyle, 1997), and, most importantly, evidence of subsequent bilateral relations. Qatar was the only other state to observe the full forty days of mourning after the death of King Faisal in 1975 and it followed the Kingdom's lead on all major matters of policy (Metz, 1994). Similarly, their bilateral defence agreement signed in 1982 also hints at the nature of their relations which are referred to as unusually close by academics (Quandt, 1981) and journalists (Searight, 1985) alike.

It should be noted that when Khalifah bin Hamad took over in 1972, he did not entirely subsume Qatar's foreign relations under Saudi Arabia's auspices. He certainly diversified Qatar's Embassy contacts in Doha and in foreign capitals, he engaged increasingly in foreign aid when finances allowed (Roberts, 2008), and he sought to publicise the state in Britain through adverts in newspapers (15 May 1972). All of this has certain echoes of Hamad bin Khalifah's policies that were to come to fruition in the 1990s and 2000s, though these changes were to be more than merely cosmetic. Overall, therefore, the modern incarnation of Saudi Arabia followed on from the UK, the Ottomans, Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi forbearers, and other local powers in providing the overarching security framework for the State of Qatar.

Without any significant foreign policy gambits, Qatar under Khalifah bin Hamad existed in a kind of stasis, contentedly cosseted by Saudi Arabia

2. Qatari foreign policy: evolution

Without any significant foreign policy gambits, Qatar under Khalifah bin Hamad existed in a kind of stasis, contentedly cosseted by Saudi Arabia. In a region where Bahrain and Kuwait in particular were roaring ahead with economic development and innovative foreign policies tactics making a name for themselves, it is little wonder that Qatar became known as the state known for being unknown.

But in the 1980s a new generation of leaders emerged. Led by Khalifah bin Hamad's son and Crown Prince, Hamad bin Khalifah al-Thani, a small group evidently had a vastly different idea of how best to secure the state. Far from seeking security almost through anonymity existing quietly under Saudi Arabia's aegis, Hamad bin Khalifah sought to deeply and drastically diversify Qatar's international relations, foster a reputation for the state as an impartial, almost neutral mediator, as well as one of the most dynamic, forward-thinking entrepreneurs in the Persian Gulf. These changes were driven by a variety of factors.

Initially, Hamad bin Khalifah seemed to be preoccupied with emphatically demonstrating Qatar's independence from Saudi Arabia. Given its domineering history with Qatar and the basic

demographic and geographic realities, with Saudi Arabia being significantly larger than Qatar, there has long existed a natural assumption in Saudi Arabia that Qatar is little more than a vassal state. An assumption that Khalifah bin Hamad might not have believed, but certainly fed.

Equally, given the direction in which Hamad bin Khalifah steered Qatar in as he grew in power, there is no doubt that he found himself at odds with the Kingdom's posture on a range of issues. Under his direction, Qatar expanded education along an American model, far from the restrictive, conservative Saudi example (Zellman et al., 2007). The astonishing visibility and power of his second wife, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser al-Misnad (Khalaf & Kerr, 2013), also marks a deep difference with Saudi Arabia and its systematic disempowerment of women. And in international relations, Hamad bin Khalifah adopted a mature approach to speak to all actors, whether Sunni (Hamas), Shia (Hezbollah), Zaydi (Houthis), or Jewish (the Israeli government). This too separated him from Saudi Arabia's restrictive approach.

Thus the more Hamad bin Khalifah became the domineering voice in Qatari politics as the 1980s developed, the worse Qatar-Saudi relations became. The changing nature of their relations was indicated by, for example, Qatar diplomatically recognising the Soviet Union and China in 1988 without waiting for Saudi Arabia to do so first (Krahl, 2013), as would have been expected. Also, after initially approving of the plan, Saudi Arabia blocked Qatari attempts to build a regional gas pipeline network (Wright & Krane, 2014).

But it was the invasion of Kuwait that proved to be a watershed in the Qatari-Saudi relationship. This was, after all, an example of another small, energy rich, but intrinsically defenceless Gulf country (Kuwait) being invaded by a much larger neighbour (Iraq) amid wider bilateral relationship difficulties. Clearly, Black Swan events like this could happen. Not only was Qatar unable to avoid seeing the invasion as a warning-by-analogy, but the Kingdom's impotence in calling for Western military intervention in the face of the invasion was not only embarrassing, but exploded any notion of Saudi Arabia providing Qatar with any vestige of protection.

These issues coalesced into Hamad bin Khalifah assiduously seeking to reprise Qatar's historic foreign policy practice of seeking a central alliance on which to rely. Operations Desert Shield and Storm profoundly changed the international context in the Persian Gulf region. Instead of America being looked on as a questionable ally (largely because of its close Israeli relations), it became the indispensable ally and provider of implicit security guarantees. Qatar thus assiduously began courting the US, not least by building a \$1bn air base to entice further US cooperation. By 1992, the two states had signed various defensive agreements for joint military exercises and regarding basing arrangements (Blanchard, 2007). And not before time, for in late-1992 deadly skirmishes erupted on the Qatari-Saudi border, typifying the deteriorating bilateral relations. Hamad bin Khalifah later reflected on these issues, noting that at that time Qatar was "not ready to face the burdens" of confronting Saudi Arabia (Salman, 2009). Henceforth, Qatari-Saudi relations only deteriorated, culminating in Saudi Arabia supporting one, perhaps two, failed counter-coups to reinstall Khalifah bin Hamad after the 1995 bloodless coup installing Hamad bin Khalifah (Weaver, 2003).

Though Hamad bin Khalifah's central foreign policy tenet of basing Qatar's security on one central alliance is a central thread of consistency in Qatar's foreign policies from the late-18th century, he pursued new, innovative strategies and policies too. Indeed, overall, Hamad bin Khalifah revolutionised many aspects of the State of Qatar and entirely repositioned the state internationally.

It was the invasion of Kuwait that proved to be a watershed in the Qatari-Saudi relationship

Reflecting on Qatar's foreign and security policy under Hamad bin Khalifah, it is apparent that the overall tenor of his foreign policies during the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s was designed to diversify the dependence on American security understandings.

Hamad bin Khalifah oversaw a complete overhaul of Qatar's energy economics. Oil production rose from 3.7 million barrels per day (mbpd) produced in 1995 to 16.9 mbpd in 2000 (OECD, 2013). But more importantly, the development of Qatar's liquefied natural gas (LNG) that Hamad bin Khalifah's key advisor Abdullah al-Attiyah spearheaded stands in stark contrast to the ambling pursuit of their predecessors of this industry (Dargin, 2011; Hashimoto et al., 2004). These energy transformations – though particularly the LNG investment – were the central enablers of the masterplan underpinning the majority of the state's policies for two reasons.

Firstly, LNG propelled Qatar from being merely a rich country to a super-rich country with two streams of hydrocarbon-based income. The LNG boost to the state's coffers fundamentally allowed Hamad bin Khalifah to undertake the litany of expensive policy pursuits of the 2000s and 2010s. He invested untold billions in Qatar's education system, notably building an entire education "city" and attracting top Western universities. His various diplomatic forays into mediation across the region were often underpinned by financial strength, as in the 2008 Lebanese example and multi-year Darfur negotiations, as a carrot towards settlement of differences (Kamrava, 2011). And the head-long pursuit to augment Qatar's soft power was an expensive proposition. Not only has al-Jazeera, Qatar's (in)famous TV news station lost money every year since its inception, but many billions have been spent on fine art, constructing world-class museums, hosting a litany of world-class sporting tournaments, and hosting global conferences on every possible topic. All of this was undertaken to boost Qatar's visibility and to reinforce and spread a progressive message about the state.

Secondly, by building the capacity to become a central supplier of gas to countries across the world, Qatar plays an important role in a range of the world's most important states. In 2013 Qatar provided Argentina with 14 % of its LNG, Belgium 40 %, Brazil 4 %, Canada 83 %, Chile 5 %, China 38 %, France 19 %, India 85 %, Japan 18 %, South Korea 33 %, Kuwait 86 %, Mexico 23 %, Spain 23 %, Taiwan 50 %, Thailand 74 %, the UAE 84 %, the UK 93 %, and the US 8 % (OECD, 2014).

Even though on occasion Qatar only provides a small part of a state's LNG imports and LNG is, of course, not the only energy source for a country, Qatar is evidently crucial to several countries. Most notably, taking into account the role of LNG in each state and Qatar's contribution therein, Qatar is acutely important to states like Belgium, China, France, India, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, and the UK. This is a list of financially, militarily, and politically powerful states that are heavily interdependent upon Qatar's continuing prosperity and security. Qatar's importers also included, in 2013 and 2014, four permanent members of the UN Security Council and three non-permanent members (Argentina, Korea, and Chile).

A third direct consequence of the gas-infused wealth was the creation of a fiscal surplus that was ploughed into the creation of a sovereign wealth fund, the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) in 2005. This fund soon became one of the most recognised funds in the world with a rash of acquisitions, typically of the bluest of blue chip shares and companies, in the world's leading markets.

Hamad bin Khalifah oversaw a complete overhaul of Qatar's energy economics

A reading of Qatar's history until this era would see successive (all) Qatari leaders scrambling to secure an alliance. In the early days, these were changed with alacrity and speed from one local ally to the next. More stability came – decades where there was no need to find another alliance – when Qatar hitched its wagon to the Ottoman Empire. But even this once great empire disintegrated. It was then replaced by the largest empire of its era, the British. Yet once again, this power, that once dominated the Persian Gulf, disappeared as an actor of importance. Any Saudi guarantees, however implicit or explicit, were deeply undercut by the state's recourse to international forces for Operations Desert Storm and Shield. Though the United States, the latest power to de facto provide security for Qatar, remains the world's strongest ever military power, comfortably superior to any other nation on earth, reading Qatar's history in this way, once can discern a sense of Qatar preparing for the eventually inevitable withdrawal of US forces – just as all other forces had withdrawn before them – by so evidently making Qatar a crucial player to a range of states across the world. Whether for energy or investment, because of Qatar's al-Jazeera-led soft power coursing through the region as the 2000s developed or its role as a regional educational hub, Qatar had transitioned from a state of demonstrable unimportance on the periphery of international relations to one that was front and centre and almost irreplaceable to several key states around the world.

From a policy that expressly exhibited a desire to talk to all sides in any given conflict, as the 2010 Arab Spring began Qatar took sides as never before

3. Qatari foreign policy: revolution

From a policy that expressly exhibited a desire to talk to all sides in any given conflict, most notably including improving relations with Iran and Israel to become almost uniquely placed among Arab states, as the 2010 Arab Spring began Qatar took sides as never before. Whenever Qatar engaged or sought to act in the emergent revolutions that often descended into civil war, it tended to direct its actions through and to support broadly moderate Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood (Roberts, 2014). Nevertheless, this was not necessarily as much of an active choice it may seem.

Firstly, it was not as if there were a significant range of actors available that Qatar could support. There is no secular, leftist or other denominational organisation comparable in history, organisation, strength, or range across the Arab world to the Muslim Brotherhood. As a way to “reach” or otherwise (attempt to) support millions of Arabs at once, there is no organisation like the Brotherhood in the region. In other words, from a utilitarian perspective, supporting the Muslim Brotherhood is an obvious choice for an actor looking to quickly build influence across the region.

For an opportunistic actor like Qatar, without a long-established Foreign Ministry that had built up a diverse array of connections or that otherwise had channels through which to spread its influence, channelling support to the Brotherhood, a group whose time looked like it had come in the earlier days of the Spring (as embodied in the person of Muslim Brotherhood President of Egypt, Mohammed Morsi), made some sense.

Equally, there is a certain history to Qatari-Brotherhood relations. Since the 1950s members of the group or those associated with it have lived in Qatar playing key roles establishing the state's institutions (educated Brothers played similar roles throughout the Gulf region). Moreover, Qatar has hosted the Arab world's most influential Imam, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who is widely seen as synonymous with the Muslim Brotherhood, since 1961. He has long played a central role in

directing Islamic studies in Qatar as well as educating Qataris more generally in the 1970s and 1980s via his Qatar TV-funded television channel (Roberts, 2014). But he is more famous internationally for his prime-time al-Jazeera television show during which he espoused his Islamic teachings and further boosted his importance as a regionally-famous Islamic preacher (Gräf & Skovgaard-Petersen, 2009).

These kinds of informal links proved to be critical in directing Qatari financial, political, diplomatic, and military materiel support to Islamist rebels. This can most clearly be seen in the Libyan case with Qatar funnelling support via the Islamist preacher Ali al-Sallabi and onto his brother, Ismael al-Sallabi, and also to the former head of the al-Qaeda associated Libyan Fighting Group, Abdulkarim Belhaj (GSN, 2011; Coker et al., 2011).

But, cautioning against the notion of Qatar as exclusively seeking to support Islamists, another conduit for its support was the Sufi Aref Ali al-Nayed; an important middle-man for a time at least before he turned against Qatar's policies (Malas, 2011; Fitzgerald, 2014). Similarly, the secular Mahmud Shammam is another Libyan that the Qataris worked with, when he was chosen in 2011 to lead the new Libyan TV station broadcast from Doha (Hounshell, 2011).

But with the possible exception of Tunisia, where moderate Islamists have managed to maintain a leading place in the political system (and there are also plenty of allegations of Qatari support of moderate Islamists (Kausch, 2013)), wherever Qatar has supported Islamists such as in Libya, Egypt, or in Syria, the Gulf state has ended up losing ground.

In Egypt, after the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood-led Mohammed Morsi government that was so triumphantly and exorbitantly supported by Qatar, Egyptian-Qatari relations troughed as Doha took a hard line against what it perennially described as the Sisi-led coup. Qatar's money was returned, Egypt's Ambassador (who also happened to be named Mohammed Morsi) was withdrawn from Doha, and Qatari support was replaced with support from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain (El Baltaji, 2012).

In Libya, not only did the Qatar-sponsored political party – Belhaj's "al-Watan" [nation/homeland] party – fail spectacularly at the 2012 elections, but the state descended into a civil war and Qatar's previously dominating position as the rebels overtook Gaddafi disintegrated too (Monitor, 2012; GSN, 2012).

Overall, while the reality may be more nuanced, the perception throughout the Arab world was – and remains – that Qatar is a state that actively seeks to support the Muslim Brotherhood and similar Islamists (Dickinson, 2014). And this perception, that is particularly prevalent among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) allies, has been the source of increasing difficulty for Qatar's leadership. Indeed, these policies antagonised its neighbours Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain to such a degree that they withdrew their Ambassadors from Doha in Spring 2014 (Kerr, 05 March 2014). They followed this up with a vociferous campaign to pressure Qatar to alter its ways and follow the mainstream GCC policy. For a time, the Gulf allies implicitly threatened to extend their vendetta against Qatar to blocking its land border or Saudi Arabia's skies to Qatar Airways planes (Kerr, 14 March 2014). Though these escalations seemed unrealistic and over-the-top at the time, so too had the very notion of withdrawing their Ambassadors *en masse* from Doha in the first place.

Outwith the success of the al-Nahda movement in Tunisia (that denies any links to Qatar in any case), the short and medium term shows the failure of Qatari foreign policies during the

The perception throughout the Arab world is that Qatar is a state that actively seeks to support the Muslim Brotherhood

Arab Spring (Neubauer, 2014). Qatar is in a weaker position in 2015 than in 2010. Its regional allies launched an unprecedented, public, embarrassing action against Qatar, effectively blackmailing changes in its policies. Qatar became reviled in the most populous country in the Arab world and received similar treatment elsewhere in North Africa. Additionally, whether because of supposed corruption in its FIFA World Cup 2022 bid, its depressing migrant worker rights record, or its support of a range of Islamist groups, some of whom are in no way whatsoever moderate, its western allies have seen an unprecedented surge of anti-Qatari sentiment (Hauslohner, 2013).

The German Development Minister, several UK Parliamentarians, and US Congressional hearings have all openly accused Qatar of supporting terrorism on one way or another (Barclay, 2014; Pecquet, 2014; Reuters, 2014). These voices join with a crescendo of negative wider publicity aimed at Qatar, and have created a worrying climate for the state. With American politicians actively calling for or at least questioning the removal of the al-Udeid military base from Qatar and at least one major NATO country having considered designating Qatar as an official state sponsor of terrorism, the consequences of Qatar's failed foreign policies are beginning to undermine, albeit tangentially, some of the founding plinths of its security. Certainly, Qatar still has many allies around the world, and doubtless the more sensible politicians in western capitals grasp that the state is not as nefarious as it is typically presented in the media. But Qatar has invested so heavily on broadening the state's appeal for so long now, that to see such innovative, progressive policies of the 1990s and 2000s undermined by poor policy execution or simply not communicating what policies Qatar is undertaking is unfortunate.

Moreover, if Qatar is to prepare for the loss of America as a "protector", as history and common sense dictates will happen eventually, Hamad bin Khalifah's plan to position Qatar as a state centrally important to a variety of countries is also being undermined. Qatar's oil and gas will be a strong lure for relations for the foreseeable future. But soft power is about building relations and creating an attractiveness independent of such base resources and needs. With its initial revolutionary media support, promotion of women's empowerment, installation of western education systems at the heart of society, mature foreign relations including with Israel, and its obvious (if not always successful) attempts to mediate peace as a matter of policy, Qatar was, arguably, making not insignificant headway towards this goal. But no more.

4. Qatari foreign policy: post-revolution

Having taken over as Emir in summer-2013, the then-33-year-old Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani inherited a state mired in a range of evolving, complex international intrigues. Initially, he pursued the same approach as his father Hamad bin Khalifah and we are yet to see what a truly Tamimi foreign policy might look like. But this is not surprising. There are several reasons as to why Qatar's foreign policy was always likely to continue along a similar path post-Hamad bin Khalifah.

Firstly, Qatar is a young state without mature institutions and so exhibits a form of path dependency. Thus the informal paths of communication used by Hamad bin Khalifah when supporting one group or another remain the same as for Tamim bin Hamad. So while an Emir decree could, technically, change policy, in reality, it is not that simple.

Look, for example, to the early years of Hamad bin Khalifah's rule. When he was in power, though his rule was unquestioned, he still created duplicate ministries (Supreme Councils of

The German Development Minister, several UK Parliamentarians, and US Congressional hearings have all openly accused Qatar of supporting terrorism

Education, of Health, and of Planning) because the reality was that he could not press through the changes and the policies he wanted through the old institutions. Either they were fundamentally incapable of doing the work of implementing the changes, or general institutional malaise would slow change to a crawl.

Aside from practical impediments of changing policy, secondly, one must question whether Tamim could actually order such a change for another aspect of the path dependency problem is the effect of legacy pressures on policy. While Hamad bin Khalifah is not ruling from behind the scenes – if he wanted still to be in power, he would not have given it up when under no duress to do so – he is an iconic leader who casts a long shadow. It is questionable whether Tamim bin Hamad could simply or quickly jettison some of the central plinths of his father's foreign policies just as it is questionable as to whether Hamad bin Khalifah would have given him power had he (Hamad) an inkling that his son would take power and immediately begin unpicking his life's work. The fact that Tamim's mother, Hamad's second wife Moza bint Nasser, is still a key player in Qatari domestic politics reinforces this problem.

Thirdly, one should question whether Tamim bin Hamad has any real interest in foreign policy. In the decade that he was Crown Prince, he seldom focused explicitly on foreign policy; never took a portfolio, led a mediation effort, or otherwise focused on a niche issue in Qatar's international relations. Even though the then-Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani was a centrally important figure in Qatar, there is little doubt Tamim bin Hamad could have taken a niche issue if he so chose. But Tamim evidently preferred to focus on establishing pet-projects like his sovereign wealth fund, Qatar Sports Investment, to buy the likes of Paris St German the French football club, or the Qatar National Food Security Programme.

Fourthly, Tamim bin Hamad was immediately distracted upon ascending to the throne, evidently deeply concerned about Qatar's fiscal position with state revenue dropping by a third from 2014 to 2015 (Kerr, 29 June 2015). This was shown by the emphasis on issues of financial prudence in his first speeches on assuming the throne and by the subsequent depth and breadth of budget cuts that his government employed (Law, 12 February 2014). He was also soon distracted by the vociferous diplomatic pressure exerted upon Qatar by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE when they removed their Ambassadors in Spring 2014 to force Qatar to alter its foreign policy.

In sum, no coherent fully-formed Tamimi foreign policy is yet in evidence. Nevertheless, as the pique of the regional Ambassadorial dispute has passed and Tamim bin Hamad matures into the role of Emir, the state's foreign policy will increasingly come to reflect his rule and his government.

Thinking about his potential future orientation, there is logic to maintaining Islamist links to a degree. Qatar has paid a high-price thus far for supporting such groups and individuals, and its government may well be loath to give them up as the pressure eases. Also, it is far from clear how Qatar could diversify its support, such is the state's limited foreign ministry capacity and the levels of divisiveness that Qatar has sowed throughout the region.

Nevertheless, Tamim bin Hamad has evidently sought to, at the very least, hint that Qatar under his rule may attempt to diversify contacts. The only person regularly mooted as an influential foreign policy advisor and who evidently has some trust (judging by the amount of money that Tamim bin Hamad trusts him with) is Azmi Bishara, a Christian Palestinian former Knesset member

Having taken over as Emir in summer-2013, the then-33-year-old Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani inherited a state mired in a range of evolving, complex international intrigues

(Black, 27 June 2013). Bishara has been responsible not only for establishing an Arab think-tank in Doha (which will soon grow into a higher education institute) but a new news channel and online newspaper in London called *al-Arab al-Jadeed*, a venture designed to diversify Qatar's media portfolio from the Islamist-associated al-Jazeera (Kilani, 28 November 2014).

It is also true that Tamim bin Hamad has had to pare-down his state's overt association with certain Islamist elements, most notably the Muslim Brotherhood as a direct result of regional pressure (Hassan, 22 April 2014). Nevertheless, Tamim bin Hamad has played a savvy game against threats from Saudi Arabia and the UAE. He effectively waited-out the rival states, slowly agreeing to certain conditions, calculating correctly that Saudi Arabia's desire to preserve the unity of the GCC in the face of a resurgent Iran would overcome its desire to drive-home significant change in Doha.

Similarly, regional links to Islamists have been maintained elsewhere. In particular, using its contacts in the Levant and Iraq, time and again, Qatar secured the release of hostages such as the last US serviceman held by the Taliban in Afghanistan in June 2014 and five Tajik soldiers in June 2015 (Kucera, 15 June 2015). Qatar has also been using its contacts with the al-Qaeda-associated group, *Jabhat al-Nusra*, to attempt to bring the group into more of a normal, political alignment. This is the only reasonable explanation for the interviews aired with the extremist group's leader, Abu Mohammed al-Jolani on al-Jazeera in May and June 2015 (Roberts, 6 March 2015; Editorial, 28 May 2015).

But Tamim bin Hamad felt acute pressure from Western allies too. Reportage of Qatar's role supporting Islamists became so contentious that serious questions were raised in western legislatures about Qatar's suitability as an ally, with, as noted, some US Congressmen and women calling for the removal of the al-Udeid base. Presently, these calls seem unlikely to genuinely threaten Qatar's core security arrangement. But that such a notion is being contemplated highlights how acutely Qatar's articulation and prosecution of its foreign policies have failed and thus how much ground Tamim bin Hamad has to make up.

But this failure has come at a time of introspection in the Gulf region as to its relationship with the region's core security provider. The US pivot to Asia, the nuclear deal with Iran, and a more Middle East-averse US foreign policy hints that America is positioning itself to leave the Persian Gulf region (Roberts, 14 May 2015). Though this might not occur for a decade or more, the second era of Qatar's foreign policy, when Hamad bin Khalifah was burgeoning a positive, often innocuous image for the state, was oppositely placing Qatar to face the eventual US withdrawal.

Judging by Qatar's mauling in the international press and how Qatar has raised hackles in the west as well as in the Persian Gulf, much of the good will and positive reputation that Qatar built up has evaporated. Its mediation efforts, its focus on education, and its mature speaking-to-all-sides foreign relations, are trumped, it seems, by repeated accusations of Qatar's support of Islamists.

5. Conclusions

Leaders on the Qatari peninsula have never had an easy time. Historically, the land itself has intrinsically limited the population it could sustain, which contributed to Qatar remaining among the smallest and weakest groupings of people in the Persian Gulf region. Leaders thus made savvy decisions with whom to ally, making cost-benefit calculations as to which domineering

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regional power posed the most threat and which would provide protection with the least onerous demands. In the late-18th and early-19th centuries, these decisions were made and remade quickly and alliance structures changed frequently.

This basis for Qatari security continued, though the shifting alliance structure slowed down with the introduction of the Ottoman and British Empires with whom Qatari leaders sought protective arrangements. Though relations were far from simple, these two Empires provided for Qatar's overarching security for around half-a-century each.

The discovery and export of oil did not change the fundamental Qatari security dynamic; indeed, it reinforced the Qatari leadership's need for a suzerain to protect them, the state, and their precious commodity. After the British withdrew from the Gulf in 1971, Qatari leaders turned to Saudi Arabia. While no explicit security arrangements are in evidence, the tenor of their relationship demonstrated by Qatar's foreign policy shows that, at the very least, Qatar's leadership sought to neutralise one potential threat to its state – from Saudi Arabia itself – by so assiduously conforming if not genuflecting to the larger state's leadership.

The new leadership emerging in the late-1980s were, however, unhappy with such an arrangement and wanted to signal and demonstrate Qatar's complete independence. Equally, they possessed a fundamentally international perspective and judged that Qatar's security was best secured by making Qatar important to as wide a range of states as possible. Though a security relationship was founded with the United States, conforming to the historic Qatari tactic of alliance-forming, Qatar's leadership actively sought to diversify this dependence. History told them that, however big or important the state, it would leave their region eventually.

For a time, then, Qatar acted as if it sought to transcend its regional politics. By assiduously attempting to ally with everyone – Iran and Israel included – it was almost as if it were attempting to foster a quasi-neutral reputation for Qatar to inure the state from regional conflict.

But such a tactic veered significantly with the Qatari reaction to the Arab Spring. Then, as never before, Qatar explicitly chose sides and often attempted to support Islamists across the region. Partly this was because Qatar sensed that the moment for Islam to actively direct politics in the Arab world had arrived. Supporting such groups was an inevitable consequence of Qatar's weak foreign policy apparatus which relied heavily on informal links that tended, by historical circumstance as much as any active policy, to involve Islamists who had taken refuge in Qatar over the years.

But such a policy failed. In many places during the Arab Spring that Qatar involved itself with financial, military, or diplomatic support, the situation became more complex and eventually disintegrated into civil war. Though Qatar was far from alone in such meddling, it has been ascribed by the popular press much of the blame.

Thus Tamim bin Hamad inherited a difficult situation in 2013. As and when his personal policy preferences come more to the fore as he matures into the role of Emir, they will be checked the Scylla of his father's legacy and the state's limited formal and informal contacts that are so crucial to directing policy, and the Charybdis of humiliatingly being blackmailed (or at least curtailed) by regional states to abandon Qatar's contacts with Islamists.

His approach of maintaining Islamist links throughout the Levant, but demonstrably putting the contacts to peaceable use – by obtaining hostages from assorted groups – is a sensible way to rekindle Qatar's reputation. Yet the state's evident relations with an extremist group like

*Reenergising
Qatar's soft power
and its reputation
as a progressive
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orientation*

Jabhat al-Nusra, though such actions are doubtless undertaken with the connivance of western intelligence and security agencies, still look bad for the state. Given Qatar's inability to disseminate any message as to why it retains relations with al-Nusra, the state will continue to be pilloried. And so while maintaining this niche relationship carries a certain utility as far as western allies are concerned, Qatar will continue to pay a high price.

Instead, Tamim bin Hamad could lead the reprise of the pre-Arab Spring Qatari foreign policy tenets. Saving money through drawing down on its support of a variety of armed causes around the region, Qatar could reinvest this in its education system that has been hit hardest by the financial cuts under Tamim (Kerr, June 2015). Similarly, Qatar could plough its aid through UN organisations as opposed to its own ad hoc mechanisms, to symbolise and publicise a reversion to Qatar's "butter not guns" approach to its international relations.

Either way, reenergising Qatar's soft power and its reputation as a progressive state is crucial to its future security orientation. US security understandings will diminish eventually and then Qatar will need to find a new suzerain or fend multilaterally for itself. In such a situation, Qatar wants to be an attractive state; not one with a negative, divisive reputation.

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ENERGY AS A MAIN DRIVER OF QATARI FOREIGN POLICY

La energía como motor principal de la política exterior de Catar

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Qatar is one of the smallest countries in the world with approximately a quarter million of native population. Despite these geographical and demographic limitations, Doha has established itself as a major player on both regional and international scenes. A major drive behind this ascendancy is the accumulation of massive oil and natural gas revenues. This essay examines the role hydrocarbon assets have played in the internal and external transformation of Qatari policy and the proposed strategies to mitigate the impact of the sharp drop in oil prices since June 2014.



Abstract

Qatar; foreign policy; fossil fuels; liquefied natural gas (LNG); shale gas; energy exports; diversification; Qatar Investment Authority

Catar; política exterior; combustibles fósiles; gas natural licuado (GNL); gas de esquisto; exportación de energía; diversificación; Fondo Soberano de Inversión de Catar



Key words

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Fechas

Catar es uno de los países más pequeños del mundo, con cerca de un cuarto de millón de población autóctona. A pesar de estas limitaciones geográficas y demográficas, Doha se ha establecido como un jugador principal en las escenas regional e internacional. Una medida fundamental tras este ascenso es la acumulación de los enormes beneficios generados por el petróleo y el gas natural. Este artículo examina el papel que los activos relacionados con los hidrocarburos han jugado en las transformaciones interna y externa de la política de Catar y las estrategias propuestas para mitigar el impacto de la fuerte caída del precio del petróleo desde junio de 2014.



Resumen

With an area of under 12,000 square kilometers, Qatar is one of the smallest countries in the Middle East. Equally, the native population, approximately a quarter of a million, is one of the smallest in the Arab world. Despite these geographical limitations Qatar has one of the highest incomes per capita in the world. The country and its people are very rich. This massive national wealth has transformed Qatar into a major regional player and an influential participant in the global economic and political system (Khativ, 2013). In the last few decades Doha has enjoyed good relations with states and non-state actors that see each other as rivals or enemies. These include Iran and Saudi Arabia, Hamas and Israel, among others. Doha has strongly supported the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and has been a major player in the Syrian civil war since 2011. The bulk of American troops in the Middle East are stationed in Qatar and the country is home to Al-Jazeera. Finally, Doha has taken the lead in mediation efforts to settle regional conflicts particularly in Sudan, Lebanon and Yemen (Kamrava, 2011).

A major drive behind this active foreign policy is the country's enormous wealth. In the last few decades Doha has accumulated substantial financial assets by developing and exporting oil and natural gas. One can argue that without these oil and gas revenues Qatar's role on the regional and global scenes would have been very limited. Stated differently, Doha's active diplomacy has been backed by promises of generous financial assistance and investment.

This essay seeks to highlight the role oil and gas revenues have played in shaping the Qatari foreign policy in the last several decades. These hydrocarbon resources have had tremendous impact on the internal and external transformation of Qatar into a modern state and a leading regional and global influential player. The first section briefly discusses the history of oil and gas exploration and development and underscores Doha's heavy dependency on oil and gas revenues. The second section examines the country's financial vulnerability due to the fluctuation in oil and gas prices particularly in light of the recent sharp drop in oil prices and the substantial increase in US shale gas. The third section analyzes Doha's efforts to address this vulnerability, mainly by seeking to diversify the economy and invest oil and gas revenues.

With an area of under 12,000 square kilometers, Qatar is one of the smallest countries in the Middle East

1. Oil and gas exploration and development

Earnings from the hydrocarbon sector account for a large share of Qatar's total government revenues and gross domestic product. The country holds massive oil and gas proven reserves. Its share of proven oil reserves is 1.5 % and of production is 2 %. Qatar's gas outlook is much impressive. It holds 13.1 % of proven reserves (world's third largest after Iran and Russia) and its share of global production in 2014 was 5.1 % (the world's third after US and Russia) (BP Statistical Review, 2015). Thus, natural gas is at the center of Qatar's energy sector. Indeed since 2006 Qatar has been the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG).¹

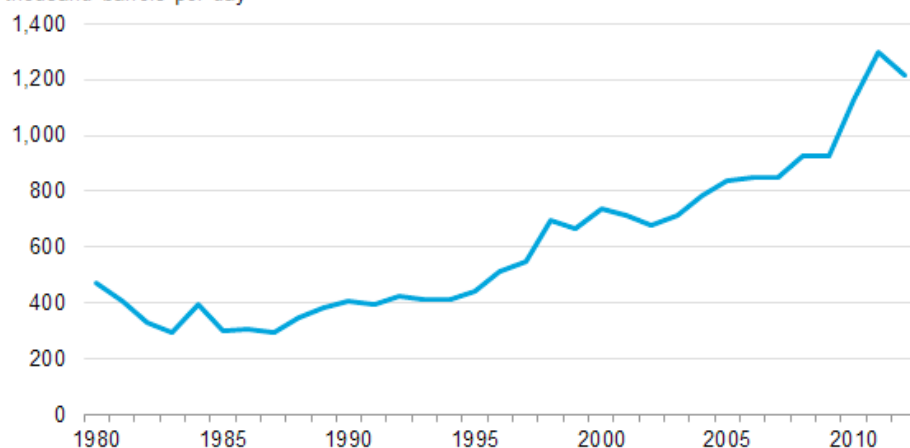
This transformation of Qatar into a major player in the global hydrocarbon market has occurred in the last one hundred years. Exploration of oil started in 1923 around the time when the pearl fishing industry was being extinguished by the introduction of cultivated pearls from Japan (Chaddock, 2008). The first oil discovery was made in late 1930s when oil deposits were found in Dukhan field. However, the outbreak of World War II delayed the development till late 1940s. It was then that the first shipment of Qatari crude bound for Europe was made from the newly

1 Liquefied natural gas is the gas that has been liquefied by reducing its temperature at atmospheric pressure. In this way, the space requirements for storage and transport are reduced.

completed terminal at Umm Said (El Mallakh, 1979). Since then other fields were discovered and developed. Currently most of the country's production comes from four fields – Al Shaheen, Dukhan, Idd al-Shargi and Bul Hanine. In 1974 the national oil company, Qatar Petroleum, was founded (Qatar Petroleum). The company is the primary operator of all oil fields but international oil companies such as ExxonMobil, Occidental Petroleum and Total are major partners in developing and expanding production. In recent years Qatar exports almost all of its crude and petroleum products to Asian markets. In the last several decades both the volumes of production and export have soared. Though, since the early 2010s they seem to have peaked and started declining. The authority increasingly relies on enhanced oil recovery techniques to boost production.

Qatar historic crude oil and lease condensate production, 1980-2012

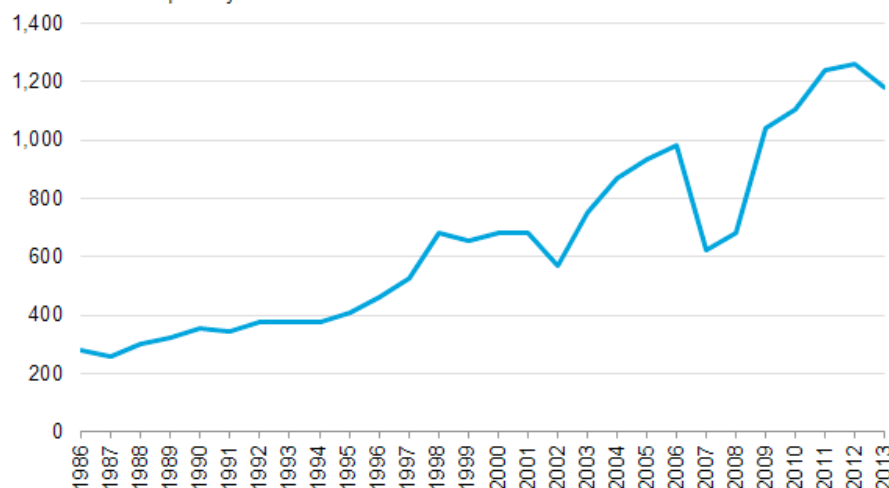
thousand barrels per day



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *International Energy Statistics*

Qatar historic crude oil exports, 1986-2013

thousand barrels per day



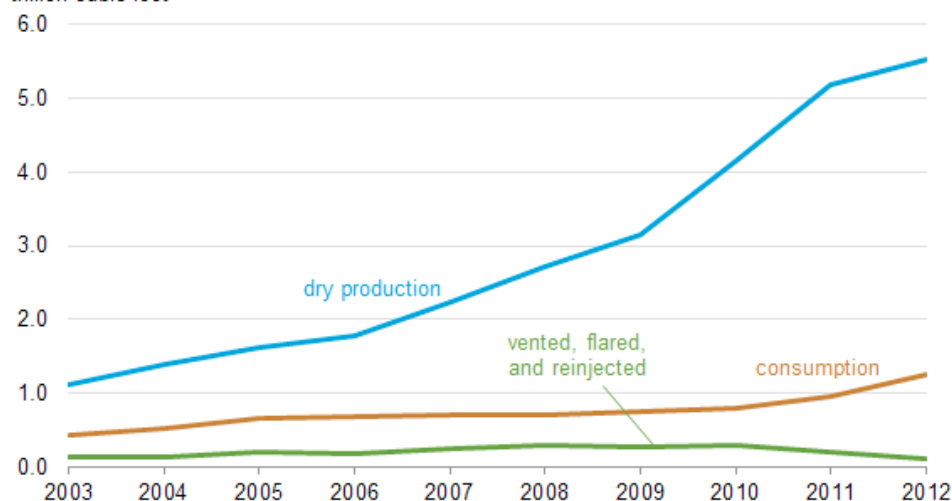
Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *International Energy Statistics*, Lloyd's List APEX

In 1971 exploration engineers from Shell discovered natural gas off the north-east coast of Qatar. At the time, however, no one knew quite how important the find was. Only after 15 appraisal wells had been drilled over a period of 14 years was it realized that the North Field, as it had been named, was one of the largest non-associated natural gas fields in the world, with recoverable reserves of more than 900 trillion cubic feet or approximately 10 % of the world's known reserves (Ras Gas).² To exploit this remarkable 6,000 square-kilometer field (equivalent to almost half of the country's land area) Qatar Petroleum has built 14 liquefied natural gas (LNG) trains. Qatargas and its sister company, Rasgas,³ each operates seven of these LNG trains.⁴ Nearly all of Qatar's natural gas production comes from the North Field.

Qatar meets all of its internal natural gas demand from domestic sources. Natural gas consumption has grown quickly over the past several years. The electricity and water (desalinization) sectors account for most of the gas consumption. Still, given its small population the level of demand is relatively low. Thus, the country is able to export nearly all of its gas production. Most of Qatar's exports go to markets in Asia in the form of LNG, while the country sends a small amount of natural gas via the Dolphin Pipeline to the United Arab Emirates and Oman. With two operational facilities, Qatar is also at the forefront of gas-to-liquids (GTL) technology, which processes natural gas into liquid fuels as low-sulfur diesel and naphtha, among other products.

Qatar natural gas flows, 2003-2012

trillion cubic feet



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *International Energy Statistics*

Historically, most of Qatar's LNG exports were part of long-term, oil-indexed contracts, but in the past few years Doha started to shift to more short-term contracts and spot-market sales. Qatar has over 90 % of its LNG production volumes committed as part of supply purchase

² Non-associated natural gas is the gas that is not in contact with significant quantities of crude oil in the reservoir.

³ Qatargas was established in 1984 and Rasgas in 1993.

⁴ The equipment used in the preparation of LNG is often referred to as a train as it is a series of units linked together, like the carriages of a train.

arrangements (SPAs) between 2014 and 2020 (Energy Information Administration, Qatar). LNG production growth elsewhere in the world over the next few years may challenge some of Qatar's remaining spot volumes, although with the majority of its LNG already sold, the impact on Qatar's natural gas export should be limited in the near term. In the long term, however, the sharp drop in oil and gas prices and projected rise in LNG export from the United States, due to the utilization of shale gas, may pose a serious challenge.

2. The global energy outlook

In late 2014 oil prices dropped by more than 50 percent. This sharp decline is particularly significant, given political instability in a number of oil producing countries such as Libya and Iraq and the sanctions on Iranian oil sector. Several years ago these geopolitical factors would have pushed prices higher. In 2014 they had little, if any, impact due to the steady improvement in energy efficiency, which leads to lower consumption, and rising production, particularly from the United States.

Energy efficiency can be defined as the delivery of more services for the same energy input or the same services for less energy input. For a long time, the contribution of energy efficiency to energy security was not fully appreciated and was identified as "the hidden fuel". In recent years efficiency has attracted more attention and has been labeled by the International Energy Agency (IEA) analysts as "the first fuel" (IEA Energy Efficiency Report, 2014). A recent report by the IEA stated that investment in efficiency has helped to lower energy consumption in the 18 member states by 60 percent. Stated differently efficiency helped to avoid over 1,700 million tones of oil-equivalent from being consumed (IEA Energy Efficiency Report, 2014). Thus, in addition to improving energy security, efficiency is a good business that offers high returns on investments, increases the sustainability of energy sources and reduces pollution.

To further appreciate the significance of improving efficiency and reducing consumption it is important to note that the 2002-2012 decade recorded the largest ever growth of energy consumption in volume terms over any 10 year period (BP Energy Outlook, 2014). Both the IEA and the British Petroleum (BP), among others, project a steady increase in the global energy consumption. However, this rise in consumption varies by region and by fuel. Energy demand in most developed countries (mostly member states in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD) has peaked and in some countries has started a steady decline. On the other hand, global demand for energy is led by Asian emerging markets (China, India, South Korea, and Japan) and the Middle East. Indeed, these two regions account for nearly all of the net global increase in consumption. According to the IEA, for each barrel of oil no longer used in OECD countries, two barrels more are used in the non-OECD (IEA World Energy Outlook, 2014). China has already surpassed the United States as the world's largest oil importer and the Middle East is projected to overtake the US to become the largest per capita consumer of oil in 2033 (IEA World Energy Outlook, 2014).

Similarly, there is a variation in the demand for different fuels. Fossil fuels will maintain their dominance of the energy mix with natural gas making the fastest growing rate. In addition, the advanced technology and declining prices of setting up liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities are slowly helping against the risk of supply disruptions and reducing the costs of exporting. Oil consumption will grow but its share will decline and coal will grow faster than oil but slower than gas.

In late 2014 oil prices dropped by more than 50 percent. This sharp decline is particularly significant, given political instability in a number of oil producing countries

Growing concern about greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, particularly carbon dioxide from the combustion of fossil fuels, has created renewed interest in the basically carbon-free nuclear power. For decades nuclear power has been seen as a non-intermittent and readily expandable source of energy. On the other side, the industry has continued to face daunting challenges and risks that need to be addressed. The list includes the high construction costs, safety, waste, and the close connection between civilian nuclear power and military applications. Thus, despite Fukushima disaster nuclear power capacity is projected to substantially increase. This increase, however, adds a little to its share of global electricity generation due to the impressive rise of renewable energy.

Like nuclear power, renewable energy sources have been the topic of continued interest in both developed and developing countries. This interest is driven mainly by concern over energy security and climate change. Renewable energy is any form of energy that is replenished by natural processes at a rate that equals or exceeds its rate of use. Some renewable energy resources such as hydropower are technically mature and have been deployed at a significant scale. Others, such as wind, solar, and geothermal, are in a nascent phase of technical maturity and commercial production and deployment. The strong interest in renewable energy in many countries raises its share in global power generation to one-third by 2040 (IEA World Energy Outlook, 2014). Low natural gas prices (due to shale revolution) might reduce incentives in investing and developing renewable energy.

This variation in the current and projected consumption of fossil fuels, nuclear power, and renewable energy has had significant impact on trading relationship. Generally North America is emerging as a net exporter, instead of net importer, while Europe's and Asia's already heavy dependency on foreign supplies will further deepen.

Long before the current tight oil boom, the United States has sought to diversify its sources of foreign crude oil. Generally, the share of US imports from the Persian Gulf has declined while that from Western Hemisphere has risen. Furthermore, the combination of increased production (mainly tight oil) and reduced consumption leads to substantial decline of imports. In 2005 the US imported approximately 60 percent of its demand. This rate is projected to fall to 10 percent by 2035 (BP Energy Outlook, 2015). Even more impressive, the United States is emerging as a net natural gas exporter. These fundamental changes mean that the energy supplies that were previously destined for the US market are being re-directed to other markets in Europe and Asia.

The increase in shale gas and tight oil supplies is helping Europe to diversify its energy import sources away from Russia. European officials have been concerned over their heavy oil and gas dependency on Russia. The recent crisis over Ukraine has further deepened Europe's sense of vulnerability. The projected decrease in the transportation costs of LNG and the rise of its share in global gas trade are likely to contribute to Europe's energy security. Meanwhile, in recent years, Asian economies, particularly China, India, South Korea, and Japan, have grown more dependent on imported energy supplies, mostly from the Persian Gulf. This trend is projected to persist in the foreseeable future.

To sum up, the global energy mix is becoming more diverse. Fossil fuels are projected to provide the majority of the world's energy needs. However, the mix will shift. Renewables and unconventional fossil fuels will take a larger share, along with gas, which is set to be the fastest growing fossil fuel, as well as the cleanest, meeting as much of the increase in demand as coal

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and oil combined (BP Energy Outlook, 2015). Meanwhile the fall of demand in the OECD countries and the rise in Asia have accelerated the re-direction of oil and gas trade. The shale gas in the United States should be seen as part of this emerging global energy landscape.

3. Shale gas and tight oil revolution in the United States

The use of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing in the United States has greatly expanded the ability of producers to profitably recover natural gas and oil from complex geological plays. Generally, under the combination of these technologies water, sand and chemicals are injected into the horizontal borehole of the well at very high pressure to fracture the shale rocks and release the gas. This has allowed wider access to oil and gas in shale and tight formations where the density of the rock has blocked migration of hydrocarbons to conventional oil and gas reservoirs. Although experimentation dates back to the 19th century (first well was fracked in the United States in 1947) (Stevens, 2012), efforts were intensified in the mid-1970s with a partnership of private companies, Department of energy and research institutions. This partnership helped to commercially produce gas and oil from shale rock. One of the earliest successful applications was led by Mitchell Energy and Development Corporation in Barnett Shale in North Central Texas. As producers gained confidence in the profitability of the emerging technology, other regions such as Fayetteville, Haynesville, Marcellus, Woodford, Eagle Ford, and others have been explored and developed. Since the mid-2000s, this combination of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling has been widely recognized as a “game changer” in the United States and around the world (Energy Information Administration: Review of emerging resources, 2011).

The application of these technologies has led to a steady impressive increase in oil and gas production, the largest in the nation's history. In 2013 tight oil production averaged 3.22 million barrels per day (m p/d), pushing the nation's overall production to an average of 7.84 m b/d, more than 10 percent of total world production (Energy Information Administration: Tight Oil Production, 2014). The Department of Energy (DOE) projects that crude oil production will rise from 6.5 m b/d in 2012 to 9.6 m b/d by 2020, a level not seen since 1970. Tight oil production growth accounts for 81 % of this increase and its share of national crude oil production will grow from 35 percent in 2012 to 50 percent in 2020 (Energy Information Administration: Tight Oil-Driven Production, 2014).

The figures for shale gas are even more impressive. In 2007 shale gas production was 1,293 billion cubic feet (bcf), by 2012 it soared to 10,371 bcf. Proven reserves rose from 23,304 bcf. (2007) to 129,396 bcf (2012) (Energy Information Administration: Natural Gas). This skyrocketed shale production has pushed the national gas production to a new high of 82 bcm in 2013 (Energy Information Administration: Shale Gas, 2014). The British Petroleum projects that shale gas output will grow by 4.3 percent between 2012 and 2035, enabling US gas production to rise by 45 percent (BP Energy Outlook, 2014).

The current and projected soaring of tight oil and shale gas has significantly improved the nation's energy trade outlook. The United States has emerged as a net natural gas exporter and the share of imported oil to the overall consumption is declining. These key changes have opened a debate about relaxing export restrictions. Current policy effectively bans crude oil exports through the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (exports of petroleum products are generally permit-

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ted). There is more scope for exports of natural gas, although the Natural Gas Act of 1938 requires DOE authorization to import or export natural gas to or from the United States (Arora, 2014).

The large and growing body of academic literature and industry projections suggests four conclusions. First, the International Energy Administration and Department of Energy, among others, project that the tight oil output will level off in the early 2020 and production will start to fall back. These projections, however, underestimate how far technological innovations can go. It is important to note that estimates of proven and recoverable shale gas and tight oil have continued to be revised upwards since the mid-2000s. Technology is not static. Accordingly more reserves are becoming accessible at lower prices. Second, it is important neither to over-estimate nor under-estimate the shale revolution. The United States is moving closer to a state of “self-sufficiency”, meaning more balance between consumption and production. On the other hand, “energy-independency: the ability to act freely without reference to the rest of the world” (Mitchell, 2013) is an attractive political rhetoric, but is unrealistic in today’s global economy. The United States will always be affected by oil prices and policies in other countries.

Third, there is significant uncertainty about shale revolution outside the United States. On one hand, the resources are available in several countries. A study issued by the DOE in 2013 surveyed 41 countries outside the United States and estimated the number of formations at 137, technically recoverable shale gas at 7,299 trillion cubic feet and 345 billion barrels of tight oil (Energy Information Administration: Analysis and Projections, 2013). On the other hand, a combination of individual property rights, legal systems, and government-private sector partnership has been the main drive behind shale gas revolution in the United States. Many countries lack such combination. As a result, the United States is becoming more self-sufficient, while Europe and particularly Asia are becoming more dependent on foreign supplies.

Finally, undoubtedly significant and rising volumes of oil production from shale resources that are economically recoverable have exerted pressure on the global price of oil. Oil producers, inside and outside OPEC, are under pressure to cut production. The price of oil, like any other commodity, reflects the equilibrium between supply and demand. There has been a widespread view that at around \$85 or \$90 a barrel extracting tight oil from shale would no longer be economical. However new analysis finds that 80 percent of new tight oil production would be economic between \$50 and \$69 a barrel (Yergin, 2014). In addition, companies will continue to improve technology and drive down costs.

To sum up, Qatar, like other major oil and gas producers, faces fundamental challenges due to the drop in prices due to rising production and slowing demand. These key changes in the global energy landscape have prompted Doha to re-adjust its broad energy strategy.

Qatar, like other major oil and gas producers, faces fundamental challenges due to the drop in prices due to rising production and slowing demand

4. Qatar Investment Authority

Unlike the prices of most commodities, oil and gas prices have experienced extreme fluctuation in the last several decades. These fluctuations have reflected both the balance between supply and demand as well as political upheavals in producing countries. Against this background of price instability, Qatari leaders, like leaders of other major producers, have pursued several strategies to maintain internal economic prosperity and active and independent foreign policy. A key part of these strategies has been investing oil and gas revenues. Another major avenue is to diversify the economy and reduce the heavy dependency on oil and gas sectors.

Sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) are government-owned investment entities, set up for a variety of macroeconomic purposes. They commonly take the form of long-term investments of foreign exchange assets in overseas holdings. Their portfolios typically involve more diverse and riskier asset allocations than traditional reserve holdings. These SWFs are not new; they have been active in the international financial system since the 1950s. Since the turn of the century, however, they have assumed a more prominent role as high oil prices, sustained impressive economic growth in several Asian nations, and economic slowdown in Europe and the United States have seen oil exporters and a number of Asian nations (particularly China) running massive current account surpluses while some major western economies have accumulated substantial deficits.

This marked global imbalance, with rapid revenue accumulations on one side and economic slowdown on the other, has given an impetus to the SWFs, which have been increasing fast in both size and number since the early 2000s. The rise in the number and size of SWFs represents a dramatic increase in the role of governments in the ownership and management of international assets (Truman). Consequently, the management of these funds and their potential impact on economic systems, domestic as well as international, have come under increasing scrutiny. In contrast to traditional reserves, which are typically invested for liquidity and safety, SWFs seek a higher rate of return and may be invested in a wider range of asset classes. However, most of these funds do not provide information on their holdings.

In the early 2000s oil prices more than tripled. In 2008 crude oil exceeded the previous all-time inflation-adjusted high of \$99.04 per barrel reached in April 1980 (Cambridge Energy Research Associates). Little wonder, then, that several oil-exporting countries have established oil funds since the early 2000s. The general justification for these funds is that “some share of government revenues derived from the exploitation of a non-renewable resource should be put aside for when these revenues decline” (Davis et al., 2001). Such a decline might come about through fluctuation of prices or depletion of resources (or both). Thus, generally speaking oil funds are classified into two categories – stabilization funds and saving funds. The former are designed to reduce the impact of volatility in revenue flows on the government and the economy. When oil prices are high, the fund receives resources; when prices are low, the fund pays out to the budget. Saving funds are intended to ensure that not only current but also future generations enjoy the benefits of oil wealth by saving and investing a proportion of oil revenues. Most oil funds seek to achieve both purposes (stabilization and saving) simultaneously.

Against this background the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the country’s sovereign wealth fund, was established in 2005 and was headed by, then, Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani. Its origins trace back to the establishment of the Supreme Council for the Investment of State Reserves for the purpose of investing Qatar’s revenue surplus (Qatar Investment Authority). The main mission of the fund is to achieve a “superior and sustainable rate of return” (QIA Investment Approach) This goal has been pursued mainly by investing in a diverse asset classes including:

- Equities
- Credit and Fixed Income Securities
- Private Equity, such as off-market transactions in non-listed companies
- Real Estate
- Real Assets (QIA Investment Framework)

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Since its inception, the Fund's investment targets have included several high-profile companies in Europe and the United States, including Credit Suisse, the London Stock Exchange, the Nordic bourse operator OMX, the British supermarket chain J. Sainsbury, the European Aeronautic, Defense and Space Company, and Nasdaq. In recent years the QIA has focused on Asia as it looks to diversify its portfolio of assets away from Europe. In the next five years (2015-2020) it aims to invest between \$15 billion and \$20 billion in Asia. In November 2014 it signed an agreement with China's state-owned conglomerate CITIC Group Corp to launch a \$10 billion fund that will invest in Asia (Reuters, 2014).

Since his ascendance in 2013 Emir Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has appointed two chief executive officers of the QIA – Ahmad Mohamad al-Sayed (July 2013), who was replaced by the Emir's half-brother Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohamed bin Saud al-Thani (December 2014). It is hard to assess the exact connection between the QIA and the country's foreign policy. But, it is fair to assume that these huge investments bring significant influence and prestige to the country and can serve to reward friends and punish rivals.

5. Diversification

In the last several decades the GCC governments have used oil and gas revenues to increase public sector employment and spend on infrastructure, health, and education. This generous public spending has helped raise standard of living and support creating a broad economic prosperity. As a result, the business climate has been improved, education has been expanded, financial sector has been strengthened, and trade and foreign investment have been liberalized. These significant achievements aside, much more is still needed. The share of non-hydrocarbons output in GDP is highly correlated with oil prices and progress with export diversification has been limited (Callen et al., 2014).

The Qatar National Vision 2030 (Issued in July 2008) states that the country "is enjoying a period of unparalleled prosperity, with exceptional economic progress being evident in the increasing standard of living of its people. Major advances in economic, human and social developments continue to occur" (General Secretariat for Development Planning). Within this context the government has sought to diversify the economy through innovation and entrepreneurship. It has increased spending on research and development and provided a supportive environment for growing private-sector technology firms and building a world-class educational and skills-training system for Qatari citizens (Engelke, 2015). Despite this optimism Qatari leaders have been aware of their country's vulnerability to the fluctuation in oil and gas prices. Having fluctuated in a narrow range of about \$100-120 a barrel in the early part of the 2000s prices have unexpectedly fallen by more than 50 % since June 2014. Future markets project that a significant part of this decline is likely to persist in the medium term. With approximately 90 % of its budget revenues and exports being tied to the hydrocarbon sector, Qatar's economic prosperity, domestic and foreign policies are severely impacted. The price of the country's LNG is linked to the price of crude oil.

A recent report by the IMF suggests that the large drop in oil prices will lead to a substantial deterioration in fiscal and external balances. In sharp contrast to recent years, the government budget is projected to fall into a deficit from 2016 onwards. The current account surplus will drop from 30 % of GDP in 2013 to 2 % of GDP in 2020 (IMF Staff Report, 2015). The short-

The Qatar National Vision 2030 states that the country "is enjoying a period of unparalleled prosperity, with exceptional economic progress"

term growth outlook is positive, but lower oil prices will lead to a substantial deterioration of the fiscal and external balances. The budget will be in deficit from 2016 onward and the current account surplus will largely be eliminated (IMF Staff Report, 2015). Stated differently, Qatar's economic growth will gradually slow in coming years. The Qatari leaders, like leaders in other major oil and gas exporting countries, have acknowledged the shrinking external surplus and the potential broad social, economic and political impact. Different strategies have been considered to mitigate this unfolding challenge.

The authorities are executing a large public infrastructure program to advance economic diversification and prepare for the FIFA 2022 World Cup. The prospects of persistent low oil prices and slow medium-term growth underscore the necessity to intensify the diversification efforts. There is scope for further improving the business environment and promoting diversification, including the simplification of business registration, improving enforcement of contracts, and enhancing the quality of educational curricula. Efforts should be made to further increase non-hydrocarbon revenue, contain expenditure growth, control the public wage bill, reduce subsidies and prioritize investment projects (IMF Qatar, 2015).

6. Energy and Qatari foreign policy – the way forward

In the last several years Qatar has gained regional and international influence largely, but not exclusively, due to its massive gas revenues. Without this substantial wealth, one can argue, Doha would not have had such leverage and prestige. The authority has used these financial tools to “put Qatar on the map”. Investments by the QIA have been made to boost economic and diplomatic relations with different countries. Diversification and efforts to build a solid human capital have sought to create sustained economic prosperity at home and credible foreign policy abroad.

The recent sharp drop in oil and gas prices poses a serious challenge to Doha's rising role on the international scene. The most recent projections of the global natural gas markets suggest several trends:

- Natural gas is the fastest growing fossil fuel 1.9 % annually, with oil 0.8 % marginally ahead of coal. In other words, gas will gain share steadily, while the shares of both oil and coal will fall.
- Shale gas production is dominated by North America, which currently accounts for nearly all of shale gas supply and continues to account for around three-quarters in 2035.
- The expansion of trade is driven by Asia Pacific, where net imports nearly triple and account for almost 50 % of global gas net imports by 2035. Asia Pacific overtakes Europe as the largest net importing region in early 2020s. The growth of shale gas means North America will switch from being a net importer to a net exporter in the next few years.
- A vast majority of the increase in gas traded across regions reflects increased supplies of LNG. Pipeline supplies grow at much slower rate. Qatar, which has the largest market share today, is overtaken by Australia, Africa and the US.
- Asia is the largest destination for LNG. By 2035, China becomes the second largest LNG importer, just behind Japan. Almost three-quarters of Europe's gas needs are met by imports by 2035 (BP Energy Outlook, 2015).

In the last several years Qatar has gained regional and international influence largely, but not exclusively, due to its massive gas revenues

These projections suggest five trends that are likely to shape Qatari foreign policy in the foreseeable future. First, the growing global demand for natural gas means that gas revenues will continue to be a major drive for economic prosperity at home and active foreign policy abroad. Second, given the strong demand for gas in south Asia, and Europe's efforts to reduce its energy dependency on Russia, Doha's economic relations with these two regions are likely to expand. Third, the projected prolonged low oil and gas prices underscore the need for a broad strategy of diversification, knowledge-economy, and human capital. Fourth, Qatar shares its major gas field (the North Field) with Iran's South Par. This structure is the largest dry gas field in the world. The continued utilization of gas deposits by the two countries requires relatively friendly relations between Doha and Tehran. Fifth, strategically, relations with the United States are not likely to be impacted by shale gas. Historically, there has never been an "oil for security" bargain between the two nations. Rather, Washington and Doha share mutual security concerns in the broader Middle East.

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Appendix I

Oil production and export (thousand barrels per day)

Year	Production	Export
1980	483	NA
1981	430	NA
1982	361	NA
1983	321	NA
1984	423	NA
1985	332	NA
1986	331	35.277
1987	319	44.134
1988	378	48.100
1989	406	54.615
1990	448	66.044
1991	447	73.040
1992	480	75.196
1993	470	60.485
1994	467	58.834
1995	499	56.189
1996	563	57.549
1997	623	53.418
1998	783	57.667
1999	779	60.027
2000	879	92.330
2001	880	81.211
2002	871	78.109
2003	1,019	103.211
2004	1,162	92.774
2005	1,254	92.519
2006	1,284	60.648
2007	1,351	62.671
2008	1,484	53.235
2009	1,573	54.763
2010	1,788	437.120
2011	1,936	NA
2012	2,033	NA
2013	2,067	NA

Appendix II

Natural gas production and export (billion cubic feet)

Year	Production	Export
1980	184	NA
1981	157	NA
1982	186	NA
1983	174	NA
1984	209	NA
1985	191	NA
1986	193	NA
1987	198	NA
1988	207	NA
1989	215	NA
1990	276	NA
1991	328	NA
1992	401	NA
1993	477	NA
1994	477	NA
1995	477	NA
1996	484	NA
1997	614	101
1998	691	169
1999	779	286
2000	1,028	496
2001	954	567
2002	1,042	649
2003	1,109	678
2004	1,383	853
2005	1,617	957
2006	1,790	1,098
2007	2,232	1,536
2008	2,719	2,005
2009	3,154	2,408
2010	4,166	3,370
2011	5,198	4,230
2012	5,523	4,267
2013	NA	NA



QATAR'S SECURITY ALIGNMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES: STRATEGIC CONSTRAINT OR FACILITATING CONDITION?

La armonización en seguridad de Catar con los Estados Unidos: ¿restricción estratégica o circunstancia favorecedora?

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Relations between Qatar and the United States constitute a mutually beneficial form of bilateral hierarchy that can usefully be considered to be a protectorate. The dynamics inherent in protectorates put the protector state in a disproportionately strong position early on, and place severe constraints on the activities of the protected partner. As time passes, this initial distribution of leverage shifts and the protected state becomes able to undertake foreign policy initiatives that contravene, and sometimes even cause damage to, the security interests of the protector. At the same time, the protected state's capacity to engage in autonomous, self-interested action in the regional and global arenas is shaped by the level of threat that it confronts from surrounding states. Taken together, these two factors offer a cogent explanation for recent trends in Qatari diplomacy.



Abstract

protectorate; Qatar; Gulf; military; foreign policy; United States
protectorado; Catar; Golfo; militar; política exterior; los Estados Unidos



Key words

Las relación entre Catar y los Estados Unidos constituye un tipo de jerarquía bilateral mutuamente beneficiosa, que sería útil considerar como si fuera un protectorado. La dinámica inherente a los protectorados sitúa en el inicio al estado protector en una posición de fuerza desproporcionada, e impone severas restricciones sobre las actividades del estado socio. Con el paso del tiempo, esta distribución inicial de beneficios cambia, y el estado socio es capaz de tomar iniciativas en política exterior que pueden contravenir, e incluso dañar, los intereses de seguridad del protector. Simultáneamente, la capacidad del estado protegido de iniciar acciones autónomas e interesadas en las escenas regional y global está determinada por el nivel de amenaza al que se enfrenta proveniente de los estados colindantes. Tomados en conjunto, estos dos factores ofrecen una explicación convincente a las últimas tendencias de la diplomacia catari.



Resumen

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Fechas

In the years after the Second Gulf War of 1990-91, Qatar has cultivated a close security alignment with the United States. The evolving strategic partnership between Doha and Washington transcends the characteristics of a conventional inter-state alliance and approximates the kind of bilateral arrangement that David Lake (1996) calls a protectorate. In this exceptional type of security alignment, each member-state maintains its own sovereign autonomy, yet the structure of the partnership constitutes a form of dyadic hierarchy, in that the protected state relinquishes the capacity to defend itself from all but the most minor external threats.

Qatar's position as a protectorate of the United States has enabled and encouraged the leadership in Doha to carry on a remarkably active foreign policy (Wright, 2011). More important, it has provided the Qatari government with the capacity and incentive to pursue external initiatives that at times run counter to American interests in both the Gulf and the broader Middle East. Relations between Doha and Washington therefore exhibit a degree of friction that seems incongruous, given the depth and vitality of the underlying relationship between the two states. Journalists thus occasionally assert that "Qatar's Support of Islamists Alienates Allies Near and Far", "Qatar's Ties to Militants Complicate Relations with U.S.' Neighbors", or "Qatar's Ties to Militants Strain Alliance" (*New York Times*, 7 September 2013; *Los Angeles Times*, 25 January 2015; *Wall Street Journal*, 23 February 2015). The paradox that exists between Qatar's firm security alignment with the United States and Doha's proclivity to undertake actions that challenge or undermine US strategic interests in the region can best be explicated in terms of the dynamics inherent in the structure of protectorates.

In the years after the Second Gulf War of 1990-91, Qatar has cultivated a close security alignment with the United States

1. Dynamics of dyadic protectorates

Security partnerships come in a wide variety of forms. Studies of world politics tend to lump these diverse arrangements together under the loose heading of "alliances", even though only a small subset of inter-state partnerships exhibits the defining features of an alliance.¹ Existing studies usually classify alliances according to how many member-states they entail and the primary purpose for which they have been constructed (Weitsman, 1997; Tow, 2001; Wilkins, 2012). Such concerns push the analysis of alliance politics toward explaining why some member-states contribute more than others to keep the partnership alive or why some alliances turn out to be more successful than others in achieving their stated objectives (Starr, 1972; Pressman, 2008; Weitsman, 2014).

In addition, most scholarship on alliances focuses on the circumstances in which inter-state partnerships initially take shape. Yet almost all of the crucial questions surrounding the role of security alignments concern the impact that formal and informal commitments to engage in joint action have on member-states' interactions with one another and with non-members after the alliance has been established (Snyder, 1997). Puzzles associated with alliance management have yet to be accorded the level of sustained attention that they deserve (Schroeder, 1976; Weitsman, 1997).

Unusual variants of security alignments have attracted even less scholarly attention. One particularly rare species in the contemporary world is the dyadic protectorate, in which one state

¹ That is, a "formal agreement that pledges states to co-operate in using their military resources against a specific state or states and usually obligates one or more of the signatories to use force, or to consider (unilaterally or in consultation with allies) the use of force, in specified circumstances" (Osgood, 1986, p. 17).

takes sole – or at least predominant – responsibility for defending another against external threats (Lake, 2009).² In most cases, the state that assumes responsibility for defense is larger, richer and more powerful than the state it protects, although it is conceivable that a wealthy or particularly well-endowed state would contract with a smaller, poorer or weaker partner to take charge of its defense. In other words, protectorates usually work to the advantage of the protector, and so protectors are almost always labelled the dominant partner, despite the fact that in exceptional cases protectorates work instead to the advantage of the protected state. It is this fundamental ambiguity regarding who benefits more from this type of security partnership that opens the door to analyzing protectorates using the concept of “relational contracting” (Lake, 1996; 1999).

Through the lenses of relational contracting, both states can be seen to benefit from the existence of a protectorate. This type of security alignment is therefore inherently “positive sum” (Lake, 1999). Protector and protected states alike find themselves better off than they would be alone, due to the creation of “joint production economies” regarding security (Lake, 1999). Whenever the protector stands at a distance from the geographical region in which the protected state is located, for instance, the protector benefits from the partnership due to a substantial reduction in the “marginal costs of projecting force over distance” (Lake, 1999). By the same token, setting up a protectorate enables both partners to “reduce redundant efforts and share [the] costs” of defense (Lake, 1999). Consequently, protectorates tend to generate significant divisions of labor with regard to the implementation of security-producing programs.

On the other hand, states that form a protectorate end up exposing themselves to notable uncertainties and dangers. Arguably the most important of these dangers is that one partner will take advantage of the alignment to pursue its own interests in ways that inflict harm on the other. Glenn Snyder (1984) calls this dynamic “entrapment”, and claims that whenever one state commits itself firmly to an alliance, its partner gains the capacity to drag it into unwanted disputes and conflicts. In a similar fashion, Lake asserts that in a protectorate, the protector exposes itself to various “costs of opportunism” on the part of the protected state (Lake, 1999). The potential for opportunistic action by the protected state tempts the protector to exert greater control over the protected state’s foreign policy, thereby engendering discontent and resentment on the part of the protected partner and prompting it to pursue a more assertive foreign policy than it might otherwise do (Elgstroem, 1981).

Opportunistic action can also be undertaken by the protector, and the protected state constantly stands vulnerable to becoming trapped in disputes and conflicts that get foisted on it by the state that guarantees its external security. Consequently, in order for a protectorate to work, the protector can be expected to create institutions that limit its capacity to exploit the protected state. The protector in fact has a strong incentive “to convince the subordinate polity that, despite its now greater decision-making authority [as part of the protectorate], it will not take advantage of the latter’s vulnerable and exposed position” (Lake, 1999; 2009). The institutional and other limitations that the protector state puts in place constitute a major component of the “governance costs” associated with protectorates (Lake, 1996). Since the costs of maintaining a security alignment tend to be greater the more hierarchy it involves (Lake, 1996), governance costs will be higher in a protectorate than they are in an alliance. In addition, governance costs tend to be greater at moments of crisis than they are during times of relative stability (Lake, 1996).

Qatar’s position as a protectorate of the United States has enabled and encouraged the leadership in Doha to carry on a remarkably active foreign policy

2 Analyzing relations between Qatar and the United States in Lakean terms was first suggested in Kamrava (2013). Dumianski (2014) proposes that all small states in the contemporary world can best be considered protectorates.

Like all inter-state partnerships, protectorates constitute “obsolescing bargains” (Lake, 1999; Moran, 1974). At the outset, the protector brings to the alignment vital resources that the protected state cannot supply for itself, such as state-of-the-art weaponry and experienced military personnel. Because the protected state has little to offer in return, the initial bargain tends to be skewed to the advantage of the protector. Most protectorates therefore resemble “patron-client relationships”, in which:

the client state is expected to remain under the wing of its patron because of the ‘shield’ [the patron] provides. It is only sensible to suggest that the client state will have to behave according to the demands of the patron and adjust its policies, respectively. (Kasimeris, 2009)

As time goes by, however, the protector invests resources, time and effort into consolidating the partnership, and thereby ends up with substantial sunk costs (Keohane, 1971). These give the protected state the capacity to exercise increased leverage vis-à-vis the protector, and enable it to undertake foreign policy initiatives that advance its own strategic interests. Furthermore, as the protector becomes more deeply committed to the partnership, the protected state finds itself able to carry out policies that circumvent the restrictions on its freedom of action that had been incorporated into the original bargain. The protected state may even gain the capacity to renegotiate the underlying terms of the contract. Such changes tend to be cumulative: “each concession that the [protected] state successfully negotiates chips away at the monopoly of information and control” that the protector enjoyed at the outset (Hosman, 2009).

Just how much leverage the protected state can exercise in its dealings with the protector state is linked to changes in the “security geography” in which the alignment operates (Bjøl, 1968). If the region in which a protectorate operates is extremely dangerous, then the protected state can be expected to restrain itself and defer to the interests of the protector. Whenever the level of threat diminishes, however, the protected state will tend to act in a more self-interested way, even if this means carrying out initiatives that challenge its partner’s strategic interests. Alterations in the security geography that surround a protectorate reflect transformations in military technology (Bjøl, 1968), as well as changes in the intentions of states in the region.

Qatar concluded an unprecedented mutual defense agreement with the United States in June 1992

2. Emergence of the Qatar-US protectorate, 1992-2005

Qatar concluded an unprecedented mutual defense agreement with the United States in June 1992. The pact provided for half a dozen joint military maneuvers by Qatari, US, British and French forces over the following two years. In March 1995, Doha took the further step of granting Washington permission to pre-position on Qatari territory enough materiel to supply combat operations by one US Army mechanized infantry brigade. Three squadrons of US F-15 and F-16 warplanes were deployed to Qatar two months later to support the creation of a “no-fly zone” over southern Iraq. And during April 1998 Qatari and US units carried out a particularly extensive set of combined land, sea and air exercises (Lawson, 2004).

In November 1998, the US ambassador in Doha announced that the US Army Corps of Engineers intended to build a giant warehouse complex in the emirate, which he boasted would end up being the US armed forces’ “largest storage base for military equipment abroad”. Then, in April 2000 the US Central Command negotiated rights to use the massive Qatari air base at Al’Udeid; the agreement authorized the Corps of Engineers to construct a new air com-

mand center at the base, as a complement to the existing regional facility at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia (Lawson, 2004). In the months after September 2001, US commanders rushed additional military units to Qatar: by the summer of 2002 some 3300 American troops had taken up positions at Al-Udeid, where hardened hangars were being built to house the fighter-bombers of the US Air Force's newly formed 379th Air Expeditionary Wing. More important, hundreds of Central Command headquarters personnel were transported from McDill Air Force Base in Florida to Qatar to supervise preparations for the upcoming US-led military offensive in Iraq (*Christian Science Monitor*, 19 September 2002).

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld traveled to Doha in December 2002 to sign a revised bilateral agreement that granted the US permission to make use of facilities in Qatar for an undisclosed period of time (*Los Angeles Times*, 12 December 2002). The visit accompanied a large-scale electronic exercise carried out under the auspices of the Central Command based at Qatar's Camp al-Sailiyah, which was billed as "the first such exercise ever staged outside the United States" (*Daily Press*, 8 December 2002). American commanders meanwhile began to transfer all command-and-control operations from Prince Sultan Air Base to Al-Udeid, relegating the former installation to the status of "a standby facility that likely would be repopulated only in the event of a major military confrontation in the region" (*Washington Post*, 20 April 2003; *New York Times*, 28 April 2003; *Aviation Week*, 5 May 2003).

As the US military presence in Qatar blossomed, the emirate's own military establishment remained miniscule. Doha's air force in the mid-1990s consisted of a dozen Mirage 2000-5s, which continued to be the primary component of the local armed forces over the next ten years. The air force was complemented by an equally miniscule navy consisting of seven fast attack boats and six coastal patrol vessels, along with an 8500-person army organized into four regiments and six battalions, including an armored battalion equipped with 34 French-built AMX-30 tanks. This force structure stayed constant even as military procurement and spending escalated sharply in neighboring states. The surge in arms deliveries that took place in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman during the summer of 2006, for example, conspicuously by-passed Qatar (*Middle East Economic Digest*, 4-10 August 2006).

As the US military presence in Qatar blossomed, the emirate's own military establishment remained miniscule

2.1. Qatar restrains itself

During the initial phase of the Qatar-US protectorate, officials in Doha adopted a foreign policy agenda that balanced a measure of independence with broad conformity to American strategic interests. Qatar resumed routine diplomatic relations with Iraq in the aftermath of the 1990-91 Gulf war, even as other Arab Gulf states kept Baghdad resolutely at arm's length out of respect for Kuwaiti sensibilities. Qatar at the same time engaged in normal interactions with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which focused on the harmonious exploitation of the newly-discovered natural gas field that straddles the maritime border between the two countries (Wright, 2011).

More compatible with US regional interests were Doha's overtures to Israel. The Qatari government broke ranks with the rest of the Arab League in September 1994 and effectively terminated its participation in the boycott against the Jewish state (Blanchard, 2008). Local officials then convened a series of working groups of Arab and Israeli academics and specialists to explore a wide range of regional problems, and in April 1996 welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres to the Qatari capital. Peres's visit set the stage for the opening of an Israeli com-

mercial office in the emirate, one of only two such agencies in the Gulf (Cooper & Momani, 2011). The trade mission continued to operate even after the outbreak of the 2000 Palestinian uprising, albeit “at a very low level” (Blanchard, 2008). Not until the weeks immediately prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq did the office shut its doors.

Barely a week after Qatar’s ruler Amir Hamad bin Khalifah Al Thani conferred with US President George W. Bush in Washington in May 2003, the Qatari foreign minister flew to Paris to meet his Israeli counterpart. The two representatives discussed prospects for resuming the stalled negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), “prompting speculation that President Bush [had] encouraged Qatari officials to take a more active role in the peace process” (Blanchard, 2008). Doha’s efforts to effect a rapprochement between Israel and the PA culminated in a burst of diplomatic activism during October 2006, when “the Qatari government launched an ultimately unsuccessful round of shuttle diplomacy aimed at resolving differences between [rival] Palestinian factions and securing the release of kidnaped [sic] Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit by his [radical Palestinian] captors” (Blanchard, 2008; *Daily Star*, 11 October 2006).

Qatar’s adoption of foreign policies that were broadly congruent with US interests was buttressed by the comparatively high level of threat that existed in the Gulf during the early years of the protectorate. The potential for Iraqi belligerence against surrounding states remained substantial even after the 1990-91 Gulf war. Baghdad’s repeated attempts to expel United Nations weapons inspectors precipitated major confrontations with US forces on four separate occasions between October 1997 and December 1998; US air strikes against Iraqi targets became a regular feature of regional affairs during 1999-2000, and grew more frequent and extensive during the first half of 2001. Iran, meanwhile, took steps to revive its dormant nuclear research program. In August 2002 an opposition group released details of two previously undeclared facilities, which led the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in March 2003 to censure the Islamic Republic for its failure to make a full disclosure of the various components of the research program (IISS Strategic Comments, 2003).

US officials accused Iran of being involved in a pair of bombings that occurred at expatriate housing complexes in Saudi Arabia in May 2003, and by the summer of 2004 it was reported that US Special Forces were undertaking clandestine reconnaissance missions inside Iranian territory. Persistent friction with Washington contributed to the electoral victory of Mahmud Ahmadinejad in the June 2005 presidential elections, and the new president wasted no time in ratcheting up the level of hostile rhetoric directed against the United States and its regional partners. Consequently, US President George W. Bush on a number of occasions in the summer of 2005 pointedly refused to rule out the use of force to bring an end to the Iranian nuclear program. Yet by late 2005 the Islamic Republic had shifted its attention away from the Arab Gulf states and started to concentrate on consolidating political and economic ties to post-Ba’thi Iraq (Legrenzi & Lawson, 2014).

3. Consolidation of the Qatar-US protectorate, 2006-10

After 2005 policy-makers in Washington allocated increasing resources to consolidate the Qatar-US protectorate. The Department of Defense earmarked almost USD 82 million during fiscal year 2008 alone to construct and equip additional facilities on Qatari territory for use by the US Air Force and an assortment of special operations teams; this figure equalled almost

Qatar’s adoption of foreign policies that were broadly congruent with US interests was buttressed by the comparatively high level of threat that existed in the Gulf during the early years of the protectorate

two-thirds of the total amount spent in Qatar by the US armed forces over the preceding four years (Blanchard, 2012). For fiscal year 2010 the figure jumped yet again, to USD 117 million. Meanwhile, Al-Udeid Air Base became the command center for all air combat and surveillance operations undertaken by components of the Central Command not only in the Gulf and Iraq, but in Afghanistan as well (Blanchard, 2012).

Qatar's military establishment remained inordinately small from 2005 to 2011. More important, its armaments steadily slipped into obsolescence compared to those found in the arsenals of the other Arab Gulf states. Only in terms of aggregate troop strength did the Qatari armed forces exhibit any noticeable change: By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century the total size of the emirate's army, navy and air force had increased to approximately 12,000 personnel. The new force structure included two additional regiments of Royal Guards, a second artillery regiment and two new mechanized infantry battalions. Nevertheless, outside observers found themselves in agreement that the country "continues to rely on the US as the ultimate guarantor of its security" (Middle East Economic Digest, 18-24 April 2014).

3.1. Qatar turns toward activism

Consolidation of the Qatar-US protectorate coincided with Israel's assault on the Lebanese Islamist movement the Party of God (Hizbullah) in the summer of 2006. Despite Doha's ongoing campaign to revive negotiations between the Jewish state and the PA, the war in Lebanon elicited severe criticism from Qatari officials. First Deputy Prime Minister Hamad bin Jasim Al Thani took advantage of Qatar's rotating seat on the United Nations Security Council to demand Israel's full and immediate withdrawal from Lebanese territory (*Middle East Economic Digest*, 29 September-5 October 2006). As soon as the fighting came to an end, Amir Hamad told a press conference in Beirut that "the Lebanese people and their resistance have achieved the first Arab victory, something we had longed for" (Agence France Presse, 21 August 2006). He then announced that Qatar would provide the financial assistance necessary to rebuild villages along the Israeli-Lebanese border that had been destroyed during the war. These actions contravened US policy with regard to the conflict, which placed blame for the war squarely on the shoulders of Hezbollah; they also contradicted the positions adopted by Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which more or less reflected that of Washington (*Middle East Economic Digest*, 29 September-5 October 2006).

Qatar pushed the envelope a bit more during the spring of 2007, when it pledged USD 50 million to finance the day-to-day operations of the PA after Palestinian voters placed the local administration in the hands of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Harakah al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah, HAMAS). Amir Hamad subsequently invited the head of HAMAS's political bureau, Khalid Mish'al, to Doha for consultations (*Middle East Economic Digest*, 14-20 September 2007). At the same time, Qatar expanded diplomatic and economic links to Libya, despite Benghazi's long-standing pariah status in the eyes of policy-makers in Washington.

January 2009 saw the convening of a regional summit meeting in Doha to discuss escalating tensions in Gaza. The conference was attended by Mish'al and Syrian President Bashar al-Asad, but ended up being boycotted by the head of the PA, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to protest Qatar's continuing material and moral support for HAMAS. Qatari officials then invited Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad to take part in the proceedings, a move that transformed the

Consolidation of the Qatar-US protectorate coincided with Israel's assault on the Lebanese Islamist movement the Party of God (Hizbullah) in the summer of 2006

gathering into “a soapbox to bash America and its Mideast allies” (Associated Press, 2 February 2009). At the conclusion of the meeting, the local authorities notified Israel’s commercial mission that it would no longer be permitted to do business in the Qatari capital (Ulrichsen, 2014).

By the spring of 2009, US officials had grown exasperated with the vagaries of Qatari diplomacy. Senator John Kerry remarked at the close of a trip to the Middle East in March that “Qatar can’t continue to be an American ally on Monday that sends money to HAMAS on Tuesday” (*The Atlantic*, 25 September 2010). At the end of the year, the Obama administration expressed concern that Qatar had abandoned its commitment to work with Washington in the ongoing struggle against Islamist radicalism. An assessment of Doha’s efforts to combat terrorism in the Middle East called them the “worst” of all American allies in the region and went on to complain that the Qatari government had become “hesitant to act against known terrorists out of concern for appearing to be aligned with the US and provoking reprisals” (*The Atlantic*, 29 November 2010; Kamrava, 2013). Relations with Washington were further challenged by Doha’s unstinting advocacy of the objectives espoused by the Global Redesign Initiative (Cooper & Momani, 2011, p. 126; Ulrichsen, 2012b).

Moreover, Doha had by early 2010 become outspoken in defense of Iran’s right to pursue a nuclear research program. Relations between Qatar and Iran had strengthened decisively in July 2009, when Amir Hamad told visiting Iranian Foreign Minister ‘Ali Larijani that “Iran is always our friend and we won’t allow any ill-will person to create problems between us” (Fars News Agency, 6 July 2009). A day after the ruler’s statement, the chief of Qatar’s general staff met with Iran’s defense minister in Tehran to discuss mechanisms that might improve security co-operation between the two countries (Fars News Agency, 7 July 2009). Subsequent visits culminated in the arrival of Qatar’s Crown Prince Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Tehran in February 2010; the heir apparent discussed the future of bilateral security collaboration with senior Iranian officials, including First Vice President Muhammad Reza Rahimi (Fars News Agency, 2 February 2010). In the wake of Tamim’s visit, the two governments concluded a pact that aimed “to combat terrorism and promote security cooperation” (Cafero, 2012). Prime Minister Hamad bin Jasim journeyed to the Iranian capital at the close of the year to confer with Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader ‘Ali Khamenei, who took the opportunity to declare in the prime minister’s presence that “the Americans and Zionists [are] fueling... ignorance of the importance of security in the [Gulf] region” by attempting to derail Iran’s nuclear program (Agence France Presse, 21 December 2010).

Qatar’s turn toward a more active foreign policy was nevertheless constrained by the high level of threat that continued to pervade Gulf affairs from 2006 to 2010. President Ahmadinejad in April 2006 publicly celebrated the resumption of nuclear enrichment operations, and the United Nations responded three months later by adopting Security Council Resolution 1696 that demanded an end to all such activities. Tehran ignored the resolution and the Security Council imposed punitive sanctions at the end of the year. After President Bush called Iran “the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism” in January 2008, naval units of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) started playing “chicken” with US warships at the southern end of the Gulf. That October the commander of the Iranian navy announced plans to open a new naval base at Jask, which would constitute “an impenetrable barrier” to shipping in the Strait of Hormuz (*Guardian*, 28 October 2008). These moves raised the possibility that Tehran might close off access to the Gulf by interdicting ships traversing the strait (Talmadge, 2008). Iranian

Doha had by early 2010 become outspoken in defense of Iran’s right to pursue a nuclear research program

officials also threatened to retaliate against US warships stationed in the Gulf if any attempt were made to destroy nuclear facilities in the Islamic Republic (al-Arabiyya, 19 January 2010).

On the other hand, Tehran moderated its overall belligerence in the wake of the 2006 war in Lebanon, and in particular responded positively to overtures from Ankara (Legrenzi & Lawson, 2014). Relations between Iran and Turkey improved further in late 2008, after Israel launched a large-scale military offensive against Gaza without notifying the Turkish government in advance. The following year saw the two countries agree to collaborate on a variety of economic projects, and in 2010 Turkish officials revised the annual National Security Policy Paper so as to remove the Islamic Republic from the list of outstanding external dangers facing Turkey.

4. Maintaining the Qatar-US protectorate, 2011-15

American expenditures for new military facilities in Qatar dropped off sharply after 2010. Just over USD 64 million were authorized to upgrade logistical and command structures at al-Udeid during fiscal year 2011, and no more than USD 37 million got allocated for projects on Qatari territory the following year (Blanchard, 2012). Funding for military construction in the emirate was phased out completely after fiscal year 2012 (Blanchard, 2014). Nevertheless, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel traveled to Doha in December 2013 to conclude a ten-year security agreement with Qatar's new ruler Amir Tamim bin Hamad. Seven months later US officials approved the sale of a package of armaments worth USD 11 billion to the Qatari military, a transaction that was reported to have constituted "the biggest weapons deal for the United States in 2014" (Agence France Presse, 14 July 2014; *The National* [Abu Dhabi], 17 July 2014).

After cadres of the Islamic State pushed into northern Iraq in the summer of 2014, Qatar provided crucial staging points for strikes by US warplanes against targets in both Iraq and Syria (*Washington Post*, 26 August 2014). Aerial combat missions undertaken out of the emirate involved not only F-15s and F-16s but heavier B-1 bombers temporarily stationed at al-Udeid as well. In addition, US Air Force C-17 and C-130 transports based in Qatar delivered food and water to Yazidi refugees camped at Sinjar in northern Iraq (*Military Times*, 15 September 2014).

Qatar's own armed forces expanded dramatically during the second decade of the twenty-first century. The navy ordered 19 fast attack boats from foreign shipyards in the summer of 2012 and started building another six locally under license from the Dutch manufacturer Damen. The army at the same time purchased 62 upgraded Leopard II tanks from Germany to replace its outdated AMX-30s, while the air force ordered a dozen UH-60M Blackhawk, two dozen AH-64D Apache and 28 MH-60S Seahawk helicopters from the United States. Doha also requested authorization to buy US-made Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile systems and state-of-the-art rocket artillery batteries (Blanchard, 2014).

These procurements heralded a further jump in military spending during 2014-15 (*Military Technology*, March 2014; *Middle East Economic Digest*, 18-24 April 2014). Construction got underway on four corvettes to strengthen the navy, even as six advanced fast attack boats were ordered from Turkey. At the same time, Doha announced plans to retire its ageing Mirage 2000-5 fighter-bombers and replace them with up to six dozen modern warplanes; an initial order of 24 French-made Rafales was placed in May 2015 (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 6 May 2015). As a result of these contracts, annual defense spending skyrocketed from USD 500 million in 2011 to USD 1 billion in 2013, and was expected to exceed USD 3.5 billion by 2015.

After cadres of the Islamic State pushed into northern Iraq in the summer of 2014, Qatar provided crucial staging points for strikes by US warplanes

5. Qatar flexes its muscles

As the original structure of the Qatar-US protectorate slid into obsolescence, Doha stepped up its foreign policy activism. The eruption of widespread popular unrest in Libya in February 2011 marked a notable turning-point:

Qatar went further than most Arab countries in backing international intervention in Libya and aligning itself with the revolutionaries. Qatar contributed fighter jets and special forces, as well as financing, weapons and training. It was the first country to recognize the National Transitional Council as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people, and organised the first meeting of the International Contact Group on Libya. (Echague, 2014; Eakin, 2011; Ulrichsen, 2012b; Khatib, 2013; Ulrichsen, 2014; Nuruzzaman, 2015)

These actions contributed greatly to the fall of the old regime led by Muammar al-Qaddafi, but left in its place an undisciplined cluster of militant Islamist formations that quickly fell into conflict with one another. Qatar's primary clients in the post-Qaddafi era included "the commander of the feared Tripoli Brigade, Abdul Hakim Belhadj, as well as the prominent Ali and Ismail al-Salabi brothers" (Ulrichsen, 2012); all three of these figures had close ties to the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, which had been designated a terrorist organization by the US government (Khatib, 2013). Officials in the interim government soon complained that Doha was supplying radical militias with armaments and funds, making it impossible for them to restore a modicum of stability to the country (Reuters, 18 November 2011; Ulrichsen, 2012a; Steinberg, 2012; Ulrichsen, 2014).

Qatar's policy toward events in Egypt displayed even less consideration for expressed US interests. Amir Hamad traveled to Cairo in August 2012 to meet with President Muhammad Mursi, after Doha had supplied some USD 5 billion in financial backing for the new regime. When Mursi was ousted in early July 2013 and 55 of his supporters killed in clashes with the armed forces, the Qatari foreign ministry immediately expressed sympathy for those who had been killed; shortly thereafter it called for Mursi to be released from custody. These moves angered Egypt's new military leaders, who ordered the closure of the Cairo bureau of Qatar's flagship television network "al-Jazeera" and arrested its local staff.

Meanwhile, in October 2012 Amir Hamad paid an official visit to Gaza, the first head of state to tour the territory since it came under HAMAS's control. The ruler promised to provide up to USD 400 million to repair the damage to housing, public buildings and general infrastructure that had been inflicted during successive Israeli military incursions. Qatari officials also encouraged HAMAS's Mish'al to take up residence in Doha after he abandoned Damascus in the spring of 2012. When the Israeli armed forces once again launched large-scale military operations against Gaza in the summer of 2014, Qatar voiced strong condemnation of the offensive, and described Israel as the "aggressor" in the conflict (Blanchard, 2014). In an address to the United Nations General Assembly that September, Amir Tamim went so far as to brand the battlefield operations that had been carried out by the Israel Defense Force "a crime against humanity."

Qatar's hyperactive foreign policy reflected the diminished level of threat that confronted the Arab Gulf states after 2010. US commanders deployed Patriot anti-missile batteries to Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar in January 2010 in a bid to limit the potential consequences of Iranian belligerence. That July, the secretary general of the Gulf Co-operation Council observed that the organization did "not wish for a confrontation [with Tehran] and we

As the original structure of the Qatar-US protectorate slid into obsolescence, Doha stepped up its foreign policy activism.

reject any military option. We ask that Iran respond to and co-operate with legitimate international resolutions and the IAEA in order to resolve the current problems” (*al-Hayah*, 16 July 2010). These sentiments were echoed by the foreign minister of the UAE, despite his country’s long-running territorial dispute with the Islamic Republic over three strategically situated islands in the Gulf (*The National* [Abu Dhabi], 8 December 2010).

Regional tensions flared again at the end of 2011, when officials in Tehran warned that they would stop traffic moving through the Strait of Hormuz if the country were subjected to stricter economic sanctions (Katzman, Nerurkar, O’Rourke, Mason, & Ratner, 2012). US commanders then reported that the IRGC had built up a squadron of suicide bomb boats, complemented by a pair of new submarines. In response, the US Navy deployed a network of mine detection and surveillance equipment around the strait. Iran’s armed forces nevertheless found themselves pre-occupied with conflicts farther north, along the border with the Kurdistan Regional Government, and devoted little sustained effort to military initiatives in the Gulf (Legrenzi & Lawson, 2014).

Furthermore, Iranian representatives in April 2012 met in Istanbul with representatives of the US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany to discuss ways that the ongoing crisis over nuclear enrichment could be defused. Both sides called the talks “constructive”, and when the meeting ended officials in Washington announced that Iran might be permitted to continue producing enriched uranium so long as it made a firm commitment not to develop a nuclear weapon and agreed to allow full IAEA inspections. Renewed activism on the part of Azeri nationalists deflected Tehran’s energies away from the Gulf and toward the Caucasus, a trend that accelerated as Turkey stepped up its own involvement in Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Afghanistan in the fall of 2013 (Legrenzi & Lawson, 2014). Faced with pressing strategic problems to the north, Tehran hinted that it would be interested in undertaking a rapprochement with the Arab Gulf states, and with Saudi Arabia in particular (Gause, 2014).

A crucial difference between the pre-1971 era and today is that Qatar is now a sovereign state, which enjoys the right and capacity to pursue an external policy in its own interest

6. Conclusion

Qatar’s relations with the United States have exhibited a peculiar form since the early 1990s. Doha has relied on Washington to provide it with defense against virtually all external threats, and has in exchange allowed US commanders to build up a massive military presence in the emirate. As a result, the security alignment between the two countries can best be described as a protectorate – one not much different in basic structure from the kind of arrangement that existed between Qatar and the United Kingdom in the decades prior to 1971.

A crucial difference between the pre-1971 era and today is that Qatar is now a sovereign state, which enjoys the right and capacity to pursue an external policy in its own interest. Doha found itself tightly constrained during the early years of the current protectorate, both by the dynamics inherent in such alignments and by the high level of threat that permeated the Gulf. As US commitment to and investment in the protectorate increased, however, and as the level of regional threat subsided, Qatar started to pursue a more assertive set of policies, which at times conflicted with American strategic objectives. Qatar’s ability and incentive to undertake foreign policy initiatives that challenge US interests increased sharply after 2010, at precisely the moment that the Middle East experienced an unprecedented degree of upheaval. Whether or not US officials will take steps to curtail Qatar’s post-2011 freedom of action – as the theory of relational contracting might predict – remains to be seen.

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QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION: EVOLVING PRIORITIES OF A SMALL STATE IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

El compromiso de la política exterior de Catar con la Unión Europea: las prioridades en evolución de un Estado pequeño en la época contemporánea

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This chapter addresses Qatari-European Union (EU) relations from the perspective of current and future Qatari priorities and interests. In doing so, it examines Qatar's evolving bilateral and region-to-region cooperation with Europe. It also analyzes recent trends in trade relations and the opportunities and constraints that Qatar faces in increasing gas exports to Europe. It examines how and why Qatar also greatly values Europe for the role that it plays in non-traditional areas of socio-economic cooperation including technology transfer, sustainable diversification, human capital development and investment (both overseas and inward).

This article concludes by arguing that despite the Eurozone financial crisis and the Arab Spring, American dominance of the security sphere, and increased competition from Asia in the economic sphere, the EU and its constituent member states are important partners for Qatar. They are of particular importance to Qatar as key stakeholders in the country's efforts to achieve socio-economic development through economic diversification.



Abstract

European Union (EU); bilateral; region-to-region; diversification; socio-economic development
Unión Europea (UE); bilateral; región-a-región; diversificación; desarrollo socioeconómico



Key words

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Fechas

Este capítulo aborda las relaciones entre Catar y la Unión Europea (UE) desde la perspectiva de las prioridades e intereses catariés presentes y futuras. Para ello examina la relación catari en curso de cooperación bilateral y región-a-región con Europa. También analiza las tendencias recientes en las relaciones comerciales y las oportunidades y restricciones a las que se enfrenta Catar sobre las crecientes exportaciones de petróleo a Europa. Examina cómo y por qué Catar también valora Europa por el papel que juega en áreas no tradicionales de cooperación socioeconómica, incluyendo la transferencia tecnológica, la diversificación sostenible, el desarrollo de capital humano y la inversión (tanto en el extranjero como hacia el interior).

Este artículo concluye argumentando que a pesar de la crisis financiera de la Eurozona y la Primavera Árabe, el dominio norteamericano en la esfera de la seguridad y la competitividad en aumento de Asia en la esfera económica, la UE y sus estados miembros constituyentes son socios importantes para Catar. Son de especial importancia para Catar como accionistas clave en los esfuerzos del país para conseguir el desarrollo socioeconómico a través de la diversificación económica.



Resumen

The European Union (EU) and its constituent member states are important foreign policy partners for the State of Qatar. Prior to 2000 there existed some scholarship on the narrow history of Qatar in the pre-and-post independence eras (Said Zahlan, 1979; al-Mallakh, 1979). There was also some comparative scholarly work on citizenship and labor markets (Nakhleh, 1977) and political authority and government structures in the country (Ballantyn, 1986; Crystal, 1989, 1995). There were, however, few works dealing with Qatar as a foreign policy player, economic actor or small state in the international system. Though Qatar gained independence in 1971 at the same time as the European Economic Community (the forerunner to the EU) had already launched the mechanisms required for a coherent unified foreign policy approach, over the next three decades there was an almost total absence of scholarship addressing Qatar's relationship with the European regional bloc.

From 2000 onwards Qatar's transition from an economic and political backwater into a relatively significant small state player in the international system was reflected in a growing body of literature on the country. On the domestic front this included notable contributions from Rathmell and Schulze (2000) and Kamrava (2009) on political reform, political liberalization and political participation; from Berrebi, Martorell, and Tanner (2009) on citizenship; and from Abdulaziz al-Ghorairi (2010) on the development of the Qatari financial sector and its impact on economic diversification. Two recent book length contributions from Fromherz (2012) and Kamrava (2013) added to this burgeoning literature on the country's domestic development, its evolving identity and its transition to modernity.

Kamrava's volume also builds on his earlier research on Qatar as a "civilian power" (2009) to examine the ways the country has used "subtle power" to attempt to influence events beyond its borders. In these terms, Kamrava's recent research is also part of an extensive body of academic scholarship and policy-oriented work on the country's external engagement over the last decade and a half. Abadi (2004), Peterson (2006), Cooper and Momani (2011), Ulrichsen (2012), Wright (2012), Woertz (2012), Roberts (2012) and Khatib (2013) amongst others have also made contributions to our understanding of this.

However, with the exception of Woertz's 2012 policy paper on Euro-Qatari relations in the context of European neglect of the wider Gulf region, very little of this substantial body of work has directly examined Qatar's foreign policy relationship with the EU. Even Kamrava's recent comprehensive volume on Qatari foreign policy only rarely, briefly and indirectly examines this important relationship (2013). Instead, those wanting to learn about the Qatari-EU relationship must still rely on the general literature on EU-GCC region-to-region relations that is all too often framed in terms of European drivers and interests.¹ This chapter moves away from this broad and euro-centric approach by examining Qatari-EU relations from the perspective of current and future Qatari priorities and interests.

The fundamental objective of Qatar's engagement with all its external partners in the contemporary era is to promote its interests in two priority areas: socio-economic development and security and defense. For Qatar, three important considerations make security and defense relations with the EU of secondary importance to cooperation in the broad area of socio-economic relations. The first is Qatar's vital strategic relationship with the United States. The second is the EU's position as the world's leading regional economic bloc and the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) number one trade partner. The third stems directly from the second. Qatar's ties with the EU across a wide range of economic areas has taken on even more importance since the Arab Spring underscored the vital inter-relationship between socio-economic progress, strategic stability and domestic security in the contemporary Middle East.

1. Bilateral versus region-to-region cooperation

Qatar is committed to engagement with the EU both on a region-to-region basis as a constituent member state of the GCC and bilaterally within the GCC framework.² Since 2011, for example, there have been five annual rounds of high-level strategic dialogue between Qatar and the EU. The Qatari European Friendship Association, founded in late 2012, was also the first of its kind to be established between a GCC member state and the EU. Addressing the opening session of the 24th session of the Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU) in May 2015, Qatari Foreign Minister Dr. Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah described the EU as "a strategic trade partner" of the GCC, noting how the volume of two-way trade between the two blocs had risen by €8 billion to €38 billion between 2010 and 2014.³ On this basis, Qatar continues to support the long-time efforts of the GCC to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU and has continued to participate in informal contacts with the EU on this matter since the suspension of negotiations by the GCC in 2008.

Qatar is also committed to developing GCC-EU efforts to expand further region-to-region cooperation in the realm of energy security. It also continues to support the establishment of GCC monetary union and a single currency along the lines championed by the EU despite the withdrawal of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from the process in 2007 and 2009 respec-

Qatar is committed to engagement with the EU both on a region-to-region basis as a constituent member state of the GCC and bilaterally within the GCC framework

1 For a very recent example of this tendency see Barnes Darcey (2015).

2 Qatar has a resident embassy in Brussels that represents its EU interests. Only Saudi Arabia and the UAE amongst the GCC member states play host to a resident EU representative. The EU office in Riyadh is responsible for relations with Qatar, as well as Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman.

3 See *Gulf Times*, 25 May 2015.

tively. This commitment to monetary integration has endured the damage done to the credibility of the EU model of economic and monetary union since the start of the Eurozone financial crisis.

Qatari officials have acknowledged that the “current problems” affecting the Eurozone have raised many challenges for Qatar and its neighbors. At the same time they have argued that these same problems have made it even more necessary for the GCC to push forward with plans to establish a single central bank and common capital markets.⁴ This official position has not changed in response to the ongoing financial and political crisis in Greece and the consequent stand off between Greece and its major European creditors, the European Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB).

For Qatar, engagement with Brussels on a region-to-region basis as a member state of the GCC also provides another, more abstract, benefit. It allows policymakers in Doha to draw on the decades of EU experience on issues that preoccupy Qatari concerns (as they do all of its GCC partners) as the country attempts to re-define its evolving role inside the GCC, as well as its interactions with its regional partners on a bilateral level.

Of particular relevance to this are the lessons that the EU provides for Qatar on how to (and how not to) pursue institutional harmonization and integration, the management of trade and regulatory reform, and cross-border cooperation in the sensitive areas including intelligence gathering and counter-terrorism, and the regulation of border controls and migration policies. In February 2015, to take one recent example, Ali bin Jassim Al Thani, Qatar’s ambassador in Brussels, met with the European Commissioner for Migration & Home Affairs, Dimitris Avramopoulos to discuss ways to “open up new horizons for joint cooperation” (Information Office, 2015).

At the same time, Qatar is also increasingly committed to developing bilateral relations with individual EU member states (as well as non-EU European nations) across its priority areas parallel to, independent of and beyond, any joint GCC approach. This is evident in its cooperation with France (and the United Kingdom) in the realm of security and defense, particularly in the area of arms purchasing. As this chapter will show, it is even more evident in Qatar’s pro-active bilateral engagement with a host of individual EU (and non-EU) states on socio-economic matters. These include interactions in such traditional areas of cooperation as trade and energy relations, as well as the increasingly important areas of technology transfer, sustainable diversification, human capital development and investment (both over-seas and inward).

Currently, forty-eight nations fall under the jurisdiction of the Europe division of the Qatari foreign ministry. They include all twenty-eight EU member states (the EU-28) as well as twenty non-EU European nations. All forty-eight are separated on the basis of geography into two groups – “Europe West” and “Europe East”. Of the twenty-four nations included in “Europe

Of particular relevance are the lessons that the EU provides for Qatar on how to pursue institutional harmonization and integration

4 See for example the statement by current governor of Qatar Central Bank, Abdulla Bin Saoud Al-Thani, *The Financial Times*, 17 December 2011.

West,” sixteen are EU members and eight are not. Of the twenty-four nations included in “Europe East,” eleven are EU member states and thirteen are not.⁵

This leads us to a further point. Qatar’s diplomatic engagement with Europe is not primarily prioritized in terms of relations with the EU, the world’s premier regional bloc. Instead, the focus from an organizational and bureaucratic standpoint is on geography and the two core themes – socio-economic development and security and defense. Practitioners like Jazbec (2010) have argued that the organization of a foreign ministry department on a geographical and thematic basis predisposes it toward bilateral rather than multilateral engagement. This observation is given credence in the case of Qatar by the fact that the Europe division of the foreign ministry lists its number one task as the “development of bilateral relations between the State and European countries in the political, economic, cultural, technical and other fields”.

One consequence of this is that Qatari policymakers measure the importance of individual European nations not in terms of membership or non-membership of the EU but in terms of how they contribute to Qatar’s interests in the areas of security and defense and socio-economic development. One sees this clearly in terms of Qatar’s evolving relationship with the “Europe East” group. Though currently a majority of members of this grouping (thirteen out of twenty-four) are not members of the EU, this bloc is becoming an increasingly important factor in Qatari thinking on its engagement with Europe.

Russia, a member of this eastern grouping, is important to Qatar as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a major player in the global gas sector and an influential actor in the geopolitics of the Persian Gulf and the wider Middle East. Other smaller members of the eastern grouping, including the twelve other non-EU members, are now also viewed as valuable emerging economic partners. They offer Qatar attractive investment opportunities across a number of sectors and are also potential future customers for Qatari gas, an important consideration in a constricting and increasingly competitive international energy market.

Qatar will increasingly look to develop extensive and multi-faceted bilateral ties with non-EU, as well as EU, states in Europe

2. The small state factor in Qatari-EU relations

As the above underlines, Qatar will increasingly look to develop extensive and multi-faceted bilateral ties with non-EU, as well as EU, states in Europe. It is also the contention of this chapter that in the wake of the Eurozone crisis and the Arab Spring, small European states inside and outside of the EU are becoming increasingly attractive partners, as well as valuable role models, for Qatar in its attempt to consolidate stability through enhanced socio-economic development.

When Qatar entered the United Nations (UN) in the last few months of 1971 it was one of the world’s smallest states. It was so small that its entry into the UN engendered a passionate debate over whether the international organization would have more credibility if it refused entry to such tiny entities. As UN Secretary-General Thant remarked at the time, “micro-

5 The EU members of “Europe West” are Austria; Belgium; Cyprus; Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Ireland; Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The non-EU members of “Europe West” are Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland and the Vatican City. The EU members of “Europe East” are Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic Estonia; Hungary Latvia; Lithuania Poland; Romania; Slovakia; and Slovenia. The non-EU members of “Europe East” are Albania; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Bosnia-Herzegovina; Georgia; Kosovo; Macedonia; Montenegro; Moldova; Ukraine; the Russian Federation and Serbia.

states” like Qatar raised an “acute” problem (1971, p. 19). As Mendelson (1972), Harbert (1976) and Gunter (1977) have shown, paramount amongst these concerns was how to align voting rights inside the world body with the realities of power and influence in the international system.

Over four decades later Qatar continues to be defined in some of the literature as a “micro-state” (Windecker & Sendrowicz, 2014). However, as Ulrichsen (2012) has noted, the country’s high levels of in-migration have moved it out of the “micro” category, which most observers, including the World Bank, agree is usually reserved for states with populations of less than one million. No less importantly, Qatar’s rapid domestic development, its ambitious program of state-branding, its position as a global gas power and its “hyperactive diplomacy” (Kamrava, 2013), have resulted in its transition from “micro” to “small” state status.

The emergence of Qatar as a “small” state of some significance in the international system in the last decade and a half has led it to pro-actively look to “expand relations in all fields” with other small states across the world, as a senior Qatari official recently explained. While the “big” EU member states of the “West Europe” grouping – primarily France and the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, Germany, Italy and Spain – continue to be the major EU partners for Qatar, small European states are also becoming more important.

This is reflected in the unprecedented deepening of relations in recent years with a group of small EU states including Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Malta. It is also reflected in Qatar’s evolving relationship with Norway and Iceland, two small non-EU European states, both of whom have very extensive ties of their own to the EU and its member states.

It is notoriously problematic to generalize about the lessons that one small state offers for another because there is no agreement in the literature as to what constitutes a small state. Even if it is possible to agree on a common definition of what a small state is, differences in culture, geography, history, natural resources, and levels of development serve to differentiate small states from each another.

This becomes even more complicated when one is attempting to assess the lessons that a small state outside the EU can draw from the policies, actions and interactions of a small state inside the EU. As Panke (2011) has shown, small states have to operate in a EU political system that is both “complex and demanding”. While Fawcett (2013) has rightly reminded us of the dangers of assuming that EU experiences, institutions or structures are necessarily transferable elsewhere. For example, unlike Qatar, EU member states – big as well as small – are increasingly required to coordinate policies on many issues directly with Brussels rather than bilaterally with other member states.

There are also important structural limits to the lessons that Qatar can learn from small EU member states in terms of developing its own role inside the GCC. Traditionally, the European Commission provided small EU member states with a supranational counter-balance to the power of larger and stronger member states whose interests are often viewed to be represented by the Council of Ministers. The GCC has no equivalent to the Commission. The decision-making center of the GCC is the Supreme Council made up of the heads of member states. This body sets the domestic and foreign policies that the Ministerial Council is tasked with implementing. The function of the Secretariat-General is limited to providing administrative support and preparing the groundwork for cooperation and coordination between member states.

Over four decades later Qatar continues to be defined in some of the literature as a “microstate”

These important caveats aside, the small states of the EU are natural partners for Qatar. East (1973) long ago showed that the targets of small state engagement are most likely to be other groups or intergovernmental organizations that include other small states. While Kamrava has noted in his recent study of Qatar that European states in particular have reputations as “role models on certain norms and issues” (2013).

3. Qatar’s European priority: developing socio-economic relations

3.1. The security and defense exception

As noted above, the main Qatari priority vis-à-vis Europe in general and the EU in particular is in the area of socio-economic development rather than security and defense. Qatar’s unstable and dangerous external environment has shaped its strategic approach in the contemporary era around pro-active regional diplomacy and the development of a deep bilateral security and defense relationship with the United States, the dominant regional security actor. It is even arguable that the neglect of Qatari-EU relations in the literature is in part a function of Washington’s status as Qatar’s dominant external security and defense partner over the last two decades.

US-Qatari relations are addressed elsewhere in this volume but Qatar’s embrace of US protection as a key pillar of its security and defense doctrine has served to diminish the importance of the EU and its member states as security providers. There is one exception to this. The two “big” EU military players – France and the United Kingdom – both play an important role for Qatar as “balancers” to the United States, as evidenced in the major security cooperation agreement that Qatar entered into with the United Kingdom in 2014.

Qatari ties with both are particularly robust in the area of arms purchasing. As Handel (1990) has shown, for a small state there is always an important strategic and political dimension to arms purchasing policy because it raises the vital issue of “operability”, as state-of-the-art military equipment requires integration into existing capabilities. This in turn results in further reliance on foreign technology and technicians, which in turn further entrenches small state dependence. For these reasons, whenever possible, Qatari policymakers have looked to diversify sources of arms imports away from the United States. This strategy is most apparent in the case of France, which by some estimates has been the source of over 70 percent of Qatar’s military hardware purchases over the last four and a half decades.

In 1998, at exactly the same time as the new Emir was employing a strategy that made relations with Washington the “backbone”⁶ of his country’s national security doctrine, Qatar signed a defense agreement with France. It built on a 1994 military agreement and it included a significant arms purchasing component (Andre, 1999). The May 2015 Qatari announcement of the decision to buy 24 Rafale fighter jet from the French manufacture Dassault Aviation for US \$7.1 billion, as well as to employ the French Air Force to train dozens of pilots and maintenance mechanics, underscores the fact that the recent change in leadership has not changed this strategy.⁷

The main Qatari priority vis-à-vis Europe in general and the EU in particular is in the area of socio-economic development rather than security and defense

6 See *Al-Arabiya*, 2013.

7 See *Al-Jazeera*, 2015.

3.2. Europe and the Qatari socio-economic model

Over the last two decades infrastructural development and economic diversification have been at the center of Qatar's evolving socio-economic model. For its part, the Arab Spring served to make socio-economic development an increasingly important conception of security. In particular, it highlighted the extent that social and economic disparity is one of the biggest drivers of social unrest. This made it increasingly important for countries like Qatar to address the causes rather than the symptoms of future instability. As Qatari policymakers have increasingly come to acknowledge the link between effective strategies and policies for socio-economic development, domestic stability and regime security, Europe has become an even more important partner.

Both "big" and "small" EU and non-EU European states have played an important role in these processes. "Big" countries, notably the United Kingdom and France, are not only Qatar's key security partners besides the United States. Along with Germany, Italy and Spain they are also Qatar's major European trading partners, its leading recipients of investment, some of the main providers of vital technology and know-how and, in the case of the United Kingdom, its most important European liquid natural gas (LNG) customer.

3.3. Trade: trends and implications

Over the last decade Qatari exports to the EU have increased significantly from €983 million in 2004 to €7.48 billion in 2014. These figures underscore the ongoing importance for Qatar of trade with the EU. They also point to a massive rise in bilateral trade ties with individual EU member states over the same period. Most notably, in 2011 Qatar recorded a 160 percent rise in the total value of exports to the United Kingdom, which had replaced Germany as Qatar's number one European trade partner a few years previously. However, two factors need to be considered in any analysis of this rising trade relationship between Qatar and the EU.

The first is that Qatar's exports to the EU peaked in 2011 at €13.57 billion. Since then they have fallen every year, dropping to €7.48 billion in 2014. This fall off in the value of exports over the last four years is due primarily to a fall in the sale of energy and related products, which make up the vast majority of Qatari exports to the EU. In 2011, the year Qatar exports to the EU peaked, this sector accounted for €12.89 billion out of €13.55 billion of total sales. Most recently, in 2014, they accounted for €6.17 billion out of total exports of €7.48 billion (European Commission, 2015).

Directly related to this is a second point. The EU (on 2013 figures, the most recent available) now only stands fourth in the ranking of Qatar's top export markets behind Japan, South Korea and India. Together these three Asian markets account for €60.39 billion of Qatari annual exports, which equates to 57.6 percent of total annual Qatari sales (compared to the EU at €9.77 billion, a 9.3 percent share of total sales).

When one includes the sale of gas and energy products to other Asian nations, notably China and Singapore, the Asian region as a whole purchases 63 percent of Qatari LNG and other related exports, compared to Europe's 30 percent share. This gap is explained in part by the fact that South Korea and Japan established themselves as major customers of Qatari LNG in the late 1990s at an early stage in the development of Qatar's gas export program; EU member states have traditionally purchased their gas from Russia, Norway and Algeria rather

Over the last decade Qatari exports to the EU have increased significantly from €983 million in 2004 to €7.48 billion in 2014

than the Persian Gulf. More recently, it has also been the result of relatively weak European demand at the same time as Asian economic growth has increased regional demand for Qatari energy products.

3.4. Energy: opportunities and constraints

Since it launched its gas strategy in the 1990s Qatar has considered Europe to be an important energy market. Though Asian nations were the largest early bulk purchasers of Qatari LNG, Spain was actually the first country to buy Qatari LNG. In an era of falling oil prices, a rising shale gas industry, increased competition in the LNG sector from countries like the United States and Australia and shrinking demand in some key traditional markets (South Korea and Japan), Europe (including EU and non-EU member states) remains an important and, to some extent, untapped potential customer.

Russia is currently the top supplier of gas to the EU but its share of the market has fallen from 80 percent in 2006 to 50 percent in 2013. This reflects a growing desire in both Western and Eastern Europe amongst EU and non-EU member states to reduce their gas dependence on Russia. Attempts to do this have become increasingly apparent since 2009 when Ukraine experienced first hand the financial and strategic costs of challenging Russia, its major gas supplier.

This motivated European nations, first and foremost Moscow's neighbors in eastern and central Europe, to search for alternatives to Russian natural gas. Since long-time Russian-Ukrainian tensions took on a military dimension in 2014 and EU sanctions have further soured EU-Russian relations, energy has been one of the most common topics of bilateral discussions between Qatar and its European partners.

There are, however, a number of significant impediments to Qatar increasing its share of the European gas market at the expense of Russia. The first is accessibility and price. Qatar relies on the world's largest and most sophisticated fleet of expensive to run state-of-the-art tankers to supply its gas customers. Russia supplies Europe through a network of pipelines, like Nord Stream, which came online in 2011 and delivers gas to Germany via the Baltic Sea. This allows Russia to sell its gas to Europe at about half the price of Qatari LNG.

Even more prohibitive is the high cost of building the infrastructure required to receive LNG. Some European countries have demonstrated a willingness to make this investment. Faced with a notable decline in its gas production over the last decade, as well a rising consumption, the United Kingdom has become a major customer of Qatari LNG in recent years. Qatar Petroleum is also the main shareholder in South Hook liquefied natural gas terminal. Located in Milford Haven in Wales, it has the capacity to provide up to a quarter of the United Kingdom's gas needs. In Eastern Europe, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland have also invested heavily in the required LNG infrastructure. It is expected that Poland's LNG terminal in Świnoujście will become operational by the end of 2015 (Wagner, Cafiero & Bin Uzayr, 2014).

Even if other European nations are willing to pay a premium to move away from Russian gas dependence, Qatar's opportunity to capitalize on this may also be challenged in the medium-term by competition from other gas suppliers including the United States, which by some estimates could export as much LNG as Qatar, the world's largest exporter, by 2020 (StreetAuthority, 2015).

Since it launched its gas strategy in the 1990s Qatar has considered Europe to be an important energy market

4. Economic diversification: Europe as a lead partner?

The Qatar National Vision 2030, published by the General Secretariat for Development Planning (GSDP) in July 2008, set out economic diversification that “gradually reduces its dependence on hydrocarbon industries” as one of its “Four Pillars”. This is vital for Qatar as economies dependent on energy revenues suffer from higher growth volatility than nations with a high diversification quotient, and are inherently less competitive and less efficient than their non-energy counterparts. As Esty and Geradin (2001) and Besley and Persson (2011) have shown, this lack of competitiveness is often the result of very tight regulatory policies combined with the poor implementation of reforms.

O’Sullivan et al (2008) and Curmi (2009) have also shown that in order for small states to become competitive and achieve sustainable development they must prioritize programs that build up human capital and open the way for the easy and efficient growth of business activity. This usually requires states in the development phase to strengthen institutional frameworks, the rule of law and intellectual and physical property rights protection. They also need to adopt innovative approaches to tax policies, and invest heavily in research and development (R&D) capabilities, business processes, and training and education.

Qatar has made progress in some of these areas – the IMF classifies the country as “fairly good” in meeting transparency requirements and the IMF’s Article IV reviews of Qatar have been consistently positive about the country’s economic management overall. Nevertheless, Qatar still needs to make further strides in addressing issues like trade liberalization, regulatory reform and the privatization of state-owned enterprises. It also needs to do more to promote the growth of the private sector and to streamline laws, regulations and administrative practices affecting domestic and foreign investment.

In the current climate it is tempting to discount the contribution that Europe can make to Qatar’s future efforts to achieve all this. The Eurozone crisis has highlighted the lack of a viable European growth strategy. It also threatens the collapse of the Euro single currency and may even lead to the end of European monetary union itself. However, despite the profound challenges that the EU now faces it remains better positioned than any of Qatar’s other external partners to play a lead role in these processes.

In the first place, according to 2013 figures (the most up-to-date data available) EU imports to Qatar stand at €6.62 billion, making up 27 percent of goods and services flowing into the country. This dwarfs the level of imports into Qatar from the United States (€4.49 billion) and China (€0.4 billion), the second and third biggest importers respectively, who between them only make up 20.8 percent of imports.⁸ The EU is not only the biggest importer of goods and services into Qatar, it is also a major supplier of the cutting-edge technology, technical support and know-how required to foster the type of diversification needed for socio-economic progress. On top of this, over the last two decades European energy firms have played an important role in Qatar’s hugely ambitious and ultimately successful attempt to diversify out of oil and into gas. This provides an important basis for future involvement in the next phase of Qatar’s plans for diversification out of the energy sector into other areas of economic endeavor.

The Qatar National Vision 2030 set out economic diversification that “gradually reduces its dependence on hydrocarbon industries”

⁸ See European Commission (2015), section “Top trading partners 2013”.

4.1. Europe's key role in Qatari energy diversification

In the course of prospecting for oil in 1971, Royal-Dutch Shell, the Anglo-Dutch multi-national, discovered the North West Dome (North Field), the world's largest known offshore non-associated gas field off the north east coast of Qatar. Soon after, in 1974, the Qatar Petrochemical Company (QAPCO) was established in a joint venture with Chimie de France CdF (subsequently renamed Total, currently France's largest company, in which Qatar has a small shareholding).

During the 1980s, in the face of an oil glut that drastically restricted the affordability of oil exploration, British Petroleum's US subsidiary, BP-America, played a key role in Qatari exploration activity. Shell, CFP (now Total) and BP were all offered 7.5 percent equity stakes in a joint venture with the Qatar General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC) to develop the North Field in 1982. Shell would subsequently withdraw from this project in order to focus its gas exploration in Australia. However, in 1984 a joint-venture agreement signed between QGPC, BP, and CFP officially established Qatar Liquefied Gas Company (Qatargas) with the function of managing, operating, marketing and exporting liquid natural gas (LNG) from the North Field.

In 1991, the Qatar Europe LNG Company was formed as a partnership between QGPC and the Italian conglomerate ENI's Snamprogetti, with shareholdings of 65 and 30 percent respectively.⁹ The consortium planned to construct two liquefaction trains at the largely Italian-built port of Ras Laffan, and to ship LNG through the Suez Canal to a new terminal in Ravenna on Italy's northern Adriatic coast. Snam SpA, an Italian natural gas infrastructure company, and the Italian state power generator Enel were to be the main gas buyers.

During the 1990s, joint ventures and innovative production-sharing agreements (PSA's) with Italian, Dutch, British, Danish and French energy companies proliferated, with Total and Royal Dutch-Shell in particular undertaking further major investments in projects across the rapidly expanding gas sector. Though US giant Exxon-Mobil is now the largest foreign investor in Qatar, Shell can claim the single largest investment in the country at the Pearl Gas to Liquids (GTL) plant at Ras Laffan. This is also the company's largest investment anywhere in the world.

Qatar was relatively spared from the global economic crisis, and could boast the world's fastest growing economy during the period 2008-2012, at 12 percent

4.2. Investment in Europe: a key component of Qatar's diversification strategy

Qatar was relatively spared from the global economic crisis, and could boast the world's fastest growing economy during the period 2008-2012, at 12 percent, compared to China's at 9 percent. This enabled Qatar to play an important role at the height of the crisis in buying European sovereign debt, and rescuing struggling financial institutions. As Kamrava has noted (2013, 99) it also allowed Qatar to take advantage of what the then Emir described as investment opportunities that "will not be repeated in the next 20 years". This opportunity was not squandered and resulted in extensive Qatari purchases in a variety of deflated economic sectors across EU economies. It is estimated that various investment funds controlled by the Qatari government spent about US\$5 billion on Greek assets during the worst years of the crisis. This included a half a billion dollars for the restructuring of major Greek banks. The importance of this back-

⁹ The US company, Hunt Oil, held the remaining 5 percent share.

ing was underscored by the Greek president of the time who described Qatari support as a key factor in any future Greek recovery.¹⁰

Important as Qatari investments in Greece were, they were dwarfed by parallel investments in the United Kingdom and France, currently the number one and two recipients of Qatari investments in Europe. Qatari holdings in these two economies, particularly those made in high-profile, blue chip companies, properties and products have been listed many times in the literature and have attracted much media attention. They serve to underscore just how deeply Qatar's financial health is connected to Europe in terms of investment, as well as energy and trade.

In the case of the United Kingdom, where Qatari investments are currently valued at over £40 billion, they include Harrods department store, and a significant shareholding of BAA, the owner of London's Heathrow airport, as well as one of the largest and fastest growing property portfolios in London. In France, Qatar has major holdings in companies like the Suez Energy Group, Dexia Bank, Paris Saint Germain football club, as well as smaller holdings in the country's largest company, oil giant Total, and Vivendi and LVMH, the owner of several of the world's most renowned brands including the fashion designer Christian Dior and Dom Perignon champagne. Similar investments were made on a smaller scale in Germany (where Qatar is the third largest investor in Volkswagen AG) and numerous other European countries.

Other, less high profile, Qatari investments in Europe since the start of the global financial crisis may not have attracted as much attention but they are just as vital to Qatar's socio-economic progress. They are part of a clearly defined Qatari strategy to invest in European companies and know-how that add value to plans for diversification and development. As current Qatari foreign minister al-Attiyah has explained, "as a nation we believe it is our responsibility to invest today in the technologies and practices required to build a healthy and prosperous future for the next generation".¹¹

In late 2008, for example, Qatari Diar, established in 2005 to support the country's real estate development priorities, acquired the French firm Cegelec, an international group providing technological services to companies and public authorities in the areas of energy and electricity; automation, instrumentation and control; information and communication technologies. As Ghanim al-Saad, chief executive officer of Qatari Diar, explained at the time, "we intend to fully associate Cegelec to all of our development projects in the Middle East, in Europe and Africa, where Qatari Diar is strongly established".¹² Similarly, Qatar's 2010 investment of US\$1 billion in the heavily indebted CMA CGM, the world's third-biggest shipping group and one of the leading private sector employers in the southern French port city of Marseille, was made to add value to Qatar's planned maritime hub in the port of Doha.¹³

Another aspect of Qatar's strategy is to make major investments parallel to the signing of important trade or political agreements with European partners. In the summer of 2009, for example, Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), offered to provide the investment needed to rescue two struggling Polish shipyards. The move coincided with a

Qatari investments in Europe may not have attracted as much attention but they are just as vital to Qatar's socio-economic progress

10 See *Gulf News*, 2011; *Athens News Agency*, 2011; *Global Times*, 2011; *Athens News Agency*, 2013.

11 See *PR Newswire.com*, 2012.

12 See *Reuters News Agency*, 2008.

13 See *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, 2010.

long-term natural gas supply accord between Poland and Qatar, and with Warsaw's expression of hope that Poland would become a EU hub for Gulf investment.¹⁴ As noted above, five years later Qatar now hopes to reap the rewards of these efforts once Poland's almost completed LNG terminal in Świnoujście becomes operational.

A third aspect of this strategy has been Qatar's prioritization of investment in cutting-edge global technology that fosters sustainable development. As Saleh bin Mohammed al-Nabit, Secretary-General of the GSDP has explained, "sustainable development is crucial to Qatar's National Vision".¹⁵ Within a few months of the launch of Vision 2030, Qatar had announced that in partnership with the United Kingdom it would establish a US\$403 million fund to invest in pioneering clean-energy companies attempting to develop technologies that could help produce low-carbon-emitting energy. QIA pledged £150 million. In return, the United Kingdom's Carbon Trust, a government body, pledged £10 million and a commitment to attract investment from private companies worth an additional £90 million.¹⁶ More importantly, the government in London also pledged to transfer technology to Qatar, allowing it to "develop and commercialize" these projects domestically.¹⁷ Subsequently, QIA made a further significant investment in the Carbon Trust, as part of its contribution to develop cutting-edge low carbon technologies.¹⁸

To further facilitate sustainability, the government also established the Sustainability Development Industry (SDI) initiative, a pledge by companies to improve their environmental record, as well as their corporate governance, social progress and human development efforts.

The QIA has also become a lead partner in the Agreement on the Establishment of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) – with a mandate to develop a new model of economic development by linking economic performance to sustainability. This commitment has influenced many of Qatar's recent investments in Europe. In mid-2015, for example, it purchased a 100 percent interest from Hine, the international real estate firm that specializes in sustainable projects, in Porta Nuova, a transformative city-center development in Milan, Italy.

Qatar's commitment to sustainable investment overlaps closely with the effort of the EU and its member states to promote such endeavors. The EU-28 is not only the world's biggest trading bloc and leading foreign direct investor, it is also the biggest donor to the sustainability programs run by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as the largest global donor of general development assistance and multilateral trade related assistance programs linked to sustainability.

Qatar's commitment to sustainable investment overlaps closely with the effort of the EU and its member states to promote such endeavors

4. 3. What role for small European states?

As Cooper and Moami (2011) have noted, the Eurozone financial crisis highlighted the real vulnerabilities that small EU and non-EU European states face. Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Iceland, to name some of the worst affected, have all had to deal with huge financial and economic downturns in recent years.

14 See *Agence France-Presse* (AFP), 2009.

15 See *PR Newswire.com*, 2012.

16 See *The New York Times*, 2009.

17 See *Bloomberg News.Com*, 2008.

18 See *The Peninsula*, 2009.

Despite such challenges these states, and their less badly affected small state partners – Luxembourg, Finland, Belgium, Austria and Norway – all offer Qatar valuable lessons in building a sustainable national development strategy. In the first place, they have all encountered and tackled exactly the same “small” state obstacles that Qatar now faces in its attempts to achieve sustainable diversification. They have all had to deal with the challenges posed by a small domestic market, high production costs, low economies of scale, and low levels of industrial production. The ways that they have adopted long-term strategic plans to overcome these limitations has challenged what Rothstein (1968) termed the “vaunted irresponsibility” of small states for their tendency to ignore long-range problems in order to ensure short-term stability.

Miller and O’Sullivan (2010) showed clearly how the Irish strategic decision of the early 2000s to harness an educated, English-speaking workforce to a number of progressive economic policies – most notably low tax rates, flexible business practices, and an enterprise culture – made it a global leader in attracting FDI. Prasad, Hypher and Gerecke (2013) have shown how other small European countries including Malta and Luxembourg have followed the Irish precedent.

The viability of this strategy has survived the Eurozone crisis. For example, despite a devastating property crash and the near collapse of its financial services sector, Ireland has maintained its position as one of the world’s top destinations for FDI over the last five years by continuing to adhere to its long-time, and proven, progressive economic strategy.¹⁹ In acknowledgement of this, in 2010, at a time when the Irish economy was in free fall, Qatar embraced the Irish corporate tax model and reduced corporation tax from 35 percent to 12.5 percent for foreign companies operating in the non-hydrocarbon sector.

Baldacchio (2005) argues that social capital or cohesion – the resourcefulness of a nation’s citizens to respond positively, collectively and responsibly to socio-economic challenges – explains positive socio-economic development in small states. The small European states mentioned above all have high levels of social capital. Human capital development is a key ingredient of social capital development, as well as a requirement for successful sustainable diversification. Every year since 1990, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has published the Human Development Index (HDI). This evaluates a country’s economic and social progress outside of traditional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measures. In particular, the HDI takes into account education, in particular the literacy levels of the local population, as well as health indicators, notably access to clean water and electricity, and to basic health and sanitation facilities as well as life expectancy at birth.

Though the HDI does not take into account gender or income inequality or human and political rights it is nonetheless accepted as an important and valuable measure of socio-economic development above and beyond GDP. The UNDP classifies countries into three groups: (1) high human development; (2) medium human development; and (3) low human development. Qatar has seen a consistent rise in its ranking particularly since 2000 onwards. It moved from a ranking of forty-seven in 2000 to thirty-eight in 2010, at which time it moved into the High Human Development grouping, according to the UN. By 2014 it had risen to thirty-first place in the rankings.

The Eurozone crisis may have damaged the credibility of the EU model but it also showed just how deeply interconnected Europe’s economic and financial wellbeing had become to Qatar

19 For example, IBM’s Global Location Trends 2011 report ranked Ireland number one globally as a location for attracting high-level investment and ranked its capital Dublin as the top European city for investment.

Over the same period small European states have scored very highly. Denmark, Iceland, Ireland and Norway have all consistently ranked in the top five globally over this period with Norway topping the rankings on several occasions in the last decade. In fact, Norway, a major energy player and massive overseas investor, has successfully managed to achieve economic diversification in part because of high levels of social capital. Other small European countries inside and outside the EU, including Denmark, Finland and Iceland also provide Qatar with valuable lessons and examples of “best practice” in different areas of socio-economic endeavor. Olafsson’s analysis of the Icelandic model, for example, shows that while in objective terms small states are suboptimal as economic units there are “no serious disadvantages resulting from the small size of states” (1998).

5. Conclusion

This chapter conceptualizes Qatari-EU relations from a Qatari perspective. In doing so it provides an original contribution to a literature that remains extremely underdeveloped. Its main contention is that despite the Eurozone crisis and the Arab Spring, the EU and its constituent member states big and small, as well as other non-EU European states, are important partners for Qatar. They will continue to be so in the future as Qatar looks to build on its long-term bonds with key stakeholders, especially as its recent status as a regional diplomatic powerhouse and an enlightened model of good socio-economic practice come under increased pressure.

The Eurozone crisis may have damaged the credibility of the EU model but it also showed just how deeply interconnected Europe’s economic and financial wellbeing had become to Qatar by the start of the global downturn in 2008. The unprecedented levels of Qatari investment in Europe since then, in particular in areas that contribute to Qatar’s ongoing attempts to achieve sustainable economic diversification, have only served to further reinforce this state of affairs.

Bilateral security and defense relations between Qatar, the United Kingdom and France are strong. But neither the EU nor any of its individual member states can challenge the United States as Qatar’s key external partner in the area of defense and security. That said, in illuminating the centrality of socio-economic progress to domestic stability and security, the Arab Spring has also served to illuminate to Qatari policymakers the importance of relations with Europe.

For these reasons, Europe in general and the EU and its member states in particular are well placed to consolidate their existing position. Despite the ongoing financial and economic challenges at home and the growing importance of Asia as a market for Qatar’s gas-led exports and investments, they are on course to become Qatar’s leading external stakeholders as the country moves forward in its task of socio-economic development through sustainable diversification.

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INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY DYNAMICS OF QATARI POLICY TOWARD THE SYRIA UPRISING

Las dinámicas de seguridad internas y externas de la política de Catar frente al levantamiento sirio

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Qatar played a leading role in supporting the opposition to Bashar al-Assad since the beginning of the Syrian uprising in 2011. While Kuwait emerged as a key (unofficial) conduit for financial transfers from the Gulf States to Syria and backing from Saudi Arabia initially took the form of illicit flows of militants and weapons to groups of opposition fighters, Qatar from the start adopted a political approach to organizing the Syrian opposition, in addition to providing tens of millions of dollars to rebel groups. Qatari support increasingly controversial as it was perceived to be tied to groups linked to the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. During 2012, Qatar and Saudi Arabia backed competing groups, contributing to the fragmentation of the opposition, before responsibility for the “Syria file” passed decisively from Doha to Riyadh in spring 2013. This signified a major setback to Qatar’s ambition to become a regional power and highlighted how Qatar’s Syria policy was undermined by the lack of institutional capacity to underpin highly-personalised decision-making processes.



Abstract

Qatar; Syria; Saudi Arabia; Syrian civil war; Syrian opposition; rebel groups; terrorism financing; foreign policy

Catar; Siria; Arabia Saudí; guerra civil siria; oposición siria; grupos rebeldes; financiación del terrorismo; política exterior



Key words

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Fechas

Catar jugó un papel fundamental en apoyar la oposición a Bashar al-Assad desde el comienzo del levantamiento sirio en 2011. Mientras que Kuwait emergió como un conducto clave (extraoficial) para las transferencias financieras de los estados del Golfo a Siria y como apoyo de Arabia Saudí, al inicio tomó forma de flujo ilícito de militantes y armas para grupos de combatientes de la oposición, Catar adoptó desde el inicio una posición política para organizar la organización siria, además de proveer decenas de millones de dólares a los grupos rebeldes. El apoyo catari, cada vez más controvertido, era percibido como relacionado con grupos unidos a la Hermandad Musulmana siria. A lo largo del 2012, Catar y Arabia Saudí apoyaron a grupos rivales, contribuyendo a la fragmentación de la oposición, antes de que la responsabilidad por el «archivo sirio» se traspasase de modo decisivo de Doha a Riyadh en primavera de 2013. Esto representó un duro revés a la ambición de Catar de convertirse en un poder regional y resaltó cómo la política sobre Siria de Catar estaba debilitada por la falta de capacidad institucional para sostener los procesos de toma de decisiones altamente personalizados.



Along with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Qatar played a leading role in supporting the opposition to Bashar al-Assad after the Syrian uprising began in 2011. While Kuwait emerged as a key (unofficial) conduit for financial transfers from the Gulf States to Syria and backing from Saudi Arabia initially took the form of illicit flows of militants and weapons to groups of opposition fighters, Qatar from the start adopted a political approach to organising the Syrian opposition, in addition to providing tens of millions of dollars to rebel groups. Qatari support increasingly controversial as it was perceived to be tied to groups linked to the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. During 2012, Qatar and Saudi Arabia backed competing groups, contributing to the fragmentation of the opposition, before responsibility for the “Syria file” passed decisively from Doha to Riyadh in spring 2013. This signified a major setback to Qatar’s ambition to become a regional power and highlighted how Qatar’s Syria policy was undermined by the lack of institutional capacity to underpin highly-personalised decision-making processes.

There are four parts to this essay. Part I examines the policy motivations and regional objectives of the key decision-makers in Doha before, during, and immediately after the sudden onset of the “Arab Spring” in early-2011. These include senior members of the Qatari ruling family, led by the Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, and the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, who was also the Foreign Minister until both he and the Emir stepped down in June 2013, as well as technocratic experts upon whom they came to rely in the formulation of policy toward the evolving conflict in Syria. This leads into Part II, which provides an overview of the evolution of Qatari policy toward Syria between 2011 and mid-2013.

Parts III and IV of this article focus specifically on the internal and external security dimensions of Qatar’s activist approach toward the overlapping conflicts in Syria. Part III questions whether Qatari actions in Syria between 2011 and 2013 made the country less, rather than more, secure, as the Qatari leadership faced mounting regional and international pushback against its assertive regional policies. This scepticism peaked in 2013 but its impact continued into 2014 as officials in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) spearheaded a campaign to isolate Qatar within the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Part IV concludes with an assessment of the new threat of potential blowback posed to Qatar and other Gulf States by militant extremists from the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), in addition to

signs that Qatar and Saudi Arabia belatedly have started to coordinate policy toward the Syrian opposition in an attempt to confront this shared threat.

Qatari policy-making circles were drawn extremely tightly around a handful of the most senior members of the Al-Thani. Decisions frequently were taken “from above” and transmitted downward for implementation, rather than the other way around. For public sector officials in government ministries, instead of acting as the incubator of policy ideas, their role was to find ways to make declaratory policies work in practice. Continuing reliance on networks of powerful personalities hampered also the institutionalisation of the machinery of government in Qatar. The four main protagonists behind Qatar’s policy toward Syria were Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa and his Prime/Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim until they both stepped down on 25 June 2013, Heir Apparent (and, since 25 June 2013, Emir) Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs until June 2013, when he succeeded Hamad bin Jassem as Foreign Minister. The first three are senior figures in the ruling Al-Thani family while the Al-Attiyah family is regarded as the most influential of the “non-royal” families in Qatar. A fifth figure of influence in shaping the early thinking of Emir Hamad was Azmi Bishara, a prominent Arab Israeli MP residing in exile in Qatar.

In Qatar, the general direction of policy throughout the period prior to and during the Arab Spring was set by the two most powerful men in the country – Emir Hamad and Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim – with the Heir Apparent, Sheikh Tamim, gradually assuming a greater role in the day-to-day running of domestic and regional affairs. Emir Hamad and Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim were the twin architects of Qatar’s policy of intensifying internationalisation in the aftermath of Emir Hamad’s seizure of power from his father in a bloodless palace coup in June 1995 (Kamrava, 2013). Curiously, in light of what subsequently transpired in Syria, prior to 2011, both men had developed closer ties with Bashar al-Assad based around growing Qatari commercial investments in Syria, cooperation over Qatar’s mediation efforts in Lebanon in 2008, and anger at Israel’s offensive in Gaza (Operation Cast Lead) in 2008-9 (Khalaf & Fielding-Smith, 2013).

While Emir Hamad was instrumental in overseeing Qatar’s rise to a position of international prominence during his eighteen-year rule, he was supported throughout by Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim, Qatar’s long-serving Foreign Minister (from 1992) and Prime Minister from 2007, when he replaced one of the Emir’s brothers, Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Thani. Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim range of interests and portfolios were as impressive as they were numerous. In addition to his Prime Ministerial and Foreign Ministry roles, he served on the Ruling Family Council and the Supreme Council for the Investment of the Reserves of the State. In addition, he was the Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Qatar Investment Authority and Chairman of its real-estate arm (Qatari Diar), and its direct investment arm (Qatar Holding) (Gulbrandsen, 2010).

The Emir and Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim worked productively and in tandem for most of the 2000s. Toward the end of the decade, they were joined by a third influential participant in Qatari foreign policy formulation. This was Sheikh Tamim, the Heir Apparent from August 2003 until his accession as Emir on 25 June 2013 following Emir Hamad’s decision to hand over power. The fourth son of the Emir (and the second with the Emir’s favoured wife, Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser

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al-Missned), Sheikh Tamim became Heir Apparent on 5 August 2003 (Kechichian, 2008). As early as 2011, the *Gulf States Newsletter* cited one (unnamed) analyst as stating that “There has been a gradual transfer of power from the office of the prime minister/foreign minister to the office of the heir apparent. Of course, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim still has great power on the international scene, but is not so powerful domestically” (*Gulf States Newsletter*, 2011).

Significantly, Sheikh Tamim additionally started to encroach upon Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim foreign policy domain. During the summer of 2011, Sheikh Tamim was active in hosting delegations of visiting Free Libyan officials as the anti-Gaddafi rebellion unfolded. He also travelled to Egypt in July 2011 to meet with the leadership of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) (*Gulf States Newsletter*, 2011). Subsequently, in January 2012, as the violent uprising in Syria escalated, Sheikh Tamim arranged a meeting between the Palestinian resistance organisation Hamas and Jordan. Unusually, in light of Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim’s previous dominance of such issues, it was Sheikh Tamim who accompanied Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal and a delegation of Hamas leaders to meet with King Abdullah in Amman in January 2012. The visit was seen as an opportunity to repair previously tense relations between the Hashemite Kingdom and Hamas, particularly as conditions in Syria deteriorated (Farrell, 2012).

Two additional policymakers who had a key influence on Qatari decision-making on Syria were not members of the ruling family. Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah rose rapidly in prominence in early-2013 as he emerged as Qatar’s point of contact within the Foreign Ministry with Syrian rebel groups and gradually took over the day-to-day running of the ministry from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim. Along with Sheikh Tamim, Al-Attiyah played a key role in trying to repair simmering tensions between Qatar and Saudi Arabia over policy toward Syria in the spring of 2013 (and thereafter as Foreign Minister under Emir Tamim). Al-Attiyah has a close relationship with Emir Tamim and the former Emir, Hamad, borne in part out of residual loyalties stemming from the fact that his own father (Mohammed Al-Attiyah) was a mentor to the young Hamad as Heir Apparent in the 1980s and gave him crucial political backing when Hamad made his first power play against his own father, Emir Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani, in 1989 (Gray, 2013). The significant influence on Qatar’s early policy toward Syria was Azmi Bishara, General Director of the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies in Doha. A Palestinian intellectual, academic, and politician, Bishara was a member of Israel’s Knesset between 1996 and 2007, when he resigned his seat and went into exile in Doha after he was accused of providing Hezbollah with information on strategic locations in Israel during the July 2006 conflict in Lebanon. Bishara developed a close relationship with Emir Hamad and was instrumental first in deciding that the Assad regime was incapable of peaceful reform and subsequently in putting together the Syrian National Council/Coalition (Khalaf & Fielding-Smith, 2013).

The outbreak of the Arab Spring in late-December 2010 and early-January 2011 found Qatar in a fortuitous position. Flush with the success of the 2022 World Cup bid and with its international recognition soaring, the Qatari leadership seized on the opportunity to mark Qatar as distinct from the troubles afflicting the wider region. With little prospect of being affected by the contagious spread of the political and socio-economic unrest, there was much to gain for making a high-visibility stand against authoritarian misrule in North Africa, Syria, and Yemen. Moreover, the opportunity cost of doing so was low at first, as Qatari expressions of declaratory and material support for opposition movements elsewhere were unlikely to rebound domestically, while they also played into Qatari efforts to be taken seriously as a responsible participant on the regional and international stage (Coates Ulrichsen, 2014).

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Beginning in March 2011 in Libya, Qatar embarked upon a decisively new role in its efforts to exert leadership in the Arab world. The emphasis of Qatari policy underwent a ground-breaking shift away from diplomatic mediation and investment in post-conflict reconstruction and recovery toward an activist and even interventionist approach to the Arab Spring. During 2011 and 2012, the focus of the Emir and the Prime Minister was on assisting, if not facilitating, an armed intervention in two of the bloodiest theatres of upheaval, Libya and Syria. Qatar's role in the campaign to oust Libya's longstanding dictator, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, in 2011 indicated a new direction in Qatari regional and foreign policy with the unprecedented use of political, economic, and both direct and indirect military support (Barakat, 2012). The apparent success of this policy in toppling Gaddafi in August 2011 represented the zenith of Qatar's perceived power and influence in the Arab world. However, subsequent developments in Syria and across the region underlined how Qatari officials over-played their hand and over-estimated their ability to trigger far-reaching changes to regional structures.

II

The uprising in Syria prompted Qatar's second intervention in the Arab Spring following the campaign to topple Libya's longstanding leader, Muammar Gaddafi, between March and October 2011. However, a world of difference separated the cases of Libya and Syria as flashpoints in the unfolding regional upheaval. Whereas Gaddafi's regime was diplomatically isolated and politically (and physically) remote from major regional actors, Syria lay at the geopolitical heart of the Middle East. The multicultural fabric and sectarian balance within Syria combined with its cross-regional tribal links and political alliances to ensure that the civil unrest that started in March 2011 was not contained purely within the country. Syria became the battleground for proxy wars waged with increasing intensity and ferocity by groups linked to both sides of the primary Sunni-Shiite divide. Within this series of lethal and overlapping conflicts it was fanciful to suppose that any one country could hope to influence, let alone control, developments on the ground. Yet whether by accident or design, or simply flush from their apparent success in Libya, this is precisely what the Qatari leadership attempted to do in late-2011 and throughout 2012. Moreover, when Qatar's early attempts to rally regional and international support for intervening in the worsening conflict in Syria were not successful, Qatari policy became more unilateralist and unpredictable. With Qatar unable to mobilise the international community as it had over Libya and with regional scepticism of Qatar's foreign policy motives soaring, the activist foreign policy espoused so strongly in 2011 showed signs of wearing thin by the end of 2012, months before the formal shift in leadership occurred in Doha in June 2013 (Coates Ulrichsen, 2014).

Shortly after the outbreak of mass demonstrations in Syria in March 2011, both the Emir and the Prime Minister of Qatar attempted to use their personal influence to persuade Assad to negotiate a political solution and refrain from violent repression of the protest groups. Similar overtures were made from the Emir's daughter, Al-Mayassa bint Hamad Al-Thani to President Assad's wife, Asma, but all proved futile (Al Qassemi, 2011). In January 2012, Emir Hamad called for armed intervention in the Syrian uprising. As with his earlier "leading from the front" over Libya, the Emir became the first Arab leader to publicly support the dispatching of foreign troops to Syria to try to stop the bloodshed, telling CBS News's *60 Minutes* programme that "for such a situation to stop [...] some troops should go to stop the killing". He added that Qatari policy toward the Arab Spring uprisings was to side with "the people of those countries

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[...] asking for justice and dignity [...] I think this is a healthy influence. I think all the world should support this” (Al Jazeera Online, 2012). However, Qatar’s vocal, flexible and proactive role in the crisis failed to trigger an immediate or far-reaching impact as it had in Libya the year before. In the face of evidence that the Qatari star was wearing thin, policy pronouncements from Doha became more strident and desperate. In October 2012, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim accused the Syrian government of genocide after the failure of (yet another) four-day ceasefire attempt. The Qatar News Agency quoted Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim as stating explosively that:

What is happening in Syria is not a civil war but a genocide, a war of extermination with a license to kill by the Syrian government and the international community [...]. Everything that is happening now is a waste of time and just buying time to kill the Syrian people and to destroy the Syrian infrastructure. (CNN, 2012)

During 2012, with the numbers of deaths in Syria multiplying to more than 60,000 by the year’s end, allegations gained ground that Qatar, along with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, was channelling financial aid and small arms to opposition fighters and groups. In September 2012, *Time Magazine* conducted an in-depth investigative report into the matter. It found that Qatari and Saudi funding and weaponry was finding its way to competing factions within the Free Syrian Army. Whereas Qatar was reported to have developed close links with the Muslim Brotherhood of Syria (in line with Qatari support for the organisation and its offshoots in North Africa), other Gulf networks were alleged to have favoured Salafi groups said to form part of broader Islamist networks of fighters in Syria. The report concluded that Qatar and Saudi Arabia were engaged in “a game of conflicting favourites that is getting in the way of creating a unified rebel force to topple the Assad regime” (Abouzeid, 2012).

With a lack of consensus both within the Syrian opposition and among the international community over the shape that any political settlement may take, Qatari involvement in the country is (and will remain) vulnerable to reputational risk. Michael Stephens of the Qatar-based branch of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) think-tank warned in September 2012, “Syria has the potential to discredit Qatar in a big way [...] Qatar thinks it’s Libya all over again. But at this point, they cannot just insert themselves into the diplomatic process and appear free of an agenda” (quoted in Dickinson, 2012). Writing again several months later, in February 2013, Stephens suggested that local and regional suspicion of Qatari motivations and policy objectives were compounded by Doha’s shortcomings in public diplomacy and institutional depth:

When the rumours get so large that answers are demanded they are met with walls of silence, not because Qatar has anything to hide, but because that is the culture of governance here ... regional leadership needs more than a TV station and five people at the top of the government making all the decisions. It is impossible with the number of world problems in which Qatar is involving itself for five people to possess the information necessary to deal with them adequately ... In short, Qatar’s culture of silence is beginning to backfire badly. (Stephens, 2013)

This notwithstanding, Qatari leaders continued in their efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis. In November 2012, a meeting of Syrian opposition leaders convened in Doha to try and iron out their many differences and competing agendas. As was the pattern with Qatar’s pre-2011 mediatory initiatives, delegates met at two of Doha’s glitziest hotels – the Sheraton and the Ritz – in an atmosphere far removed from the violence and suffering of the people they claimed to represent. After four days of intense negotiations, the delegates agreed to establish an umbrella

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organisation, the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, to unite the multiple ethno-sectarian- and regional-based opposition factions under one body, and establish political coordination over the disparate military wings (MacFarquhar & Droubi, 2012).

Although Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim joined US secretary of state Hillary Clinton in welcoming the outcome of the Doha meeting, it was not at all clear how the new group would be any more effective than the already existing Syrian National Council (SNC). The *Wall Street Journal* summed up the difficult task facing the new coalition: “It faces a challenge in controlling the sprawling patchwork of rebel militias and councils fighting regime forces and, in some parts of the country, already governing rebel-held areas” (Malas, 2012). Moreover, the tensions that had plagued the opposition for months remained close to the surface even as the conference proceeded, with the Qatar-supported Muslim Brotherhood of Syria drawing particular ire from other delegates. The head of the Revolutionary Council in the town of Idlib stated that the “haphazard financing coming from abroad was demoralising, especially because it was distributed on a political basis”, adding caustically that the SNC had appointed a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in his 60s as the “youth envoy” for Idlib: “The guy had not been there for 32 years [...] If you dropped him at the edge of town, I doubt he could find his old house” (MacFarquhar, 2012).

The new coalition failed to establish any great credentials as a political power broker or a central hub for coordinating military or financial aid to the Syrian opposition. Its inability to do so did further harm to Qatar’s attempts to reach a multilateral solution to the crisis, and increased the likelihood of unregulated and destabilising flows of unilateral support by Gulf governments to selected groups of rebels. Moreover, it added to the growing chorus of critics of Qatari policy-making that pointed to Doha’s lack of institutional depth in following-through and implementing its regional initiatives. It might have been thought axiomatic that a country of such socio-ethnic and geopolitical complexity as Syria was beyond the “management” of any external actor, but this caution was not readily apparent as the Qatari leadership advocated a policy of intervention in 2011 and 2012. The result, as the conflict entered into its third year in 2013, was a weakening of regional and international resolve on Syria that was to begin with powerless to alleviate or end the human suffering (Coates Ulrichsen, 2013).

Subsequent events during the spring and summer of 2013 provided further evidence of both the fragmentation of international policy toward Syria as well as the waning of Qatar’s regional influence. Over the course of the spring, primary responsibility for leading the Gulf states’ engagement with the Syrian opposition was passed from Qatar to Saudi Arabia (Karouny, 2013). Tortuous negotiations were held in Istanbul in May to expand the sixty-three-seat Syrian National Council by adding an additional forty-three seats, with particular emphasis placed on including a liberal bloc headed by Michel Kilo and backed by Western and Arab governments. This was widely seen as a Saudi-led attempt to dilute the influence of the (Qatar-backed) Syrian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Council by broadening its membership and composition. However, the coalition’s Qatar-backed secretary-general, Mustafa al-Sabbagh, resisted the mooted expansion. An initial proposal to award twenty-two seats to Kilo’s grouping was blocked by the Islamist-dominated council, which instead offered the liberals a mere five seats before settling on a compromise of fourteen. This laid bare the divisions within the Council and their respective external connections, as al-Sabbagh had been appointed the political head of the opposition at the Doha meeting in November 2012 that created the coalition (Hassan, 2013).

In November 2012, a meeting of Syrian opposition leaders convened in Doha to try and iron out their many differences and competing agendas

Along with Turkey (the other major regional backer of the Muslim Brotherhood), Qatar had then orchestrated the selection of Ghassan Hitto, a naturalised US citizen and long-time resident of Texas, to head an interim government in March 2013. This produced a further backlash as Saudi anger at his appointment prompted them to get directly involved in opposition politics in Syria, while several figures suspended their membership of the opposition coalition in protest, meaning that Hitto was unable to form a provisional administration (Draitser, 2013). As the political and military stalemate continued, Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood faction was increasingly seen as a major cause of the persistent divisions within the Syrian opposition; a lengthy investigation by the *Financial Times*, entitled "How Qatar Seized Control of the Syrian Revolution", found that opinions on Qatar among the Syrian opposition had polarised and in many cases become extremely critical and negative. One rebel commander interviewed by the report's authors stated simply that "after two years it is time for everyone involved in Syria to review their actions and engage in self-correction" (Khalaf & Fielding-Smith 2013).

A combination of rising Syrian, regional, and international pressure on Qatar culminated in the "transfer" of responsibility for the "Syria file" from Doha to Riyadh in April 2013. Qatar's policy of "picking winners" among Islamist groups linked with the Muslim Brotherhood had come in for intense scrutiny and criticism in the wake of the crisis in Mali in early-2013 while tensions with Saudi Arabia and the UAE also grew as the differences in policy approaches toward the Muslim Brotherhood widened (Gulf States Newsletter, 2013). Furthermore, Emir Hamad's high profile visit with President Obama at the White House in April was overshadowed by pressure from US officials on Qatar to ensure that none of the weaponry Qatar was sending to Syria ended up in the hands of Jabhat al-Nusra or other extremist jihadi groups. Signs of friction in the Qatari-US relationship also appeared as Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim declared himself exasperated with the lack of action by the international community: "You know, we put a lot of red lines. Scud, he [Assad] used Scud. Chemicals, he used chemicals. And there is evidence. But he used them in pockets, small pockets. He wants to try your reaction. No reaction? He will escalate" (Kelemen, 2013).

During the spring of 2013, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim's minister of state for foreign affairs, Khalid al-Attiah, became more prominent in Qatar's foreign policy-making and played a key role in trying to repair Qatari-Saudi tensions and align approaches to Syria, prefiguring his subsequent replacement of Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim M as foreign minister in June. Shortly after the 26 June 2013 handover of leadership in Qatar, a transition of power also occurred among the SNC as it replaced Mustafa al-Sabbagh and Ghassan Hitto with Ahmad Jarba on 6 July. A tribal figure from the powerful Shammar tribe –which extended from Syria into Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq (with Saudi king Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud himself descended from the Shammar through his mother) – Jarba enjoyed close connections with Saudi Arabia, and his victory was seen as reinforcing Saudi influence over the fractious opposition coalition (Oweis & Solomon, 2013).

III

The evolution of the conflict in Syria between 2011 and 2013 illustrated the constraints that gradually became more visible in Qatar's activist foreign policy, as well as the mounting regional backlash against perceived Qatari policy motivations and objectives. On one level, Syria illustrated the inability of Qatari (as well as other states') funding and support to deliver tangible

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results on the ground. It also highlighted the fact that only by working with other, larger external powers, such as Russia or Iran, could any individual external actor hope to generate the capacity to meaningfully alter the balance of power within Syria. But therein lies the difficulty for Qatar: having picked “winners” that failed to deliver in Syria, there was no apparent Plan B to fall back on. Thus, as Blake Hounshell aptly observed as early as the summer of 2012, “If Libya represented the apotheosis of Qatari power, Syria represents its limits” (Hounshell, 2012).

Three major consequences arose from the Qatari approach to the Arab Spring that had internal policy implications on the new Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, after he assumed power in June 2013. The first consequence is that Qatar’s move from an emphasis on diplomatic mediation prior to 2011 toward a more activist, interventionist regional policy has undermined, perhaps even shattered, the country’s reputation as an impartial and honest broker. For at least the foreseeable future, Qatar’s new leaders will find it difficult to revert to their role as diplomatic mediators that propelled the country to international attention in the late-2000s (Barakat, 2012). As instances of regional and international pushback against Qatari policy multiply, so too does the risk that Qatari actions will be misunderstood or misrepresented in ways that actively damage the state-branding strategy that had proved so successful in placing Qatar firmly on the global map. The unproven accusations levelled at Qatar’s alleged links with armed Islamist groups in northern Mali in 2012–13 constitute a potent case in point, as do the tensions these caused in Qatar’s relationship with France and Algeria (Lazar, 2012). Qatar also found itself in the full glare of a suspicious and highly negative media spotlight in 2014 as elements of the British and American media focused relentlessly on allegations of Qatari support for armed Islamist groups and on the migrant labour issue in connection with the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

This intersects with the second implication of Qatar’s Arab Spring policy, which is that Doha’s record of picking winners backfired badly and endangered key regional relationships with other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. In the transition states of Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, and particularly in the Syrian civil war, the perception that Qatar has thrown its weight behind the Muslim Brotherhood and affiliated Islamist organisations generated extreme friction both among other local groups and fellow GCC states. It propelled Qatar onto a collision course with its Gulf neighbours, chiefly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with both expressing extreme disquiet at the empowerment of the Muslim Brotherhood across the region (Stephens, 2014). For months prior to Qatar’s leadership transition in June 2013 and the removal of President Muhammed Morsi’s Muslim Brotherhood-led government in Egypt a week later, Qatari actions were no longer seen through the benign lens of 2011 but rather were viewed with great suspicion by public and political opinion in recipient states. In the months since the events of June and July 2013 that marked effectively the crushing of the Arab Spring, Qatar was marginalised in regional policy-making as neighbouring Gulf States moved quickly to extend large-scale political and financial support to the military-led transitional government in Cairo (Hamed, 2014).

The third consequence is that with Qatar assuming such a prominent role in championing the uprisings against authoritarian rule in North Africa and in Syria, attention inevitably began to focus on the lack of political freedoms within Qatar and its GCC neighbors. Incidents of repression – such as the sentencing of a Qatari poet to life imprisonment for criticising the Qatari leadership – fuelled accusations that Qatar was following a set of double standards toward the Arab Spring. Meanwhile, greater scrutiny of domestic issues, such as the condition of migrant

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labourers in the context of Qatari preparations for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, revealed a seamer side to Qatari policies that arguably “comes with the territory” of seeking a greater global role. As with the other two dimensions of Qatari policy mentioned above, these inflict significant damage on Qatar’s state-branding and international image. Finally, instances such as the lack of any substantive follow-up to (and eventual abandonment of) the Emir’s announcement in October 2011 of parliamentary elections by 2013 reinforced the views of sceptics that Qatari policy may be more about style than actual substance (Coates Ulrichsen, 2014).

Together, these factors suggest that Qatar’s activist response to the interventions in Libya and Syria achieved the opposite of what was intended. Although in the heady days of spring 2011 it appeared that almost anything might be possible, Qatar’s old and new leadership are caught in the crossfire of regional blowback as the Arab Spring gives way to a messy and uncertain period of political and economic turmoil across the region. The challenge for Qatar under Emir Tamim is to ensure the smooth operation of these trajectories, which may well be easier said than done. Indeed, upon taking power, Emir Tamim sought to reassure sceptical regional allies and international partners that Qatar was “not affiliated with one trend against the other”. However, the March 2014 decision by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain to withdraw their Ambassadors from Doha in the name of “security and stability”, and to accuse Qatar of breaching a GCC security agreement signed in Riyadh in November 2013 stipulating “non-interference” in the “internal affairs of any of the other GCC countries” reflected the deep and continuing anger felt in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi (in particular) over Qatar’s Arab Spring policies and perceived alignment with Muslim Brotherhood forces in Syria and Libya (Stephens, 2014).

In late-2014, a spate of attacks in Saudi Arabia and one in Abu Dhabi suggested that the threat posed by IS to the GCC states would arise primarily from “lone wolf” operations

IV

This final section examines the potential threat of blowback to Qatar (along with other GCC states) from the spiralling jihadi radicalism of groups such as the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (IS). In late-2014, a spate of attacks in Saudi Arabia and one in Abu Dhabi suggested that the threat posed by IS to the GCC states would arise primarily from “lone wolf” operations. However, the uncovering of networks of IS-linked cells in Saudi Arabia and the flow of Gulf nationals to the IS battlefield in Iraq and Syria, as well as the suicide attacks on Shia mosques in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in May and June 2015 indicate that IS also poses a hard security threat to Gulf security. Although the direct threat from IS militancy is less pronounced in Qatar, owing to the absence of comparable sectarian tension between domestic Sunni and Shia communities, the suspected ties between high-profile individuals in Qatar to radical groups in Syria have thrust the country into the international spotlight and done damage to “Brand Qatar” (Dickinson, 2014).

After 2011, the Qatari government set up formal mechanisms for individuals and entities wishing to provide funding for Syrian opposition and rebel groups. All charitable donations were meant to be funnelled through official organisations such as Qatar Charity and the Qatar Red Crescent, or via secure donations on the websites of major Qatari companies such as Qatar Petroleum and others. These formalised structures meant also that there were fewer private or unregulated channels for sending money to Syria as, for example, in Kuwait, where lax financing and money laundering laws meant charitable and private fund-raising was far less subject to official controls (Westall & Harby, 2013).

However, the foregoing does not mean that there have been no unregulated Qatari flows; money collected privately in Qatar often was sent to Kuwait for onward transfer to recipients in Syria through third-party intermediaries in Turkey or Iran (owing to the tightening of regulations in all Gulf States on direct financial transfers to Syria). Further, despite government efforts to channel all giving to “official” charities such as Qatar Charity and the Qatari Red Crescent or via secure donations on the websites of major state-owned enterprises such as Qatar Petroleum, allegations persisted that other, less-regulated charities acted as fund-raisers for extremist groups in Syria and North Africa (one such charity, Madid Ahl Al Sham was in fact cited by Jabhat al-Nusra in August 2013 as one of the preferred conduits for donations intended to the group). A further blow to the international “image” of Qatari charities came in December 2013, when US Treasury Department officials named Abdulrahman al-Nuaimi, a former president of the Qatar Football Association and a founding member of the government-backed Sheikh Eid bin Muhammad Al-Thani Charitable Foundation, as a major financier of Al-Qaeda and its regional affiliates. Al-Nuaimi had for many years advised the Qatari ruling family on its charitable giving, but stood accused of pursuing a dual role, promoting humanitarian causes and civil rights on the one hand while simultaneously supporting extremist groups and acting as an interlocutor between Al-Qaeda and Qatar-based donors on the other hand (Weinberg, 2014).

Other major concerns about Qatar’s financial support of the Syrian opposition focused on the lack of adequate oversight over the amounts of money being transferred and an absence of sufficient information with regard to the flow of money once inside Syria. Simply put, the lack of basic monitoring data meant that Qatari officials could not easily compute how much in total has been transferred to Syria, with some reports putting the figure in excess of US\$3 billion, or even say how much money went to which groups. Moreover, the paucity of official information or statistics evaluating or measuring Qatar’s involvement in Syria tied into the broader shortcomings in Qatari public diplomacy (explaining and justifying why actions have been taken and for what purpose) and the lack of transparency and accountability with regard to making information on state policy publicly available.

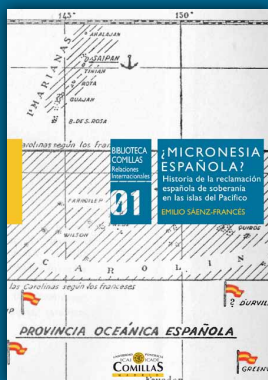
Hence, while Qatar may not share the same direct threat from IS as several of its Gulf neighbours, the fallout from Qatar’s policies toward Syria may yet cause difficulties going forward. In addition to the damage done to Qatar’s international standing from media investigations into such ties, Qatar’s carefully constructed image as a hub for the lucrative global “MICE” (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) circuit could be vulnerable to any upsurge in IS-linked attacks on Western targets either in Qatar or around the Gulf, as in Abu Dhabi in December 2014. There is also the risk arising from “lone wolf” or larger-scale terror incidents in neighbouring states, such as the 2015 mosque bombings in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, particularly if Qatar is seen, by significant elements of the mainstream media, as having somehow contributed to the rise of such groups. In an era in which the rise of radical organisations such as IS have blurred the distinction between the internal and external spheres of security policy as never before, such reputational risk could constitute the major legacy of Qatar’s ambitious yet flawed approach to the Syrian conflict.

While Qatar may not share the same direct threat from IS as several of its Gulf neighbours, the fallout from Qatar’s policies toward Syria may yet cause difficulties going forward

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¿Micronesia española? Historia de la reclamación española de soberanía en las islas del Pacífico

Emilio Sáenz-Francés

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Quizá pocos españoles sepan que el océano Pacífico, hacia el cual se desplaza en la actualidad el centro de gravedad económico y político del planeta, fue conocido en otras épocas como el «Lago español». Pese a la enormidad de su gesta, aún más asombrosa si cabe si se contempla desde la era de la globalización, los nombres de muchos de los exploradores españoles en sus aguas entre los siglos XV y XVII resultan desconocidos. Que casi cuatro siglos de presencia pasaran al olvido se debió en parte al Desastre del 98. A la pérdida de Filipinas se sumó la venta a Alemania, por 25 millones de pesetas, de las islas Marianas (excepto Guam, que pasó a manos de los Estados Unidos), las Carolinas y Palaos. El interés de Madrid por estas posesiones siempre fue escaso, y su mantenimiento difícilmente viable en las circunstancias del momento. Joaquín Costa reprochó no obstante a los gobernantes que decidieron abandonar el Pacífico, que «no tenían valor ni para soñar».

Medio siglo más tarde, en una España todavía aislada en la comunidad internacional, un investigador del CSIC, Emilio Pastor y Santos, defendió la idea de que España aún mantenía sus derechos de soberanía sobre una parte de Micronesia. En un trabajo publicado en 1950, Pastor afirmaba que, como resultado de una discordancia de contenido entre el Protocolo Hispano-Alemania de 1885 (por el que se reconocía la soberanía española, de conformidad con el laudo arbitral del Papa León XIII) y el Tra-

tado de Venta a Alemania de 1899, tras la guerra con los Estados Unidos, un grupo de las islas no habrían quedado enajenadas de España. Pastor planteaba de este modo la reclamación de un espacio que en su opinión debía denominarse «Provincia Oceánica Española», así como el establecimiento de bases permanentes españolas en los archipiélagos de las Carolinas, Marianas y Palaos.

El episodio, que tuvo un escaso recorrido diplomático y mediático, es el objeto de este excelente libro de Emilio Sáenz-Francés. Las pretensiones de Pastor, que según parece sí quiso seguir el consejo de Costa, se basaban en argumentos poco sólidos. Además de la falta de ejercicio directo y permanente de su soberanía —elemento que privaba a nuestro país de cualquier derecho efectivo—, Sáenz-Francés demuestra, tras un exhaustivo examen de la documentación existente en archivos nacionales y extranjeros, que la intención de España fue la de deshacerse de la totalidad de sus posesiones en el Pacífico. Como concluye, la reclamación planteada por Pastor debe entenderse en el contexto histórico en que vivía España y como respuesta a las necesidades de propaganda del régimen franquista.

Aunque la discusión sobre si España conservaba derechos de soberanía en la zona aparece como un asunto menor, el autor adopta sin embargo un enfoque mucho más amplio que permite contextualizarlo. Además de examinar las tesis de Pastor a la luz de la Historia y de los

principios del Derecho internacional, Sáenz-Francés nos ofrece asimismo una concisa pero útil reconstrucción de la presencia española en el Pacífico desde la era de los descubrimientos hasta finales del siglo XIX, así como una descripción de la evolución de Micronesia desde su venta por Madrid hasta nuestros días.

En el trasfondo del libro subyace una inevitable conclusión sobre la debilidad del Estado de la época y la falta de ambición diplomática. El propio Cánovas del Castillo calificaría la política exterior española como de «recogimiento». Fue un triste desenlace para una presencia mantenida durante cuatro siglos, y al que sucedería un largo paréntesis de distanciamiento. No ha sido hasta la primera década del siglo XXI cuando una España muy diferente de la de entonces se ha propuesto corregir su

alejamiento de Asia. Las oportunidades empresariales y la proyección de la lengua y cultura españolas son, entre otros, importantes objetivos que orientan una estrategia más proactiva hacia la región. Bienvenido sea pues el «re-descubrimiento» del Pacífico, un espacio que por su propia evolución empieza a denominarse bajo el nuevo término del «Indo-Pacífico». Pero mirar al futuro e intentar adquirir mayor visibilidad en un continente de creciente relevancia global no es incompatible con el conocimiento de una historia, la de España en Asia, en buena medida ignorada. Hay que agradecer a Emilio Sáenz-Francés que su curiosidad por las extravagantes pretensiones de un académico en la España de 1950 le haya conducido a escribir esta interesante aportación a la historia de nuestra diplomacia.

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AUTHOR GUIDELINES

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