

TWO YEARS AND COUNTING: THE QATARI GULF CRISIS

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Table of Contents

Abstract	4
The Question	6
Methodology	10
The Case Study	16
The List	22
Works Cited	33

Abstract

State interference in other states' affairs is not uncommon. Even before the start of the Westphalian system of international relations and what we consider a state to be, the act of one state attempting and often succeeding to interfere in other states' actions has occurred. Since June 2017, the State of Qatar has experienced direct and indirect interference attempts by multiple other states in the Persian Gulf and greater Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region.

Interference in another party's affairs is a relatively simple matter. There is an attempt to affect change by one party onto another and there is a result— positive, negative or otherwise depending on the intentions. Those results, or byproducts, are where the simple matter of interference becomes muddied. This definition is vital to understanding the intentions and subsequent rate of success with the Gulf Crisis, beginning in 2017 and still unfolding today. Using a multi-disciplinary approach between international relations and media studies is an essential part of this work as Al Jazeera (AJ) is a key bargaining piece in the Gulf Crisis.

Through a methodology with many aspects borrowed from the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) studies, we will define the actors, demanders and recipients, who are involved in this crisis for Qatar. Through this new method, parties are clearly defined and an applicable approach to other situations of attempted state interference is made available.

In regard to the criteria and this work's goal of assessing the crisis and its success or failure, it is also very important to be clear with this work's aims. To be more succinct,

was the attempted media suppression of Al Jazeera a success or failure? Were the geopolitical means and goals of states other than Qatar effective in (1) silencing media freedoms, (2) effective as of this work's publishing in the spring of 2019 to enact their initial or even adjusted goals, and (3) bringing about political changes to Qatar's policy making? The interference taken by these actors has no doubt affected Qatar but how has it done so and has that been to the pleasure of those states? The facts of this case and how we define those facts is essential.

The methodology approaches utilized focus mainly on an interdisciplinary approach of borrowing methods from different, yet strategically similar, different works as well as media analysis from Tine Figenschou's 2014 "Al Jazeera and the Global Media Landscape". This work is particularly exciting because it is on the forefront of an emerging crisis, as the two-year anniversary comes close to the time of this work's publishing, and little has been published in academia on the crisis, relative to other case studies. With the timeliness of this work, further analysis using this case study upon more information and developments with this crisis will be appropriate.

The Question

Success is in the eye of the beholder— something we shall see in the case of Qatar and its neighbors over the past 24 months.

Interference in another party's affairs is a relatively simple matter. There is an attempt to affect change by one party onto another and there is a result— positive, negative or otherwise depending on the intentions. Those results, or byproducts, are where the simple matter of interference becomes muddied. A more precise definition is vital to understanding the intentions and subsequent rate of success with the Qatari Diplomatic Gulf Crisis, beginning in 2017 and still unfolding today.

Qatar has been hit by a wave of attempted geopolitical interference by other states along the Persian Gulf with mostly unified intentions. The act of interference in Qatar, on the surface, is simplistic— defining the outcomes, byproducts, and most importantly, the success of interference in Qatar is much less simple. We see geopolitical influence being the baseline cause for attempting to interfere in another state's policy making. Examples of this outside of the region are infamous to say the least with American Central Intelligence Agency coup d'états, attempted coups, and proxy wars between the United States and Soviet Union, just to name a few. These examples of interstate interference draw similarities to struggles for hegemony, either among all states like the US and USSR or more regional hegemonic struggles within the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). Iran-Saudi proxy wars and rifts, Arab or non-Arab influence in sub-state and non-state groups like Hezbollah, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood have also yielded examples of attempted or even successful interference. Yet the understanding of

success is different in each of these examples for each actor and must be tied to a set of criteria in order to better assess what that success is, and for whom.

Success in interstate interference in domestic policy is, in fact, in the eye of the beholder. But a more objective set of criteria will be able to better assess to what degree, any given actor in the myriad of interstate inference case studies, the state actors have enacted success in their own stated terms before the interference attempts began and after the attempts are carried out. Zeroing-in on an assessment of the level of success for those who have enacted the Gulf Crisis within less than two years since its inception is key to better understanding the crisis itself; this focus on the Gulf Crisis also yields timely analysis as to whether or not the crisis was worth the effort for those who instigated the fissure of diplomatic ties.

In the same vein, the timeliness of this work also sheds light on the necessity to provide more objective analysis on this case study of interstate interference as well as the many of similar cases that have already occurred or are bound to unfold in the future. With that said, this work is not exhaustive. Many criteria could be used to assess the success and failure as this is a crisis consisting of many aspects of Qatari life on the gambling table. All of the things that Qatar is known has now been forced to be reconsidered by Qatari government leaders and elites due to those neighboring countries which enacted a list of 13 demands for Qatar upon the cutting of diplomatic ties. Major media usage, Qatari involvement in Iran and Gaza, regional hegemony, and international commerce— mostly notably things outside of non-renewable resource exportation— have all been major factors in the list of demands. The main bargaining chips used by those enacting the crisis, the reasons each state would partake in diplomatic stress, and other

factors could all be utilized in this assessment. As we see that this work will not be totally exhaustive, a more cause-and-effect level of analysis coupled with the promulgated goals of those states enacting the crisis will be utilized with specific foci on Qatar's international relations and Qatari mass-media being a major bargaining chip in the crisis. There are a multitude of other strong examples in which we can compare this to as well, many of which are from contemporary history as well as within this region with these same state-actors. One of the prime, yet broad, examples is the use of media suppression during the Arab Spring. Similar in both the Arab Spring and the Gulf Crisis, both involved state actors who utilized a barring of media freedoms in an effort to interfere with political actions and policies which in turn resulted in either a success or failure, depending on which actor is assessed and which criteria are used. Briefly utilizing this side-by-side comparison between the beginning of the 2010's with the Arab Spring and the end of the same decade with the Gulf Crisis is an extremely relevant way of seeing similarities and better hashing out these criteria which will be further discussed.

In regard to the criteria and this work's goal of assessing the crisis and its success or failure, it is also very important to be clear with this work's aims. To be more succinct, were the attempts to force Qatar to change its relations with other states and non- or sub-state actors as well as the attempted media suppression of Qatar's mostly state-funded Al Jazeera media network (AJ) successes or failures?

Regarding attempts to force Qatar's hand in lowering, limiting or even denouncing its ties to other states and non-state actors: were the means and goals other than Qatar effective in (1) changing Qatar's official narrative with these groups, (2) resulting in impactful changes to the relationships with non-state actors, or (3)

significantly affecting Qatar's international relations with states like Israel, Iran, western countries, or other MENA or League of Arab States members?

Regarding attempts at media suppression of Qatar's mostly state-funded Al Jazeera: were the geopolitical means and goals of states other than Qatar effective in (1) silencing media freedoms, (2) effective as of this work's publishing in the spring of 2019 to enact their initial or even adjusted goals, and (3) bringing about political changes to Qatar's policy making? The interference taken by these actors has no doubt affected Qatar but how has it done so and has that been to the pleasure of those states? The facts of this case and how we define those facts is essential; additionally, the context and timeline of the case study we are assessing is of importance as well.

Qatar's international relations and its media megalith, Al Jazeera, are just two areas of focus for the list of demands yet they are highly crucial and major foci for those countries that presented the demands. With that in mind, the focus on these two areas are paramount to all others in the list of demands despite some overlap between demands in how they may impact one another or concentrate on similar areas of Qatari policy and life.

Methodology

With the aforementioned aim of building a set of criteria for the success or failure of those states enacting the list of 13 demands on Qatar, we must look to others who have attempted similar feats through a niche, rather than comprehensive literature review. As discussed before, many similar historical events have taken place from the US and USSR down to the same states we are discussing in this work. With each of those major sets of events, similar work has been done to assess relevant successes and what those successes were. Additionally, better stating what facts we're working with in this work is equally crucial to understanding the Gulf Crisis in this new light.

There are three main, basic areas that this method will set out to answer The Question with. For the purposes of this work we will refer to those countries that began and promulgated the list of 13 demands as the "demanders" and Qatar as the "recipient". Referring to both parties with these terms, therefore, can be applied to other case studies in similar historical events as alluded to previously, among other situations. Additionally, this renaming of the parties involved voids us of misunderstanding while also halting the blame for the Gulf Crisis overall; in common rhetoric, some might claim the demanders have caused the Gulf Crisis whereas others claim that the recipient's previous actions warranted the interference on the part of the demanders. Placing blame for the hardships or even overall existence of the Gulf Crisis is not the aim of this work nor should it be the pointed aim of its criteria's use in future applications on other case studies. In order to answer The Question, we need to know what the goals of the demanders were, were these

goals met or are currently in the process of being met, and what has the tangible effect been on the demanders and recipient?

First, in an effort to frame the case study and understand why it exists and is ongoing, what were the stated goals of the demanders? In the case of the Gulf Crisis, there are 13 promulgated demands set forth for the recipient to comply with in order to restore diplomatic relations. In this case, there is no officially and uniformly stated recourse by the demanders if the recipient should not comply. As of the time of this publishing, almost two full years after those demands were given to Qatar and the public, none of them have been met. Defining those goals can begin to bring into question what we define as a fact of this work as well, which will be discussed more.

In addition to promulgated goals, what other unofficial, not-stated, or even secretive goals do the demanders have? When looking into attempts to interfere in the policies of other sovereign states, this might actually be more difficult to do. Unique to this discipline and case study, determining non-stated goals might be difficult yet is potentially fruitful and deeply beneficial to determining why the attempts at interference have occurred.

In line with common international relations thought, one state will wager more than is expected in an effort to bargain back down to its actual goal. Within the confines of this methodology, the demanders could demand more than they actually want in an effort to get the recipient to comply only with at least a portion of those demands, in effect (T. U. Figenschou 2017). To localize it to the Gulf Crisis, a reasonable assumption can be made that the demanders had goals outside of or less than the full list of 13 demands.

More on the context, timeline, and facts of this case study will be discussed but how we came about this case study is also important. Objectivity is paramount in this work because with a major focus being on media as a bargaining chip during the crisis, it is apparent that the largest amount of news reporting on the crisis has been by the outlet itself. While major news outlets the world over have reported on the commencement of the crisis as well as the updates, Al Jazeera has by-and-large been the most plentiful supplier of news reporting on the set of events. Because of this very fact, we must acknowledge Al Jazeera's use as a source of information on the crisis must always be taken with an objective grain of salt in an effort to accommodate its biases as one of the main pieces of contention between Qatar and its major funders. More on Al Jazeera-Qatar relations will need to be elaborated on further but to peer into this unique relationship is a strong example of how the epistemology behind the facts of this case study need to be explained along the way throughout the work.

Many of these criteria were lifted from a Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) study and address the second main point within my methodology. Were those goals met?

To start, a simple polar question is useful at the onset of this stage in the method but will need elaboration and clarifications as each case study goes on. In the case of the Gulf Crisis, it is by-and-large a simple no. The list of 13 demands were to be met within 10 days and granted a 48-hour extension to no avail. As we near the two-year anniversary in June 2019, no concessions have been officially or practically made by the Qatari government. In the case of any other application of this method, we will see that the

initial answer may result in a simple yes or no but like the Gulf Crisis will lead to a more convoluted conclusion.

For each case study as well as this work, there will be more grey area than simply answering a polar question. While promulgated goals might not be met, investigating effects on the recipient due to the demanders' demands and subsequent actions is important. Again, to localize this back to the Gulf Crisis, a byproduct of the demands not being met has been a diplomatic crisis between the demanders and the recipient.

Additionally, this work's criteria for not only success or failure but where the crisis falls along the spectrum between those two determinates will be how we gauge the crisis in the analysis. Working-in MERIP studies relevant to this region is a great way to have a comparative analysis despite different case studies. This study is looking at relations with the US while looking at most of these same countries affecting the Gulf Crisis today. Most of the points considered in this article that are pertinent and can be applicable toward this study's set of criteria include: (1) ties between countries outside of the conflict of interest, such as but not limited to commerce and US or Turkish military bases; (2) the redistribution of power since the Arab Spring to today considering talks of regime change attempts away from the Al-Thani family in Qatar since the crisis' outbreak; and (3) the measures taken for diplomatic negotiations, such as those efforts by the European Union, US, and Kuwaiti Emir— the first of these criteria being the main focus (Madra 2018; Balta 2018). In some way or another, these are three areas of this work that draw their foci from the two MERIP studies drawn on thanks to Balta and Madra. Interestingly enough, we actually can draw from these two studies which actually happen to focus on Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP). The focus on the

AKP in both studies is helpful in integrating the usage of both works into other case studies despite the fact that their foci on the AKP is not the same as this work's focus on Qatar. In other words, the fact that both MERIP studies focus on the same general group is helpful in linking both of them together but their actual focus on any particular group is irrelevant when adapting their methods into a work on the Gulf Crisis such as this one. Being able to use a method across multiple case studies is paramount in this work's goal because it is applicable to the Gulf Crisis or any other work that incorporates any use of attempted interference in state policy by any class of actors: non-state, sub-state or actual state actors. Furthermore, by utilizing these two MERIP studies, we have proven that in the least, elements of this work's focus on the Gulf Crisis are able to be used for all three previously mentioned classes of actors.

Application of those criteria could be accessible through the work's research as well considering this is an opportunity to look at how these same factors, like US involvement and how countries conduct diplomacy, work in conversation with one another. It applies to the Arab Spring and the current Gulf Crisis, as this comparison will be used to illuminate similar factors, mainly the use of media as a bargaining chip by those enacting the crisis.

Third, what has the tangible effect been on the demanders and recipient? This is equally important to the second section in that it sheds light on both the outcomes of all these efforts as well as the non-promulgated goals of the demanders.

Many of the byproducts in Qatar due to the demands and diplomatic crisis were sudden yet able to be anticipated by those that knew the cutting of diplomatic ties was coming. Difficulty procuring food supplies, airline travel, freedom of speech and

expression issues, and expatriate complications are all understandable and easy enough to anticipate given the knowledge that diplomatic ties are soon to be severed. With this in mind, the demanders would have reasonably anticipated these byproducts and others. This begins to lead us to some indication as to what other, non-promulgated goals the demanders might have had at the time the demands were presented and the crisis began.

Similarly, to other applicable case studies, looking into what the byproducts and tangible outcomes of the attempted interference was or currently is can yield more insight into what the non-stated goals could potentially be. Were the tangible byproducts and effects because of simple negligence? Perhaps just a simple stick approach whereas more time to comply and diplomatic channels would have been the alternative carrot approach? Or possible because there are actually other reasons in addition to the 13 demands or any case study's promulgated goals that show there are more goals at play.

The Case Study

The state of Qatar has experienced unique political relationships with other states and other political bodies since its official independence in 1971 from the United Kingdom. Ties to the global north have stayed consistent— notably through the Al Udeid airbase which hosts many American and British troops and the consistently strong commercial ties in the non-renewable energy sector. The global north connections are less unique as Qatar's ties to Tel Aviv and Tehran which have for years continuously counteracted and antagonized other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which is made up of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Oman. Furthermore, connections with sub-state and even non-state actors has given cause for unique and unwarranted relations between Qatar and other gulf states, as well as other MENA region states; quite notably this includes Qatar's hosting of Hamas figure heads like Khaled Mashal. Some of these ties have proven to be reason enough for gulf states along with other states in the region to restrict or even cut-off diplomatic ties with Qatar. Despite proclamations of successes through the Gulf Crisis and headstrong attitudes from Qataris, has Qatar bent under the pressure and affected policy changes, such as Hamas officials being asked to leave their host country of Qatar, and how has any of this benefited those states who enacted the crisis?

In addition to the Israeli and non- or sub-state actor relationships with Qatar is the impactful relationship between Tehran and Doha. The Iranian relationship with the GCC has shown to drive a wedge between Qatar and the other states on that side of the Persian Gulf. With the Iranian-GCC and Iranian-Qatari case, we see how regional influence is the

main factor in these states' international relations. Saudi Arabia considers the GCC and the Gulf region to be its sphere of influence and has asserted as such time and time again. In addition, Iran wants to be a regional player and to spread its sphere of influence.

The impact of interstate attempts at interference is most important to take note of as well as utilize in the case of the demanders presenting the list of demands and officially beginning the crisis. In addition to our understanding of state-to-state interference there is also a necessity to realize the impact of non- or sub- state groups' effects on interference. As brought up briefly in *The Question*, there are groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood which have also yielded examples of attempted or even successful interference in state policy for Qatar and many other Arab or even non-Arab states. We've touched on the Qatari-Hamas relationship for a moment—this relationship with Khaled Mashal being a crux of the Hamas portion of the list of demands— but in a similar way, the intersection of Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood yields insight into this work's understanding of interference and how it plays into the Gulf Crisis.

To touch briefly on how this plays a role in the crisis, a focus on the Muslim Brotherhood in the context of the Gulf Crisis sheds light on why one of the demanders agreed to publicly take action unfavorable toward Qatar, how this had a pre-Gulf Crisis effect on a Qatari media outlet, what this means in the contemporary sense for non-state actors specifically when discussing state policy interference, and finally, how the Muslim Brotherhood's role in the crisis is actually worked-in through multiple demands.

To better understand our case study within the context of this methodology which examines state interference, we must look to our predecessors for not only methods but

also the many cases similar to the contemporary Gulf Crisis. With a plethora of state-to-state rivalries to choose from, whether that be on a larger scale like the aforementioned US-USSR hegemonic struggles or those same countries involved in the Gulf Crisis, it is apparent that interstate interference attempts, specifically, yield similar circumstances which can be evaluated using this methodology. With this understood, let's look at where Qatar's situation falls along a larger picture of the complex web of regional rivalries in order to better understand the interstate interference attempts of the demanders as well as how these actors have been in state-to-state rivalries in recent history. As mentioned before, Iran-Saudi Arabian proxy operations have yielded examples of attempted or even successful state interference resulting in policy changes that have affected the entire region. This struggle has added to a web of rivalries and attempts at aligning countries together for a vast majority of their independence. To map out a few examples in which we will delve into, the international relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia are also met with Saudi Arabia and its leadership in the GCC; Saudi Arabia is the headquarters of the GCC and a frequent host of its meetings. Also worthy of notice, Qatar is caught within this regional hegemonic struggle as a member of the GCC despite the crisis and its continued diplomatic relations with Iran— a major cause for the crisis itself.

An important distinction to be made here is that Iran is both a majority Shiite and Persian country whereas Qatar and the GCC, bar Bahrain, are Arab-Sunni countries. With these basic demographic understandings realized, the power struggle along the Persian Gulf is not based in differences in identity despite the semi-consistent grief that ensues due to these differences in identity. Some of this grief as coming as recently and with

topics as important as one of the pillars of Islam– the hajj pilgrimage to the Kaaba along with other holy experiences in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

In order to pay deference to those who have conducted academic work on Iranian international relations, it is also important to take note of how we often characterize the Iran-Saudi rivalry. This is crucial to this work on the Gulf Crisis simply because if a stated demand outlines the Iran-Qatar relations being too strong, as we will discuss in more detail later, than some understanding on why this has come to be is needed.

In-line with the Iran-Saudi rivalry, the infamous Shia-Sunni rivalry has often played one of the most intense roles in international relations on either side of the gulf. As the emergence of the oil economy began in Saudi Arabia, the religious divide persisted within the kingdom. Toby Jones outlines these tensions well:

“Not only did local workers at Aramco suffer hardship, but many faced pressure because they were from a hated and persecuted religious minority in Saudi Arabia,” Jones says. “The population of the [Saudi Arabian] Eastern Province, which numbered several hundred thousand in the early 1950s, was mixed religiously, home to large numbers of Sunnis and Shiites, with the latter making up the majority. The presence of large numbers of Shiites in the region was a particular concern for Saudi leaders” (Jones 2011).

The importance in understanding some of the contemporary backstory for Iran-Saudi issues, fueled by Shia-Sunni issues is greatly important to understanding the brash actions taken from a leadership position by Saudi Arabia. These issues have not always been present despite the deep rooted sentiments both sides of the rivalries continue to feel.

The Sassanian Empire actually paints an interesting, and ironic, picture of this current crisis and the evidently ongoing spats all around the Persian Gulf. Long before the states we currently would recognize existed, the final pre-Islamic Persian empire actually spanned from modern Iran, around the gulf through Kuwait, and down through Saudi Arabia and Qatar (Cervantes 2013). At different times with varying degrees, the empire incorporated control and some form of unity under the empire for lands that are a part of every demander state and the recipient in the modern context. Not to say that the Sassanian Empire was a staple of unity and heterogenous utopia, but the irony of these lands being united at one time does put the Iran-Saudi rivalry for regional hegemony as well as the rifts between GCC members and other Arab states a truly peculiar contrast to what was once a more incorporated region so many centuries ago.

Similarly, the intra-GCC diplomatic rifts are not new with some going as far to say that the Gulf Crisis of today is a continuation of previous strains in the relationship between Qatar and its Arab-majority neighbors. Just in the 21st century we've seen the recalling of ambassadors, and even declaring others' ambassadors persona-non grata (PNG), between GCC members despite what is claimed in the GCC to be the "pursuit of the goal of strengthening cooperation and reinforcement of the links between [GCC member-states]" as well as working "in conformity with the Charter of the League of Arab States which calls for the realization of closer relations and stronger bonds" (GCC 1981).

Specifically with the GCC's leadership of Saudi Arabia, the Saudi envoy to Doha was called back in 2002. We see this being heightened in 2014 when Saudi Arabia, this time alongside Bahrain and the UAE, called back their ambassadors despite a GCC

meeting being on scheduled– something that despite the 2002 incident was considered an unprecedented step in the relations between those GCC member-states (Hassan 2015). During the comparatively short amount of time without official diplomatic channels between Doha and the others, within the context of the ongoing and current Gulf Crisis, there was work conducted between Saudi Arabia and other GCC members without a Qatari delegation. What is considered the First Riyadh Agreement was a crux of the 2014 rift as those GCC members which lessened their ties to Doha chose to do so due to their perception that Qatar had not followed through on its commitment to fulfil the 2013 agreement. This agreement, alongside the 2014 Riyadh Supplementary Agreement which was reached while Qatar was not represented with ambassadors or any delegation to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE, is still known to be shrouded in secrecy. Neither the 2013 nor 2014 agreements are disclosed to the public in full at this time and have had little discussion in the international community following them being made aware of to the public. Some specifics were acquired regarding the Riyadh Agreements as well as a third agreement but the official text has not been released or accounted for by any of the GCC member-states including Saudi Arabia and Qatar (CNN 2017).

It is important to note that the 2014 Riyadh Supplementary Agreement was born out of a meeting of GCC delegations in November 2014 while Qatar was still being excluded. The agreement was signed within 2014 before Qatar's reinstatement of diplomatic relations in December 2014.

These events of 2014 are important moments in GCC history as it was the first rift of its kind within the intergovernmental organization. It was unprecedented and was occurring among some of the most profitable and stable countries in the region. Similarly

to the current Gulf Crisis, the stated causation for 2014 was the difficulty in unaligned policy among Qatar and its other GCC members. As Hassan states, the 2014 diplomatic rift “threatened the GCC’s activities, adversely affected its functioning and could arguably even have led to its dissolution” (Hassan 2015). This rift being something unrivaled by the Gulf Crisis of today and still without clear byproducts for the GCC’s future.

The List

In an effort to understand the case study in which we are discussing in this work, breaking down the list of 13 demands of Qatar, as best the resources allow us to, is crucial. Documents released from the closest thing we can come to a primary source have shown what is asked of the Qatari government. More on why primary source work is difficult in this ongoing and very recent case study will be discussed further. Originally set to be met within 10 days and then with a small extension, these demands have not yet been met nor has any meaningful dialogue between the demanders and the recipient been met. Below are the 13 demands as described by the Associated Press (AP):

— Curb diplomatic ties with Iran and close its diplomatic missions there. Expel members of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard from Qatar and cut off any joint military cooperation with Iran. Only trade and commerce with Iran that complies with U.S. and international sanctions will be permitted.

- Sever all ties to “terrorist organizations,” specifically the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic State group, al-Qaida, and Lebanon’s Hezbollah. Formally declare those entities as terrorist groups.

- Shut down Al-Jazeera and its affiliate stations.

- Shut down news outlets that Qatar funds, directly and indirectly, including Arabi21, Rassd, Al Araby Al-Jadeed and Middle East Eye.

- Immediately terminate the Turkish military presence currently in Qatar and end any joint military cooperation with Turkey inside of Qatar.

- Stop all means of funding for individuals, groups or organizations that have been designated as terrorists by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Bahrain, the United States and other countries.

- Hand over “terrorist figures” and wanted individuals from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain to their countries of origin. Freeze their assets, and provide any desired information about their residency, movements and finances.

- End interference in sovereign countries’ internal affairs. Stop granting citizenship to wanted nationals from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain. Revoke Qatari citizenship for existing nationals where such citizenship violates those countries’ laws.

- Stop all contacts with the political opposition in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain. Hand over all files detailing Qatar’s prior contacts with and support for those opposition groups.

- Pay reparations and compensation for loss of life and other, financial losses caused by Qatar’s policies in recent years. The sum will be determined in coordination with Qatar.

- Align itself with the other Gulf and Arab countries militarily, politically, socially and economically, as well as on economic matters, in line with an agreement reached with Saudi Arabia in 2014.

- Agree to all the demands within 10 days of it being submitted to Qatar, or the list becomes invalid. The document doesn’t specify what the countries will do if Qatar refuses to comply.

- Consent to monthly audits for the first year after agreeing to the demands, then once per quarter during the second year. For the following 10 years, Qatar would be monitored annually for compliance (AP 2017).

This work focuses most on the Qatari ties to other states and non-states as well as the media related demands, most specifically of Al Jazeera’s intended closure, but each one of the demands on the list has been met with steep criticism and even denial by the Qatari government. Additionally, each of those countries which took part in the initial

fissure of diplomatic ties, the demanders, have bought into not only supporting the list but also believing in the facts they are based in— state-sponsored terrorism or support of Iran by Qatar just to name a few. The validity of the demanders believing in these facts is not up to this work to determine but the difficulty in doing so does bring into question the reasoning why the demanders would take such quick, swift, decisive and continuous action when dealing with demands of a neighboring country in which they are attempting to interfere in its policy despite facts that the international community cannot agree are completely true.

While the 13 demands were intended to be aimed at Qatar, its government and the world, the specific language of intergovernmental communication regarding the list of 13 demands has not been made easily accessible to the public. At the onset of the crisis, the demands were given by the demanders to Reuters and the Associated Press (AP) before being distributed further to other news agencies around the globe. The difficulty in obtaining the specific language puts the general public and potentially other government actors from outside the Persian Gulf in a position with difficulty drawing their own conclusion about the situation due to the inability to read specific language of this policy.

For some inkling into the actions and opinions of actual state-actors who represent the demanders, the Saudi Arabian foreign minister at the time of the Gulf Crisis announcement, Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, made his point in support of the list as well as the idea of taking hard action on Qatar. A verbatim understanding of a very high-profile state actors from one of the leading demanders is essential to understanding both sides of this crisis. A June 27, 2017 press release from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stated Al-Jubeir's take on the, then, very fresh situation:

“This idea that you can fund extremist groups, that you can pay ransom to terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS, that you can send \$300 million to the Shi’ite militias in Iraq with most of it ending up with the Quds Force in Iran, is not acceptable,” [Minister Al-Jubeir] said in a press briefing at the Saudi Embassy in Washington today. ‘I think most countries in the world would agree with the demand to stop this.’

‘We hope that reason will prevail and that our brothers in Qatar will do the right thing and respond to the demands of the international community to cease these activities. Because we think we can’t be on both sides of this issue. You cannot fight against ISIS, you cannot commit to participate in the global center against extremism, you cannot commit to participate in a financial center to combat terror financing and at the same time allow these things to go on,’ he said.

Minister Al-Jubeir said that Saudi Arabia has expressed its grievances and it is now up to Qatar to make amends, and he said Saudi Arabia’s demands are non-negotiable. Specifically, Saudi Arabia has demanded that Qatar end its practice of harboring known terrorists, prohibit funding from within its borders to Al-Qaeda and Daesh (ISIS), and shut down its news network, Al-Jazeera, which has been inciting violence throughout the region.

‘It’s very simple. We made our point. We took our steps. And it’s up to [Qatar] to amend [its] behavior. And once they do, then things will be worked out. But if they don’t, they will remain isolated,’ said Minister Al-Jubeir. ‘If Qatar wants to come back into the GCC pool, they know what they have to do.’

The Foreign Minister reiterated that the decision to cut off diplomatic ties with Qatar was made after taking into account the history of its behavior, including harboring known terrorists and funding extremist groups throughout the region.

‘It was an issue that has been building up, and then a decision was made that enough is enough. Zero tolerance,’ he said” (Al-Jubeir 2017).

There are many points worth unpacking in this almost two-year-old, official statement by the Saudi embassy and its figurehead. Additionally, the statement holds water in international relations because it comes from a leading country in the MENA region, GCC and this group of demanders.

In a political effort to shape the narrative on the Gulf Crisis, Al-Jubeir who was then minister of foreign affairs and as of 27 December 2018 the minister of state for foreign affairs, took a public effort to distill unproven information regarding the demanders’ reasoning for bringing about the Gulf Crisis, cutting diplomatic ties and presenting the list with a relatively short timeline (KSA MOFA 2019).

As discussed before, the Saudi-Iran rivalry for regional hegemony is on secret to the international community. Therefore, kicking off this official statement with the alleged Qatari support of the Saudi rival Iran is a presumptuous stance by Al-Jubeir. The specific language of the statement is also of importance to note. The definition of terrorism, for example, is both arbitrary and often not uniform among states. With this statement made for the general public as well as other states, that is not realized often among those consuming this statement. Additionally, the boxing out done by the Saudi

Arabian government is also of note because the statement presents an ultimatum for Qatar: meet the demands and get a seat at the table again.

In an effort to not determine whether or not the Iran-related and terrorism-related aspects of the statement are true or untrue, it is important to acknowledge this ultimatum in the statement, no matter how seemingly obvious it might be.

While the cutting of diplomatic ties can come across as punitive by the demanders toward the recipient, it actually has grave byproducts for the improvement of the situation. By cutting ties, the demanders have effectively cut off official state-to-state channels for discourse, only making it more difficult to practically resolve the Gulf Crisis. In common international relations thought, recalling a state's foreign service officers including ambassadors or declaring others' PNG is usually shocking and a public embarrassment. While this is a major downside to the Gulf Crisis, we see that it is all the more difficult to resolve the issue through proper means if official communication is effectively impossible. This goes not only for unilateral relations and communications between Qatar and each individual demander but also with Qatar and its membership in intergovernmental organizations such as the GCC. As Al-Jubeir states in the statement above, "if Qatar wants to come back into the GCC pool, they know what they have to do." This insinuation that Qatar is unable to meet at GCC meetings or summits marks even further that lines of communication are not something the demanders are willing to accept during this ongoing crisis (as well as non-Gulf Crisis related matters that can be discussed at meetings of the GCC). Additionally, this is something that should be allowed with their continuous membership in the GCC despite almost all GCC members not having ties with Qatar.

Similarly to the leadership of the demanders' statement, the recipient also made official statements following the announcement of the Gulf Crisis through their ministry of foreign affairs. In a series of official statements between 22 June and 23 June 2017, a dialogue was one of the first things called for by the Qatari government— something, as discussed above, that is nearly impossible to do with severed diplomatic ties and subsequent non-existent official channels for interstate communications. In statements provided by the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Qatar's Ambassador to Germany, Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, and Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani both expressed a need for the demanders to elaborate on the list of demands as well as open up communication between Qatar and the demanders regarding the crisis.

In a speech given in Germany by Saud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, he addressed his German colleagues with a need to resolve the Gulf Crisis which was at that point very young. His points are shown below:

“The Ambassador stressed the State of Qatar's adherence to the political constants, towards the crisis, pursued by Qatar under the directives of HH he Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, including restraint, not to be dragged into similar measures, respect for neighborliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of neighboring countries and further deepening of historical relations with the GCC States and the Arab world, in addition to defending Qatar's right to an independent foreign policy approach that supports security and stability in the region and the world” (Qatar MOFA and Abdulrahman Al-Thani 2017).

In a similar vein, his superior, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani expressed the inability to converse between the demanders and his home country, the recipient if channels of communication were erased in a statement released the same day. It was made clear by Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani that concerns over the reasoning for the Gulf Crisis by were present by the Qataris.

The statements described his thoughts on this issue as well as the preemptive nature of the demands and diplomatic severing. Two points from Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani are presented from the statement below:

“There can't be talk about complaints or accusations by the countries that imposed the siege on the State of Qatar until these countries explain the problem, adding that mass measures were taken against the State of Qatar by the three countries in coordination with Egypt to close off ports and the sole land border and then they issued statements without these measures being preceded by any communication or talks” Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said. “Before discussing demands, there must be a discussion first of the real reasons behind the punishment measures against the State of Qatar and the evidence on which these measures were based” (Qatar MOFA and Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani 2017).

This drives home the point that Qatar expressed a need for official diplomatic channels of communication in order to both learn more about the demanders' list of demands, how to resolve it more acutely and more on what their intentions were behind this cutting of ties and presenting the list. Additionally, it furthers the idea that the

demanders had promulgated, official reasons for cutting ties and presenting the list but in this work's effort to assess the success or failure of those stated intentions, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani presents the idea that there might be more behind the demanders' reasons for punitively cutting ties and presenting very drastic demands of Qatar.

With difficulty in obtaining the official text of the 13 demands, this comparison between the foreign ministry statements by a leading demander and the recipient are vital to better understanding the root of the Gulf Crisis. Similarly, Qatar did not announce that they had received official documents concerning the list of demands from any of the demanders until 23 June (Doha, Information Office 2017). In that same announcement, it also acknowledged Kuwait, another GCC member, and its efforts at hastily working to resolve the Gulf Crisis.

The list incorporates a focus most accessibly analyzed through the interdisciplinary lens of liberal arts and a use of its many fields. As discussed earlier it is imperative to discuss the impact of media outlets, namely Al Jazeera, as it is a hotly contested point along with other media outlets in the list of demands.

It is apparent that influence by Qatar and its leadership has impacted Al Jazeera domestically and abroad. Its coverage is notorious for being emblematic of representing non-western voices and publishing less-than-supportive media regarding Arab leaders and elites, outside Doha. Tine Figenschou goes as far as to say that Arab elites across the region have managed to influence and shape media, including regional satellite channels (T. Figenschou 2013). This comes off initially as not so shocking: the idea that elites have influence on the way in which mass communication messages are communicated to

the masses is not unobvious. What is unique to the crisis is the individualized condemnation of Al Jazeera as a media outlet among the others and the simple fact that Al Jazeera and the other outlets were called to be closed. Yet again, through an unprecedented move in the Arab world international relations, a demand to close a major news outlet was made with little explanation, way in which to carry out those demands, or recourse should it not be done within the demanders' stated timeline.

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