

Monthly Monitor Report

July 2015



Gulf State Analytics Monthly Monitor

Gulf State Analytics 2015. All Rights Reserved

No duplication or transmission of this document is permitted without the written consent of Gulf State Analytics

Contact us: contact@gulfstateanalytics.com Visit our website: www.gulfstateanalytics.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KUWAIT'S SECTARIAN EQUATION	3
MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN: THE SAUDI SCAPEGOAT?	5
AL-QAEDA'S OUTLOOK IN YEMEN	7
BAHRAIN MONITOR	10
KUWAIT MONITOR	13
OMAN MONITOR	16
QATAR MONITOR	17
SAUDI ARABIA MONITOR	19
UAE MONITOR	22
ENDNOTES	25

KUWAIT'S SECTARIAN EQUATION

By Cinzia Bianco

On June 26, a suicide attack during Friday prayers in the historic Shi'ite Imam Sadiq mosque in Kuwait City killed 27 people and wounded 227. Hours after the suicide bomber detonated his explosives-laden vest, Daesh ("Islamic State") took to social media and claimed responsibility. A Saudi Arabian national by the *nom de guerre* Abu Sulaiman al Muwahhidby—of Najd Province (a Saudi Arabia-based Daesh division)—was identified as the perpetrator.¹

The gruesome act caught many analysts by surprise, given that sectarian relations in Kuwait have been relatively positive compared to other Arab states. However, developments that unfolded in Kuwait prior to the June 26 attack highlight how sectarian issues in the region have negatively impacted Sunni-Shi'ite relations within the emirate.

On April 2, Khaled al-Shatti, a prominent Kuwaiti Shi'ite lawyer and former parliamentarian, was arrested after posting tweets critical of the Saudi-led Arab coalition's fight against the Houthis in Yemen.² Shatti had suggested that Iran's power was going to prevail in Yemen. He was charged with challenging the emir, demoralizing Kuwaiti soldiers, offending the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and threatening Kuwait City's relations with Riyadh. Shatti was released four days later. Other Shi'ite parliamentarians (7 out of 10 in a body of 50) also criticized Kuwait's participation in the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen on the grounds that it violates Kuwait's constitutional prohibition of offensive war.

Kuwait's sectarian orientation makes the emirate a palatable target for Daesh and other extremist groups that thrive on spreading sectarian strife. Indeed, the chaos in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen has offered Daesh fertile playgrounds, as such conflicts have triggered extreme polarization along sectarian lines throughout the greater Middle East.

Saudi Arabia and Iran, the two leaders of the Sunni and Shia blocks, exacerbate this polarization by backing opposite parties in each of the conflicts currently enflaming the region. Yemen is a case in point. The fact that Arab Sunni states have formed a historically unprecedented military coalition to fight the Houthis—a Shi'ite non-state actor in Yemen, allegedly backed by Iran—underscores the region's growing Sunni-Shi'ite divide, a conflict that is clearly raising sectarian temperatures in Kuwait's political sphere.

The Unique Role of Kuwait's Shi'ite Minority

Such an outspoken protest is, to say the least, unusual in the Gulf. Indeed, Kuwait's Shi'ite MPs are the only such group in the region allowed to take a stand against their government's foreign policy on an official and institutional level.³ However, these political arrests are a real danger to Kuwait's long-standing equilibrium. They threaten the Gulf state's consolidated political system, one that was moving slowly toward a peculiar form of public involvement in the *res publica*.

As a matter of fact, the highly mobilized Kuwaiti public can vote in free and fair parliamentary elections. The Kuwaiti parliament is the only one in the Gulf that can vote out individual ministers and even override the emir's veto via majority vote, as happens in a semi-constitutional monarchy. At the same time, the cabinet, appointed by the emir, does not answer to the Parliament. Therefore, the ruling elite has been traditionally pushed to reason more in terms of averting political opposition than in terms of playing on sectarian dynamics.⁴ In turn, the opposition activity of Shi'ite MPs is carefully framed in constitutional terms, demonstrating their willingness to respect the norms of Kuwait's political system rather than call for regime change. In the economic realm, Kuwaiti Shi'ites have equal access to sensitive positions in high-level defence and interior departments, and to the welfare benefits offered by its rentier structure, including free health care, education, and state subsidized fuel and housing.⁵ Some of the most powerful merchant families of the Gulf Arab nation are Shi'ite.

This is mostly because Shi'ites in Kuwait, who represent 25 to 30 percent of the population, hold a unique place in Kuwait's history. Since the inception of the State of Kuwait, the emirate's Shi'ites have known their place in the landscape of Kuwaiti politics. From 1936 to 1979, the ruling Al Sabah family relied on them as a counterweight to the political challenges coming first from Sunni Arab notables and later from Arab nationalists.⁶

This "unwritten contract" ended with the Iranian revolution, when a small group of Kuwaiti Shi'ites began to push for political reforms. Sometimes Kuwait's authorities violently repressed these Shi'ite activists. However, these episodes were mostly isolated and, generally speaking, Kuwaiti Shi'ites have most often been nationalistic and loyal to the ruling monarchy. In many cases, the Al Sabah ruling family has even defended them against tribalism and sectarianism in the parliament and throughout society.

When in 2011 Saudi Arabia and the UAE deployed troops to Bahrain to suppress its Shi'ite-led Arab Spring, the Kuwaiti government declined to send ground forces. Being highly sensitive to how Kuwait's participation might impact sectarian divisions within the government, the emir ended up deploying a largely symbolic naval force.⁷ Immediately after the June 26 attack, Emir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah visited the site. Footage on state-run Kuwait Television showed him visibly moved by the scenes of carnage. The leader also stressed the necessity for national unity in order to avoid falling into the polarizing trap of Daesh, as well as the need to confront head-on the threat of terrorism.⁸

Hunting Down Whose Enemy?

Kuwait's authorities face grave risks in terms of reconciling rhetoric about national unity with counter-terrorism efforts. Such activities should not become a re-branding of the authoritarianism utilized to counter the uprisings that erupted across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in early 2011.

Since "Arab Spring" protests were held in Kuwait back in 2011, the ruling family has been confronted by the cross-class Islamist-tribal-youth coalition, which has intensified its demands for political reform. In 2014, authorities responded to ongoing calls for change by stripping over 30 Kuwaitis of their citizenship and expelling them from the emirate for their alleged determination to undermine the Gulf state's security.⁹ In March, authorities arrested human rights defender Nawaf al-Hendal and dozens of others at an anti-government protest.¹⁰

Kuwaitis who have criticized fellow GCC regimes have also been targeted. The Shi'ite MP Abdulhameed Dashti is on trial for condemning Bahrain's Sunni rulers; the Shi'ite writer and academic Salah al-Fadhli was arrested for criticizing the war in Yemen; and former Sunni MP Mubarak al-Duweileh was questioned for criticizing officials in Abu Dhabi.¹¹ These cases underscore not only that there is a red line Kuwaitis must not cross when criticizing the emir, but also how speaking against Kuwait's regional allies has become taboo.

Although the arrest of Shi'ites who are particularly outspoken appears sectarian from the outside, the trend fits into the context of all GCC states tightening the screws on political dissent under the pretext of securing stability in the Council. When considered in this light, regime-Shi'ite relations have more to do with how organized the political opposition is becoming in the Gulf. Emboldened domestic constituencies are increasingly vocal in GCC states, including Kuwait, where calls for democratic reform of the last decade have not translated into meaningful reform.¹² Indeed, by further criminalizing dissent, Kuwait is on track with its regional allies. The Gulf state is facilitated by the GCC's Security Pact, which allows all six members to join forces in silencing opposition forces all over the Gulf by creating transnational controls and eliminating safe havens for dissidents of one country in another.¹³ As sectarian strife continues to intensify in the Gulf and greater Middle East, it remains to be seen how such tensions will play out in Kuwait's parliament and in society at large. On one hand, Kuwait's contribution to Saudi Arabia's military coalition in Yemen certainly

heightens the risk of a growing number of Shi'ites distancing themselves from their longstanding ally in the ruling Al Sabah family. On the other hand, the June 26 attack—in addition to the Kuwaiti tribal-Islamist opposition—may prompt more Shi'ites to move closer to the regime for protection, despite disagreement with the emirate's foreign policy. Finally, the signing of a comprehensive nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1 on July 14 has the potential to provoke a powerful shock to the Middle East's sectarian balance. The nuclear deal may lead to further engagement among different sects, or it may worsen tensions between Sunni Arab regimes and Shi'ite groups, including in Kuwait.

Ultimately, the prospects for stability and cordial sectarian relations in Kuwait will largely depend on the ruling family's ability to navigate the aforementioned regional and domestic challenges, particularly with respect to the most sensitive issue of all: Iran's reintegration in the region and global economy.

Cinzia Bianco holds a Master's degree in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Studies from King's College London. She worked as a Junior Researcher at the South Asia and the Middle East Forum in London and was a Research Fellow in Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates for the European Commission project, "Sharaka," focusing on EU-GCC relations. Bianco represented Italy at the G8 Youth Summit in the Foreign Affairs Commission (Paris, 2011) and at the G20 as an expert in the Commission on International Trade (Mexico City, 2012).

MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN: THE SAUDI SCAPEGOAT?

Akhil Shah

Modern history has demonstrated that Middle Eastern rulers face high political risks in the aftermath of humiliating military defeats. This is particularly true when victory is expected. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's ongoing military campaign in Yemen has fallen short of what Riyadh had in mind on March 26, when it launched "Operation Decisive Storm" (later named "Operation Restoring Hope"). That four months into the Saudi-led campaign there is still no end in sight is problematic for the kingdom's image. Moreover, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud risks losing power as a result of a costly quagmire in Yemen, which would alter Saudi Arabia's current line of succession.

For the Saudi leadership—and to various extents its fellow Arab statesmen in eight other capitals—the war in Yemen presented an opportunity to stamp their authority both regionally (against Iranian influence) and domestically (against democratic opposition movements). For Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, the conflict was critical. As a young and inexperienced member of the ruling Al Saud family, he has most likely led efforts in Yemen to publically establish his leadership credentials. Yet, the less than fruitful results and deadly blowback have left him open to much criticism—internally and externally—and have provided more senior princes with a legitimate reason to remove him from the line of succession following the death of his father, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

H.E. Goemans, a professor of international relations at the University of Rochester, wrote that if a leader loses a war "disastrously...leaders are not only likely to lose power but also suffer additional punishment."¹⁴ His study, which can be directly applied to the military losses of Middle Eastern states, concludes that repressive and exclusionary regimes such as Saudi Arabia build a repressive state apparatus to maintain power.

A critical example of this was the Iraqi Ba'athist Party in the aftermath of the military loss to Kuwait. Saddam Hussein faced a number of issues as his leadership was constantly challenged and questioned. Top Iraqi regime officials, including two of Hussein's son-in-laws, defected and disassociated themselves from the party and its leadership. Saddam, due in part to the state apparatus, was able to pre-empt internal dissent. The Iraqi leader purged potential military and political opposition, executing thousands.

Saddam's invasion of Kuwait is only one example. Others include Egypt and Syria's wars with Israel in 1967 and 1973, and Libya's intervention in Chad from 1977 to 1986.

Yet the key difference between the aforementioned military defeats and the ongoing Saudi-led campaign in Yemen is the group constituting the opposition. Riyadh's expensive war against the Houthis will face scrutiny from a growing unemployed youth population. There will likely be international opposition as well as criticism from voices within the ruling family. Whereas Saddam Hussein's regime relied on brutal and reprehensible tactics to maintain a firm grasp on power, Mohamed bin Salman is in no position to execute members of his extended family as a means to hold power. The Deputy Crown Prince faces a dire dilemma in terms of his next move. Goemans' theory states that if a loss is severe enough, the leadership will seem weak and the power of the repressive state apparatus will diminish, encouraging domestic opposition.¹⁵ How Mohamed bin Salman reacts to this will certainly impact the prospects for him one day becoming the King of Saudi Arabia.

Public Image

For legitimacy, the Saudis have largely relied on their role as the "Custodians of the Two Holy Mosques." In particular, this self-declared role allowed the kingdom's rulers to present a certain image of Saudi Arabia as the *de facto* leader of the Muslim world. However, as a consequence of the richest Arab country's humiliation in the poorest Arab country, where it is fighting an opponent with far less military backing or training

(certainly compared to Saudi Arabia with arms and training provided by Washington), this image of Saudi Arabia is weakening.¹⁶

Mohamed bin Salman appears constantly in picture form throughout media coverage. Saudi Arabia's public image has therefore become increasingly synonymous with that of the Deputy Crown Prince. The continuation of Riyadh's failed campaign in Yemen can only diminish the kingdom's 'strongman' image. As a result, Saudi Arabia's leadership role in the Sunni Arab world is becoming increasingly relegated to the kingdom's religious establishment. Mohammed bin Salman's legitimacy and credentials to lead the kingdom are quickly fading. Given that Riyadh's crisis unfolds under Mohammed bin Salman's watch as Deputy Crown Prince, more opposition within the royal family to the idea of him serving as king may mount in due course.

A Convenient Scapegoat

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef's lack of a presence in this conflict is particularly interesting. Publically, he is known as the father of the kingdom's counter-terrorism program and is a favorite among Western allies. The Crown Prince is credited with defeating al-Qaeda's efforts to topple the Al Saud family in the mid-2000s. Beyond this, Mohammed bin Nayef also serves as Chairman of the new Council for Political and Security Affairs. Considering this position, it is strange that Mohamed bin Nayef is not at the forefront of Riyadh's war in Yemen.

Perhaps Mohammed bin Nayef, in knowing his cousin's need to prove his leadership capabilities, is allowing the Deputy Crown Prince to serve as the face of the Yemen campaign so that he can take the political damage and potentially lose legitimacy as a successor to the throne. Given that Mohamed bin Salman is not well-liked, nor deeply respected within the ruling Saudi family this may well be the case.

The ruling Al Saud family's size creates a general lack of trust, especially with the Sudairi Seven (the line of Abdulaziz bin Saud and Hassa bint Ahmad Al-Sudairi

ri) having been restored to a prominent and central position in Saudi Arabia's political structure. Princes do spy on each other for the purpose of acquiring information to leverage for positions of greater power. Numerous princes from the third generation, many of whom are older than the Deputy Crown Prince, will eye an opportunity to make claims. Principally, there will be cries of "I would have done it better if I had been in charge". Dissent and grumblings are thought to be widespread within the ruling family. It is not difficult to understand why many princes would be motivated to use the Yemen war against Mohammed bin Salman. After all, the Saudi throne comes with billions of dollars and virtually unlimited power.

Conclusion

Rumors persist within certain circles that Mohamed bin Nayef is considering changing the kingdom's line of succession. Sources in Saudi Arabia have indicated that he would prefer his nephew, Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef, to become his Crown Prince, thus removing Mohammed bin Salman from the line to the throne. Abdulaziz, who is often seen in the background of photos of the Crown Prince, is purportedly being groomed for a leadership role in the Saudi monarchy. Although the Al Saud family's grasp on power is currently strong, the military campaign is embarrassing enough for the kingdom's rulers to require a scapegoat. Ongoing events point to Mohammed bin Salman filling that role. Consequently, he may no longer serve in a prominent position of power after his father ceases to be the King of Saudi Arabia. While the Deputy Crown Prince may not face arrest or exile, it is highly possible that he will be relegated to a junior position within the establishment.

While Saudi Arabia initially launched "Operation Decisive Storm" as part of an effort to unite the ruling family behind Mohammed bin Salman, the conflict may ultimately prove to be his undoing.

Akhil Shah is a counterterrorism and foreign policy analyst at the Washington, DC-based Institute for Gulf Affairs.

AL-QAEDA'S OUTLOOK IN YEMEN

Adam Patterson

Despite the fact that al-Qaeda is responsible for the deadliest attack on U.S. soil, and that dismantling the terror apparatus was Washington's primary motive for occupying Afghanistan, the burgeoning of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is a development that has eluded much of the American public. Yet, since the Saudi Arabian-led military coalition launched "Operation Decisive Storm" on March 26 of this year, Osama bin Laden's former cohorts in AQAP have effectively transformed their organization into an occupying militia. This development has largely escaped the U.S. mainstream media's radar.

Lacking significant oil reserves, Yemen has not experienced an influx of wealth as have neighboring Saudi Arabia and other nearby Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. As a result, it has become increasingly insular. Yemen has long attracted Sunni revivalists and assorted religious purists. The Yemeni strain of Arabic is believed to be the closest to that spoken during the times of the Prophet.¹⁷ Those with an especially austere, fundamentalist vision of Islam have flocked to Yemen believing that the area remains uncorrupted. The world's most reactionary Sunni Muslims (frequently labeled Wahhabis or Salafists) share a special reverence for their vision of the early Muslim caliphate. Those who migrate to Yemen on these grounds do so to invoke the past and to promote a revival of their absolutist interpretation of Islam.

AQAP's strong presence in Yemen long predates the country's 2011 breakdown of civil authority, when the group constituted more of a hostile nuisance than a martial threat. According to reports, the al-Qaeda branch began germinating in the Arabian Peninsula during the 1990s and gradually rose to prominence as a regular instigator of violence following the escalation of Washington's war on terror during the 2000s.¹⁸

Fertile Land for Global Jihadists

This unique situation drew Anwar al-Awlaki, the influential preacher and al-Qaeda recruiter, to Yemen in 2004. Hardline jihadists view the impoverished country as fertile ground in an ideological sense, while petroleum speculators have long regarded Yemen as barren. American-born Anwar al-Awlaki was a gifted agitator for Sunni jihadism, speaking English fluently in addition to commanding a poetic grasp of Arabic. He ultimately chose Yemen in which to exhibit his disreputable talents, which included the skill of attracting Anglophone recruits.

Al-Awlaki's relocation to Yemen was part of a greater tide, one that has been met with increasing retaliation from both U.S. intelligence and Yemen's local authorities. Drone strikes in Yemen became common early in the Obama administration, one of which killed al-Awlaki in 2011.¹⁹ Certain analysts suggested that the al-Qaeda recruiter became a regional commander within AQAP and was instrumental in overseeing the logistics of terror attacks, including the failed explosion aboard Northwest Airlines Flight 253.²⁰ Despite his ignominious death, al-Awlaki's presence still lingers in the jihadist psyche.

Yemen's collapse into civil war was a catalyst for AQAP's regional ambitions, plans that would have likely remained unrealized had the country not splintered itself into mutually antagonistic pieces. Evidence suggests that hundreds of foreign jihadists have filtered into Yemen since unified rule collapsed in 2011, drawn by the opportunities presented by a fractured central government in a failed state awash with arms caches.²¹ In a series of decisive skirmishes, AQAP began rapidly claiming territory outside of major cities and overcoming government forces. As of July 2015, AQAP holds terrain in the northern hinterlands of the Hadramaut Governorate (situated along the Saudi Arabian border) and in much of the Abyan Governorate (situated along Yemen's southern coast).^{22,23} Al-Qaeda's growing control in Yemen can be compared to the rise of AQAP's Syrian counterpart, Jabhat al-Nusra, and of Daesh ("Islamic State"), which followed the rebellion against the Damascus regime in 2011.

One of the interesting components of the jihadists' shift in priorities is the diminished emphasis on attacking the West. The previous generation of terror organizations have transformed from sleeper cells and shadow elements into openly declared militias. The focus of their aggression has been capturing and occupying contested territories in failed states. As a result, violence against the West is often waived off to copycats and supporters in Europe and North America determined to execute improvised lone wolf attacks. In recent weeks, AQAP has doubled down on this tactic, issuing two proclamations in early August that praised lone-wolf style attacks and exhorted aspiring jihadists to "strike America in its own home and beyond."²⁴

In an extension of this doctrine, the organization has prioritized planned terror attacks in areas they hope to directly influence. AQAP's bombings appear localized and often symbolic with an August 6 attack obliterating a 700-year old Sufi mosque in the Yemeni province of Lahj.²⁵ In this case the perceived enemy is close both in terms of geography and religion with the target being a mystical order of Islam that is heretical according to AQAP's worldview.

In contrast to the more reckless jihadi groups claiming territory in Syria and Iraq, AQAP's style of operations appears more measured and procedural. They are less prone to the abrupt gains and losses that have characterized Daesh's campaigns. Keeping in mind that Yemen is a different theater than the Levant, AQAP's expansion in the area has been one of gradual encroachment. Yet, like Daesh, AQAP is comprised of opportunists, though they seem much more astute at calibrating logistical boundaries. In contrast to the recent blindsiding of Daesh at the hands of Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, AQAP appears less likely to over-extend itself.

AQAP's Prospects in Yemen

The return of a unified civil authority in Yemen would serve as the most effective counter to AQAP's expansion. Unfortunately, all signs point to this being unlikely in the immediate future. Terror organizations

by definition function in the least observable fringes, generally being unable to expose themselves in the face of disciplined martial and policing oversight. AQAP appears to have picked up steam in Yemen because their status as marginal figures has enabled them to bide their time and emerge only when more powerful factions with governmental roots began engaging one another.

Corralling al-Qaeda's Yemeni branch has become less of a priority for locals now that Sunni and Shi'ite/Zaydi factions have turned their guns upon each other. Saudi Arabia's military incursion into Yemen bodes poorly for the defeat of AQAP. Riyadh's aggression breaks down largely along sectarian lines, with their hostility focused primarily on the Houthi rebels. Recent evidence suggests that AQAP has become an ally of convenience for the House of Al Saud, with terrorist militants fighting alongside Saudi-backed militias during open skirmishes.²⁶ As long as al-Qaeda remains antagonistic toward the local Shi'ite/Zaydi Muslims of Yemen, AQAP will remain well out of Saudi Arabia's line of fire. Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, the president of Yemen's ousted government, currently rules in exile

from Riyadh. His ongoing protection under the Saudi banner practically guarantees that the Houthis will have to contend with AQAP as a tactical ally of the kingdom.

Unless the Houthis and their Sunni enemies reach a détente, or one side scores a decisive victory on the ground, AQAP is well poised to continue asserting control over portions of territory in Yemeni hinterlands by simple virtue of exploiting the martial chaos. Peace by any means would constitute the clearest threat to AQAP's power because this would force local Sunnis to contend with pressure from Washington to either suppress or eliminate the al-Qaeda branch. Considering that the crisis in Yemen is escalating by the day, however, al-Qaeda is likely to sustain its position as a major power in the war-torn country, a thorn in the side of Houthi rebels, and a beacon for militant jihadists.

Adam Patterson is a Washington, DC-based analyst of international security topics, with a special focus on insurgency and conflict in Arab states.

BAHRAIN MONITOR

- **Authorities foil arms smuggling operation and point finger at Iran**
- **Manama recalls Iran envoy**
- **Threat of Daesh (“Islamic State”) prompts officials to tighten security**
- **Clashes between security forces and Shi’ite protests erupt in Sitra and al-Akr**
- **Two terrorist attacks in Krana and Erk occur within 24 hours of each**

July 3

Bahrain tightens security amid fears of Daesh (“Islamic State”) threat

Al Jazeera reported that in response to Daesh’s threats against Bahrain, officials in Manama stepped up security measures to protect the kingdom’s mosques and began screening individuals as they entered. Security volunteers trained by the Bahraini Civil Defense had already been sent to different areas of the country to assist police officers in protecting the large numbers of Muslims attending Friday prayers.

During the previous month, Turki al-Binali (a Bahraini cleric who is the Imam of Daesh and is based in Mosul, Iraq) tweeted that “the next attack after Kuwait” would be in Bahrain.

In response to the recent threats, Jamal Fakhro, a member of the Bahraini parliament, told reporters that the government is taking the threats “very seriously.” He went on to say that “any sensible government and sensible person who saw what [Daesh] did in the Gulf and around the world, will take [Daesh] threats very seriously...The threat is not only today, it is a daily threat. The government will do its best because there is a legislative authority that will hold them accountable in case something goes wrong.”

The Bahrain Foundation for Reconciliation and Civil Discourse urged Shi’ite and Sunni Muslims to come

together in Bahrain’s mosques. The foundation explained, “This initiative coincides with the unfortunate events taking place in neighboring countries where places of worship are being targeted and extremist ideas are being spread.”²⁷

July 4

Bahrain’s Justice and Islamic Affairs Minister praises public response to terrorism in the GCC

Minister Sheikh Khalid Bin Ali Al Khalifa hailed the “one-family” spirit on display when Bahraini Sunnis and Shi’ites gathered for joint prayers following the suicide attacks of late May and June in eastern Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The minister took part in prayers at the Grand Mosque in A’ali, where he stated that “Bahrainis have set a model of unity in the face of conspirators against the Arab and Islamic nations... Bahrain will always remain a model of moderation, harmony, Islamic unity and patriotism. Any extremist, wherever he is in Bahrain, will always find himself isolated.”

Sheikh Khalid praised the citizens of Bahrain who have “expressed strong solidarity with their brothers in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the state of Kuwait in confronting the scourge of terrorism, which reflects their awareness, spirit of fraternity and authentic mettle.” Bahraini officials went on to say that the region as a whole was beset by violent turmoil and that the joint prayers were “a strong message that says Bahrain remains immune to terrorism and all intimidation, and threats will make Bahrainis more united and determined.”²⁸

July 9

European Union officials criticize Manama’s human rights record

The EU Parliament passed a resolution calling on Bahraini authorities to cease all human rights violations. The resolution demands “the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience, political activists, journalists, human rights defenders and peaceful protestors,” referring to the plights of

imprisoned political activist Nabeel Rajab, the president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, the co-founder of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, and Ibrahim Sharif, who serves as the General Secretary of the secular liberal National Democratic Action Society, recently released from custody. The EU parliament also called for a ban on the exportation of tear gas and crowd-control material to the island kingdom and proposed the creation of an EU-Bahrain human rights organization as a joint partnership.

Alyn Smith, member of the European Parliament and one of the contributors to the recent resolution, declared: “Bahrain is a clear ally of the European Union and an important partner in the region. And it could be a good news story for the human rights in the Middle East - there has been progress, there is an ongoing dialogue.” Smith went on to say, “It is also important that we recognize failures and shortcomings. Nabeel Rajab’s case is emblematic...of many more cases of repression and abuse of human rights and we do call on all charges to be dropped.”

In response to the resolution, Ali Alaswad, a former Bahraini MP, declared, “I think this is an illusion, it would be similar to the previous one. I don’t see any kind of pressure of the EU countries on the Bahraini government...The governments still look to adapt to the issues they have, especially business.” Alaswad continued, “People know what is happening in prison, they don’t see any kind of improvement of the treatment to their prisoners. We still have more than 3,000 prisoners in prison including the political prisoners. Still, we have torture cases; that’s also because the Bahraini government doesn’t allow [UN] Special Rapporteur on torture to visit Bahrain.”²⁹

July 12

Bahraini security forces and anti-regime demonstrators clash in Sitra and al-Akr

According to Iran’s state-run media outlet, Press TV, Bahrain’s security forces attacked demonstrators in the Shi’ite-majority island of Sitra, situated near the

capital Manama, and also in the village of al-Akr, situated twenty miles south of Manama. The demonstrations were held in commemoration of two protestors killed during previous anti-Khalifa rallies.

In a separate development, Bahraini security forces detained political activist Ibrahim Sharif only days after he spoke at the funeral of a fellow anti-regime protestor. A source who requested to remain anonymous said that six military vehicles and eight civilian cars surrounded the home of the leader of the National Democratic Action Society in the Umm al-Hassam neighborhood of Manama before they entered Sharif’s residence to arrest him.

During Sharif’s speech, he accused the Al Khalifa family of “being too authoritarian toward underprivileged people but very weak in the face of the haves.” Al Khalifa also went on to say that the family “has stolen a whole loaf of bread, is simply offering people very small bits of it, and expects the Bahraini nation to be grateful for such treatment.”³⁰

July 14

Officials in Washington raise issue of Bahrain’s treatment of opposition figures

U.S. officials conveyed their concerns regarding the state of human rights in Bahrain after a prominent Sunni leader was detained for allegedly plotting to overthrow the kingdom’s ruling monarchy three weeks after his release from prison. Bahrain’s Interior Ministry responded that Ibrahim Sharif (the former leader of the secular National Democratic Action Society) had been arrested on charges of incitement to overthrow the Bahraini government, in addition to having publicized his “hatred of the regime.” Sharif spent four years in prison for his role in the 2011 uprising, and was released by a royal pardon.

Although the statement welcomed initial reports that activist Nabeel Rajab had been freed from custody, it urged Bahraini authorities to respect freedom of expression within the Gulf state.³¹

July 15

Man killed while planting bomb in Eker

A man was killed by a blast in Eker, a village near Sitra, after the bomb that he was planting detonated prematurely. As of this writing, officials have not yet identified the man, who allegedly intended to target police officers in the village. According to witnesses, Bahraini security officials immediately cordoned off the area where the explosion occurred.³²

July 18

Police patrol is attacked near Bahrain's capital

The Daily Tribune reported that unidentified militants targeted a police patrol in the village of Krana, situated near Manama. No deaths or injuries were reported.³³

July 19

Bahraini police escape blast in "terrorist attack"

Bahraini officials announced that less than 24 hours after the Krana blast (see *Bahrain Monitor* July 18) a "terrorist attack" targeting a police officer in the village of Eker, where a prematurely detonated bomb blast killed one four days earlier (see *Bahrain Monitor* July 15) had resulted in no injuries. It was the second such attack in twenty-four hours, the first having occurred as police officers patrolled the village of Krana near Manama.³⁴

July 25

Bahrain foils arms smuggling operation and recalls Iran envoy

Bahrain officials announced that on July 15 the kingdom's coast guard intercepted a ship traveling to Bahrain after it had met another vessel outside of Bahrain's territorial waters. Officials took credit for foiling an attempt on the part of two Bahraini citizens to smuggle arms into the country. They disclosed that the two men in question had admitted receiving the

shipment of explosives, automatic weapons, and ammunition from Iran, as well as having received military training at an Iranian Revolutionary Guards camp in 2013.

Bahraini officials accused Iran of attempting to threaten the Gulf kingdom's security by providing weaponry and explosives training to Bahraini citizens to undermine Bahrain's "progress with national stability."³⁵

Analysis: Such tit-for-tat dialogue between officials in Manama and Tehran naturally continues as Bahraini authorities persist with raids and crackdowns. Ever since the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Al Khalifa family has accused Iran of seeking to overthrow Bahrain's ruling Sunni monarchy and establish a Shi'ite-ruled client state in the archipelago off the coast of Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province. At this juncture, officials in Manama have grave concerns about Tehran funneling resources from sanctions relief into Iran's allies and proxies across the region, alleging that Iran is directly arming militant Shi'ites in the island kingdom. At the same time, Bahraini members of Daesh ("Islamic State")—including several with high ranking positions in the group—have vowed to attack the island kingdom and have called on Bahraini Sunnis to target the Gulf state's Shi'ites, as well as overthrow the Al Khalifa family. As Bahrain's Shi'ite-Sunni problems continue, Daesh will view the kingdom as an opportunity to spread its influence into the GCC. In the wake of the Iranian nuclear deal, Bahrain is well poised to become more of a flashpoint in sectarian and geopolitical divisions of the Persian Gulf and the greater Middle East.

July 26

Tehran accuses Manama of stoking tensions in the Persian Gulf

According to Iranian officials, Bahrain has intentionally stoked tensions throughout the Gulf by making unfounded claims against Iran. Bahrain's interior ministry announced that authorities had detained two men accused of attempting to smuggle arms from Iran into the island kingdom. The announcement came hours after Bahrain announced the recall of its envoy to Iran

following “hostile” comments made by the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Iran’s Supreme Leader asserted that the nuclear deal would not impact Iranian support for its allies in the Middle East, nor would it affect Iranian backing of “oppressed people” in Yemen, Bahrain, and Palestine.³⁶

July 28

Two police officers killed in terrorist attack

Bahrain’s Interior Ministry reported on *Twitter* that a bombing in Sitra (a Shi’ite island south of Manama, known as the heart of the anti-Al Khalifa uprising) resulted in the death of two police officers. The terrorist attack also imposed serious injuries on a third police officer; five other officers suffered moderate injuries. According to a statement released by Bahraini officials, the explosives used in the blast bore similarities to the ones that were allegedly smuggled in to the island kingdom from Iran earlier in the month. Bahrain’s state-run news agency reported, “Early information suggests that the explosives used in today’s terrorist attack are of the same type that were recently intercepted coming from Iran.”³⁷

July 29

UN condemns deadly bombing in Bahrain from the previous day

A spokesperson for the Secretary-General of the UN issued the following statement condemning the deadly terrorist attack that killed two police officers in Sitra on July 28. “The Secretary-General conveys his deep condolences to the Government and people of Bahrain and the families of the victims and wishes a swift recovery to the injured. He calls for a full and transparent investigation into this terrorist act.”³⁸

KUWAIT MONITOR

- **Authorities wage crackdown on Islamists, sentencing 11 to death in connection to Daesh's terrorist activity**
- **GCC officials meet in Kuwait to discuss security issues as Daesh sets sights on the Gulf Arab monarchies**
- **Ruling Al Sabah family seeks to unite the Gulf nation's Sunnis and Shi'ites following the Daesh ("Islamic State") attack in Kuwait City on June 26**

July 2

Kuwait's parliament approves budget for 2015 fiscal year

Due to low oil prices, the state budget, passed in parliament, has a USD 27 billion deficit, amounting to approximately half of all government spending. Kuwait's Finance Minister Anas al-Saleh stated, "This situation requires us to speed up efforts to embark on financial reforms, ration public spending and reduce reliance on oil resources as the main source of national income." Despite Saleh's call for reforms, he did not elaborate upon what such reforms might entail.³⁹

Analysis: Although Kuwait's economy suffers from low oil prices, the emirate is not experiencing an economic crisis, thanks to its significant financial reserves, which amount to USD 548 billion, according to the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute.

July 3

Kuwaiti Sunnis and Shi'ites hold unity prayers

In a gesture of unity following the June 26 terrorist attack at a Shi'ite mosque in Kuwait's capital, Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims joined the Emir of Kuwait in gatherings to mourn the loss of Kuwaiti life. The Kuwaiti leader called the terrorist attack, which was the deadliest attack on Shi'ites in the history of Kuwait, a "heinous crime [that] only brings us further strength and tolerance."⁴⁰

GCC officials hold emergency meeting in Kuwait to discuss mosque suicide attacks

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Interior Minister Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Hasser Al Thani, and other GCC officials met in Kuwait to discuss the string of terrorist attacks in the Gulf that have targeted Shi'ite mosques. The Council issued a statement that the meeting "underscored the importance of coordination in all measures and steps in confronting this serious epidemic... which is a threat to the security and stability of the GCC states." The statement also identified the attacks as "criminal acts not linked with religion and its values, which renounce violence and the killing of innocents... Terrorist attacks that target places of worship aim at sowing dissent, promoting divisions, undermining security and terrorizing and killing innocent people."⁴¹

Analysis: In the wake of the June 26 attack, a demonstration of GCC unity was mandatory. That Saudi Arabia and Qatar took the lead in this meeting indicates the focus of Riyadh and Doha on the security of northern Gulf states, specifically Kuwait. The Council as a whole has appeared united at key moments (e.g. Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and Bahrain's 2011 "Arab Spring" uprising) and the Daesh attack in Kuwait City was another one of those moments. On the Daesh front, however, the GCC states do not seem to be coordinating on law enforcement matters. Information sharing appears to be disjointed. The fact that the June 26 suicide bomber was a Saudi Arabian national who departed from his country for Bahrain before arriving in Kuwait is notable. As such, Oman and the UAE appear to be working more independently toward homeland security in the face of Daesh ("Islamic State")'s threat to the GCC.

July 7

Kuwaiti and Saudi authorities arrest three brothers for alleged involvement in the June 26 attack in Kuwait City

According to Saudi Arabia's state-run news agency, Kuwaiti and Saudi authorities arrested three brothers who were allegedly "parties to the crime of the sin-

ful terrorist bombing that targeted the Imam al-Sadeq mosques in Kuwait.” One of the brothers was detained in Kuwait and is set to face extradition to Saudi Arabi; another was arrested in Taif, Saudi Arabia; and the third was detained following a shootout in which two police officers were wounded. The spokesman also noted that a fourth brother is living in Syria and is an active member of Daesh.⁴²

July 14

Twenty nine on trial in connection to June 26 mosque attack in Kuwait City

Kuwaiti officials announced that 29 individuals will face trial for their alleged roles in the suicide attack on a Shi’ite mosque in the Gulf nation’s capital city. The Kuwait News Agency noted that those facing trial include Kuwaitis, Saudis, Pakistanis, an individual of uncertain nationality, and “illegal” residents. The individuals are charged with illegal possession of explosives and incitement to violence. Government officials already identified Fahd Suleiman Abdul-Mohsen al-Qabaa, a Saudi citizen, as the bomber. Saudi officials declared that they are holding three brothers in question for their alleged roles in the attack.⁴³

July 15

Kuwait seeks death penalty for 11 suspects in deadly mosque bombing

Kuwaiti authorities announced that they will seek the death penalty for 11 out of 29 of the suspects on trial for their alleged role in plotting the June 26 suicide attack. Kuwait’s interior ministry declared that the Gulf Arab nation is at war with Islamist extremists who are intent on inflaming sectarian tensions in the Sunni-majority Emirate of Kuwait.⁴⁴

July 21

Kuwaiti parliament passes controversial DNA law

Kuwait’s parliament passed legislation that will permit authorities to obtain DNA samples from the nation’s citizens and residents. The law will create a database with the DNA of Kuwait’s 1.3 million citizens and 2.9

million foreign residents. Defenders of the law maintain that the measure is necessary for security reasons. Mohammed Al Whuaib, a professor of political science at Kuwait University, recently told *Al Arabiya News* that “from a security perspective, this is really important... A DNA sample that can be found in any crime scene can help identify this person without any mistake, given that there are so many factors that might make it really almost impossible to get fingerprints from a crime scene.”

Sarah Leah Whitson, Human Right Watch’s Middle East Director, condemned the new measure, asserting that “many measures could potentially be useful in protecting against terrorist attacks, but potential usefulness is not enough to justify a massive infringement on human rights.” The parliament endorsed the legislation following the June 26 attack by a Daesh affiliate on a Shi’ite mosque in Kuwait City, which killed 27 people.⁴⁵

July 22

Emir of Kuwait condemns terrorist attack in southern Turkey

Emir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber sent his condolences to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan following the July 20 terrorist attack that killed 32 people in the Turkish town of Suruc, situated along the Syrian border. The Kuwaiti leader condemned the “criminal act” and vowed that Kuwait would join Turkey and the international community in efforts to counter global terrorism. Other high-ranking Kuwaiti officials, including Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah and Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al Hamad Al Sabah, sent cables to the Turkish president offering their own condolences.⁴⁶

Kuwait raises new refinery budgets following bids that exceeded estimates

The Kuwaiti Supreme Petroleum Council endorsed a request to drastically increase the budget for a new refinery after the majority of the bids far surpassed initial estimates. Kuwait’s Oil Minister Ali al-Omar stated that the cost of the new al-Zour refinery had increased by USD 2.9 billion to USD 16.1 billion. Accord-

ing to Omair, the initial capacity for the new refinery was approximately 615,000 barrels per day (bpd), yet it is currently expected to fluctuate between 600,000 and 800,000 bpd.⁴⁷

July 23

Saudi-Kuwaiti oilfield workers forced to take leave

The closure of the jointly-operated Saudi-Kuwaiti Wafra oilfield will extend into August, according to a memorandum signed by Chevron and Kuwaiti Gulf Oil Company officials. All non-vital staff were instructed to begin their leave on August 1. Should production not resume by the end of August, the leave would become “open-ended.”⁴⁸

July 26

Kuwait tightens control of border with Saudi Arabia

Kuwait’s security agencies imposed more restrictions on the entry of Saudi Arabians into the emirate. Brig. Gen. Adil al-Hashshash, director general of public re-

lations and security media, stated that the barring of certain Saudis resulted from “precautionary actions and required measures due to the situation in the region... and that the situation should not be open as in the past.”⁴⁹

July 30

Kuwait arrests four men linked to Daesh (“Islamic State”)

Kuwait’s interior ministry reported that authorities uncovered a five member Daesh cell in the Gulf emirate comprised of militants who had previously taken up arms in Iraq and Syria on behalf of the “caliphate.” Four of the members were detained, a fifth reportedly died in a “terrorist” operation in Iraq, according to Kuwait’s state-run media. According to reports, the four suspects were all Kuwaiti subjects under the age of 34. The interior ministry stated that the four detained individuals were not linked to the June 26 attack in Kuwait City.⁵⁰

OMAN MONITOR

- Oman praises global powers and Iran for reaching nuclear agreement in Austria
- Muscat and Tehran secure USD 60 billion gas plan
- Silicon Valley start-up to provide technology for solar farm in the sultanate

July 14

Oman welcomes Iranian nuclear deal

Omani diplomats hailed the historic nuclear agreement that Iran and global powers signed in Vienna on July 14. Officials in Muscat emphasized that Oman's leadership had worked diligently behind the scenes to facilitate the deal, which paved the way for a diplomatic breakthrough to the long-lasting standoff between the U.S. and Iran over Tehran's nuclear program. Omani officials also stressed that the nuclear deal has potential to bring about new economic opportunities for the region. An Oman-based Western diplomat told the *Times of Oman* that "it has been nearly ten years that Oman has been involved as a major mediator between Iran and the US. Oman has pulled in other superpowers to help reach a fair settlement for both sides. It was not easy, but Oman can consider this a triumph and a reward for its hard work that will lead not just to world peace but immense economic gains in the region."⁵¹

July 22

Oman sovereign wealth fund seeks ruling against Bulgaria over bank collapse

Oman's largest sovereign wealth fund is reportedly seeking an arbitration ruling against Bulgaria over CorpBank's collapse. Oman's State General Reserve Fund (SGRF) had a 30 percent stake in CorpBank, Bulgaria's fourth largest lender prior to its 2014 collapse. In June 2014, the market value of Oman's stake was valued at approximately USD 95 million.⁵²

July 29

Oman and Iran finalize a USD 60 billion gas plan signed in 2013

Iran's state-run news outlet, Press TV, reported that while in Tehran an Omani delegation finalized operational plans for the exportation of Iranian natural gas to Oman via an underwater pipeline linking the two Persian Gulf nations. Alirez Kameli, the head of Iran's state-owned National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said, "According to the plan, engineering studies in both the offshore and onshore sections will be carried out simultaneously so that the implementation of the two lines does not hit a snag." Kameli stated that the smaller GCC monarchies are a top priority for Tehran in terms of energy exports.⁵³

QATAR MONITOR

- **Doha expresses support for the Iranian nuclear agreement**

July 5

FIFA official maintains that European officials sought to influence Qatar World Cup bid

According to FIFA President Sepp Blatter, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German President Christian Wulff attempted to sway the December 2010 World Cup vote, in which FIFA members were tasked with selecting host sites for the 2018 and 2022 World Cup events. Blatter asserted, “Messrs Sarkozy and Wulff tried to influence their voting representatives. That’s why we now have a World Cup in Qatar. Those who decided it should take responsibility.” He also hinted that the German football federation (DFB) had received a recommendation from Wulff “to vote for Qatar out of economic interests.”

Theo Zwanziger, former DFB president, claimed that Wulff had made inquiries regarding the possibility of Qatar hosting a World Cup, but denied that any such inquiries had any influence upon the awarding of contracts.

In addition to denying any wrongdoing in the awarding of host city contracts, Blatter has refused to accept responsibility for the atrocious conditions and human rights abuses migrant laborers have endured during the construction of stadiums throughout Qatar. In his defense, he exclaimed, “Look at the German companies; Deutsche Bahn, Hochtief and many more had projects in Qatar even before the World Cup was awarded.”

Blatter also spoke about the need to focus upon the preservation of FIFA. The organization finds itself in the middle of an American-led corruption investigation concerning alleged bribes that FIFA officials accepted over a period of twenty-four years, as well as a Swiss probe centered on potential money laundering activi-

ties related to the awarding of host-country contracts to Russia and Qatar.

Despite the pending investigations, Blatter remains defiant. “Is FIFA responsible from the top down for everything in football, what happens in some village somewhere around the world?”

Although he is protected from extradition to the US from his homeland, Switzerland, the FIFA president still faces possible detention in many other countries. Blatter was not in attendance at the recent Women’s World Cup in Canada. He has received strong support from Russian President Vladimir Putin, however, and traveled to Russia on July 23 for the 2018 World Cup qualification match.⁵⁴

July 15

Egypt invites Qatar to New Suez Canal inauguration

Despite political tensions with Qatar and Turkey, Egyptian officials invited both countries (in addition to every other country in the world) to attend the New Suez Canal opening on August 6. Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry recently described the inauguration as an event focused upon international commerce and that it would be illogical to invite only a select group of countries.⁵⁵

July 16

Doha responds to Iranian nuclear agreement

Officials in Qatar expressed support for the Iranian nuclear deal and hope that the agreement will prompt Tehran to take a “positive” approach in future dealings with neighboring countries. Qatar’s Foreign Minister Khaled Al Attiyah declared, “Qatar is one of the first countries to support and encourage settling this issue through peaceful means... this deal might relax Iran and give Iran the confidence that there is no conspiracy theory and will make Iran have a better and positive approach toward our region...in Qatar we would like to

see the more positive view, which is Iran getting a little bit more relaxed.”⁵⁶

July 20

Qatar reiterates support for refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan

Masoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), met in Erbil with a Qatari delegation, led by Foreign Minister Khalid bin Mohammed al-Attiyah, to discuss improving Qatar-KRG relations and pursuing common interests. Attiyah conveyed Doha’s interest in fostering deeper economic and investment cooperation between the KRG and Qatar, as well as in playing a greater role in terms of humanitarian assistance for displaced persons in the KRG. Officials in Iraq’s central government, however, expressed anger that the Qatari delegation did not visit Baghdad on this trip.⁵⁷

Analysis: Doha is becoming increasingly invested in deepening ties with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), to influence not only Erbil-Baghdad relations but also the future of the greater Kurdistan region. According to some GCC interlocutors, Qatar is coordinating with Turkey to counter Kurdish ambitions. At the same time, the KRG does not trust Qatar, as it suspects Doha of funding Daesh. A member of the ruling Saudi Arabian family has also stated that Doha is working with Ankara and Riyadh to sponsor Jabhat al-Nusra and other Islamist extremists in Syria.

U.S. government: Tennessee killing suspect travelled to Qatar in 2014

Reuters reported that, according to two U.S. government sources, Mohammad Youssuf Abdulazeez, who killed four U.S. Marines and one Navy sailor in Chattanooga, Tennessee, made at least one visit to Qatar during a 2014 trip to the Middle East. Friends of Abdulazeez, a Kuwaiti-born naturalized American citizen, say he confided in them upon his return to America that he was concerned regarding the conflicts throughout the Middle East as well as by the hesitation of the United States and other countries to intervene in such conflicts.⁵⁸

July 21

Qatar strongly condemns recent attack in Algeria

Qatari government officials strongly condemned the July 16 attack in the province of Ain Defla, Algeria, which resulted in the death of nine soldiers and three policemen.

The Foreign Ministry emphasized Doha’s solidarity with Algeria regarding security threats facing the North African nation. Qatar’s Foreign Ministry conveyed its condolences to the Algerian government and to the families of the victims. The statement went on to reiterate Doha’s commitment to the fight against terrorism.⁵⁹

SAUDI ARABIA MONITOR

- Riyadh cautiously welcomes the Iranian nuclear agreement
- Saudi Arabian authorities arrest over 400 individuals for alleged links to Daesh (“Islamic State”)
- King Salman and U.S. President Barack Obama discuss the Yemeni crisis
- Hamas leadership visits the kingdom for the first time since 2012
- Saudi Arabia and Egypt sign the “Cairo Declaration”

July 3

Saudis step up funding for Islamic schools in Canada

According to secret cables recently released by WikiLeaks, Saudi Arabia has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to expand private Islamic schools in Canada. The documents, part of 500,000 Saudi diplomatic cables, shed light on conversations in 2012 and 2013 between officials in Riyadh and Saudi diplomats at the embassy in Ottawa. The documents revealed that two large donations worth USD 211,000 and USD 134,000 had been given to schools in Ottawa and Mississauga.

The schools in question told *The Globe and Mail* that they sought the donations only to meet growing demand, as they have thousands of students on their waiting lists. While it is legal to make financial donations to private schools in Canada, there have been reports that these Saudi donations were made with the stipulation that a more puritanical form of Islam be implemented in the curricula.

Despite reports to the contrary, the Canadian Islamic schools in question have denied accepting donations with such strings attached, denying the presence of Saudi influence. Sharaf Shafafeldin, the executive director of the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC), responded to such assertions of Saudi influence. “It’s not the way we operate. We are solely Canadian and we have our own way of doing things.”

The MAC controls the Olive Grove School in Mississauga, which was the recipient of the USD 134,000 donation. Prior to receipt of the money, a cable was sent from the Saudi embassy in Ottawa to Riyadh stating that “the Muslim Association of Canada needs support and aid to carry out a development and construction project for phase two at the school. There are no observations or anything against it.”

Responding to questions from the media, the MAC sought to reassure parents that there has not been, nor will there be, any Saudi influence and that “the grant came with no conditions.” However, for Olive Grove to receive such a donation, it first had to apply for Saudi financial assistance.⁶⁰

Saudi policeman killed in raid on Daesh in Taif

The Interior Ministry announced that a sergeant was shot dead in a raid on a home in Taif (situated 125 east of Jeddah) conducted in search of person suspected of ties with Daesh. Police found flags of Daesh during the raid. Authorities arrested three of the suspects, yet the wanted suspect, known as Yousif Abdulatif Shabab al-Ghamdi, was not been arrested during that morning’s raid (*see following chronicle*).⁶¹

July 4

Wanted militant shot in Taif

Police killed Yousif al-Ghambi, a militant supporter of Daesh who escaped a raid the previous day that led to the arrest of three of his fellow Daesh affiliated militants. According to the Interior Ministry, police surrounded his house in Taif in a futile attempt to pressure al-Ghambi to surrender prior to shooting him dead in a gunfire exchange.

Al-Ghambi was a 32-year old with a criminal record, having served a six-year jail sentence. Reportedly, he had never left the kingdom.⁶²

July 6

The kingdom promises investments of up to USD 10 billion in Russia within five years

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) pledged a USD 10 billion investment in the Russia Direct Investment Fund (RDIF). The PIF is Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth investment vehicle and the RDIF is Moscow's state-run investment fund. The following day, Kirill Dmitriev (RDIF's Chief Executive) called the Saudi investment "very important" and serves to strengthen Moscow and Riyadh's "important relationship."⁶³

July 14

US President Obama and Saudi Arabian King Salman discuss turmoil in Yemen

On the same day that global powers and Iran signed the nuclear agreement, the White House reported that President Obama and King Salman agreed that there is an "urgent" need to resolve the Yemeni conflict. The two leaders referenced "the importance of ensuring that assistance can reach Yemenis on all sides of the conflict." Obama emphasized Washington's commitment to "building the capabilities of our regional partners" as well as to counteracting Iranian attempts to destabilize the region.⁶⁴

July 17

Hamas leadership visits King Salman

The King of Saudi Arabia met with Hamas leaders, including Khaled Meshal (the Palestinian group's Doha-based leader), in Mecca. Saudi Arabia's state-owned Al Arabiya and Osama Hamdan, a Hamas official, confirmed the meeting. The Saudi and Palestinian leaders discussed Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, yet they did not address the Iranian nuclear deal. The visit, which Qatar helped coordinate, marked Meshal's first trip to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since June 2012.⁶⁵

Analysis: King Salman's meeting with Hamas' top leadership on Eid Al-Fitr (the day of celebration marking the

end of Ramadan) was the Palestinian group's first visit to the kingdom since 2012. Following years of tension in the relationship, the Saudi Arabia-Hamas rapprochement, which began after King Salman inherited the throne in early 2015, factors into a larger geopolitical picture in which Riyadh seeks to establish a regional pan-Sunni Arab coalition to weaken Iran's influence in the Middle East. Such an alliance would also prevent Daesh from making further inroads into the Palestinian issue. Hamas desperately needs a financial sponsor and Riyadh can certainly play that role, thereby enabling the kingdom to take advantage of the fallout from Hamas-Iran relations (due largely to Hamas' stances on Syria and Yemen). By improving relations with Hamas, however, the kingdom risks provoking allies and partners, such as the U.S., Israel, Egypt, and Fatah. At the same time, if Hamas becomes a main benefactor of the kingdom, the Israelis and Egyptians will likely have to turn to Riyadh for its influence over the Palestinian group, which would naturally increase Saudi Arabia's strategic value to all in the region and to the U.S. This would come at a time when Washington and Riyadh's relationship has chilled because of the Iranian nuclear agreement, jihadist gains in Syria, and other issues.

July 18

Saudi Arabia foils Daesh ("Islamic State") plots, hundreds detained

Saudi Arabian officials announced they have foiled a great number of Daesh attacks within the kingdom and have detained over 400 suspects in a counterterrorism operation. The detainees have been accused of involvement in numerous attacks, including the two terrorist attacks in the Eastern Province that targeted Shi'ite mosques on the final two Fridays of May 2015.

GSA senior adviser Theodore Karasik told the *Associated Press* that the recent arrests factor into Riyadh's efforts to reassure the kingdom's Shi'ite minority that the monarchy is committed to the protection of all Saudi subjects. "It sends a message that the Ministry of Interior is not losing a grip and wraps up the potential nodes of Daesh recruits in the kingdom," Karasik explained.⁶⁶

Analysis: The decision to announce the arrests one day after Eid al-Fitr was an effort to reassure Saudi Arabians that the Ministry of Interior maintains control over the kingdom's Daesh ("Islamic State") threat. The arrests began in May, following Daesh's attacks on two Shi'ite mosques in the Eastern Province. Although Saudi Arabian authorities have thwarted more attacks from Daesh supporters targeting Shi'ite mosques, businesses, and local fish markets, the arrests can assuage concern only temporarily. Daesh's philosophy, state model, and political objectives appeal to many younger Saudis who would prefer to be governed by Daesh than by Al Saud.

July 22

U.S. Defense Secretary: Riyadh supports the Iranian nuclear deal

According to U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, Saudi Arabian officials provided him with assurance of their support for the historic agreement. Carter met with King Salman, Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman, and other high-ranking Saudi officials in Jeddah to discuss the Iranian nuclear deal. After the meeting, Carter told journalists that "both the king and the minister reiterated their support for the Iranian nuclear deal, and then we went on to discuss other aspects of our concerns about Iran and about ISIL [Daesh]." Carter's trip to Saudi Arabia came after stops in Israel and Jordan, during which he sought to assure Middle Eastern allies who were skeptical of the deal that the allies will continue to receive continued American military support. Carter had said prior to the trip that he sought to discuss American strategy to counter "Iranian aggression" within the Middle East, as well as strategy to move forward against ISIS forces.⁶⁷

Analysis: Although officials in Riyadh cautiously endorsed the nuclear deal, news accounts confirm that Saudi officials are actually very fearful of the deal's potential to increase Iranian influence across the Middle East. The lifting of economic sanctions in the coming months will provide Tehran access to new cash reserves, which Saudi leaders warn will be used by Iran's regime to more forcefully back their allies (i.e. the Syr-

ian regime, Lebanese Hezbollah, Shi'ite militias in Iraq, and Ansar Allah in Yemen).

July 24

Saudi aircraft lands in Aden with equipment for airport repair

Two Saudi planes landed in Aden carrying equipment to reopen the city's airport, shut down four months earlier as a result of the ongoing conflict. Although the first aircraft to land in Aden since "pro-Hadi" forces regained control of the airport was Saudi, UAE planes have also utilized the airport to provide humanitarian aid, according to *Al Arabiya*.⁶⁸

July 25

Riyadh declares ceasefire in Yemen

Following a request by embattled Yemeni president Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi to King Salman for a ceasefire based on humanitarian needs, Riyadh agreed to temporarily halt bombings. Saudi officials stated that military operations would cease; however, should Houthi militants (or their partners) conduct any military maneuvers, the coalition would respond. The declaration of the ceasefire came on the heels of air strikes which security and medical officials have said killed a minimum of 120 people.⁶⁹

July 30

Saudi and Egyptian leaders sign a defense and economic pact, the "Cairo Declaration"

While in Cairo, Saudi Defense Minister and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi signed a pact to increase military and economic ties. According to Sisi's administration, the leaders from the two Arab states committed to pursuing "all efforts to boost security and stability in the region, and to work together to protect Arab national security."⁷⁰

UAE MONITOR

- **Monarch of Abu Dhabi is first GCC official to congratulate Iran's president on nuclear deal**
- **UAE expresses solidarity with Egyptian government and population following violent turmoil in the restive Sinai between Egypt's military and the local Daesh ("Islamic State") division**
- **Emirati officials outlaw hate speech in effort to curb influence of extremist ideology in the UAE**

July 2

WikiLeaks reveals Riyadh's concerns over secret talks between UAE and Iran

Documents brought to light by WikiLeaks reveal that Saudi officials were fearful of secret meetings between UAE and Iranian officials. The majority of the communication was focused upon commercial relations between UAE and Iran, yet Syria and other issues were discussed. Reportedly the talks were a means of maintaining an open line of communication regarding the UAE and Iran's ongoing territorial dispute. The leaked document, dated March 5, 2012, outlined a conversation in which then-Saudi Foreign Minister Saudi al-Faisal spoke with members of the Royal Court about the escalating crisis in Syria. This document was sent following a crackdown on anti-Assad protests throughout the UAE, as well as threats to remove sixty protestors from the emirates.⁷¹

UAE condemns Daesh attacks in the Egyptian Sinai

In response to simultaneous terrorist attacks in North Sinai carried out by Sinai Province (the local Daesh "Islamic State" division), which targeted Egyptian military checkpoints, the UAE Foreign Ministry expressed total support for Egypt's government and the country's struggle against militant Islamist extremism. The statement also reiterated the UAE's commitment to Egypt, urged Egypt's allies to support Cairo's fight against such terrorist organizations, and called upon the international community as a whole to counter extremism.

According to Egypt's army, this single day of violence, during which F-16 jets and Apache helicopters were deployed by the Egyptian military, resulted in the death of over 100 militants and 17 soldiers. An army spokesman declared that by the end of the day North Sinai was "100 percent under control."⁷²

Analysis: The UAE supports Egypt across a number of sectors, especially counter-terrorism. The establishment of Sinai Province division and its vicious attacks are a grave concern for officials in Abu Dhabi, who continuously pump money into Egypt's economic survival. It is thought that Sinai Province's attacks against Egyptian targets are conducted with the aim of damaging foreign investors' confidence Egypt. Therefore, Abu Dhabi and Cairo's cooperation on the Daesh front is becoming paramount, with the UAE financing counter-terrorism weapons via Russia while Egypt provides the manpower. That the Egyptian Air Force and Army are becoming more engaged in the fight against Sinai Province indicates, however, that the Egyptian authorities are truly challenged by the growing menace of Sinai-based terrorist groups.

July 13

UAE executes Islamist-inspired woman convicted of murdering expatriate

Under recently-enacted counter-terrorism laws, the UAE executed Alaa al-Hashemi (aka the "Reem Ghost"), who was convicted of murdering Ibolya Ryan, a Romanian-American teacher at an Abu Dhabi shopping mall in 2014. Al-Hashemi was also accused of a failed bomb explosion and using financially supporting "terrorist organizations."⁷³

July 14

Obama and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince discuss the Iranian nuclear deal

On the same day that global powers and Tehran signed the historic nuclear agreement in Austria, President Obama spoke with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan about the Iranian nuclear deal. Obama emphasized Washington's com-

mitment to working with GCC states to counter the growth of Iranian influence in the region, which UAE officials have maintained is a destabilizing force.⁷⁴

Analysis: The UAE President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan sent Iran's President Hassan Rouhani a congratulatory note immediately after global powers and Tehran reached the historic nuclear agreement on July 14. Beneath the surface, however, the UAE has concerns regarding the political ramifications of an emboldened Iran, as underscored by Minister of State Anwar Gargash's criticism of the EU. Given the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen—as well as the rising sectarian temperatures in the Gulf—this type of commentary from UAE leaders and other Sunni Gulf Arab officials is likely to continue. At the same time, the UAE's commercial interests in Iran—particularly those of the Emirate of Dubai—will pressure the Gulf nation into accepting the agreement, which some analysts maintain has potential to substantially benefit the UAE's overall economy.

July 16

Second UAE officer killed in Yemen conflict

Iran's state-run *Press TV* reported that UAE officials have announced the death of the second Emirati officer in Yemen's conflict. The General Command of UAE Armed Forces stated that First Lieutenant Abdul Aziz Sarhan Saleh al-Ka'abi was killed in Yemen, but failed to elaborate upon the date, location, or the circumstances surrounding Ka'abi's death.⁷⁵

Analysis: Of all the smaller GCC states, the UAE has been the most active in the Saudi Arabian-led military coalition in Yemen. Sources suggest that the UAE's death toll in Yemen is higher than officially reported.

July 20

UAE, concerned with Islamic militancy, outlaws hate speech

UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan issued a royal decree outlawing religious and racial discrimination in the emirates. The decree is aimed at

countering Islamist extremism. UAE state-run media reported that “the new law No. 02 of 2015 criminalizes any acts that stoke religious hatred and/or which insult religion through any form of expression, be it speech or the written word, books, pamphlets or via online media.” The law also features provisions aimed to curb discrimination toward individuals or groups on the basis of religion, caste, doctrine, race, color, or ethnic origin. Individuals found to have violated the new law face penalties that include jail sentences ranging from six months to over ten years and the potential imposition of fines.⁷⁶

A local newspaper has reported that the intent of the new law is to provide a “sound foundation for the environment of tolerance, broad mindedness and acceptance in UAE and aims to safeguard people regardless of their origin, beliefs or race, against acts that promote religious hate and intolerance... The law prohibits any entity or group established specifically to provoke religious hatred and recommends stringent punishments for groups or support of any organizations or individuals that are associated with hate crimes.”⁷⁷

July 22

UAE to begin deregulation of gasoline and diesel fuel August 1

Government officials state that the deregulation of gasoline and diesel fuel will allow domestic fuel prices to move more freely and potentially save the Emirati government billions of dollars, while at the same time reducing the country's obsession with gas-guzzling vehicles. State news agency WAM quoted energy minister Suhail bin Mohammed al-Mazroui as saying, “Deregulating fuel prices will help decrease fuel consumption and preserve natural resources for future generations...it will also encourage individuals to adopt fuel-efficient vehicles, including the use of electric and hybrid cars.” Undersecretary of the ministry and chairman of the new Gasoline and Diesel Prices Committee, Matar al-Nyadi, stated that although the price of gasoline may experience an initial rise due to the reform, diesel prices will fall.⁷⁸

ENDNOTES

- 1 Cafiero, Giorgio. "The 'Islamic State' Attacks Kuwait." *The World Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 1 July 2015. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/giorgio-cafiero/the-islamic-state-attacks_b_7690374.html>.
- 2 Toumi, Habib. "Kuwaitis held over Yemen war tweets." *Gulf News*. GN Media, 2 Apr. 2015. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwaitis-held-over-yemen-war-tweets-1.1484281>>.
- 3 Wehrey, Frederic M. *Sectarian Politics in the Gulf: From the Iraq War to the Arab Uprisings*. N.p.: Columbia University Press, 2014. *Google Books*. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <<https://books.google.com/books?id=N71kAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Sectarian+politics+in+the+Gulf:+from+the+Iraq+war+to+the+Arab+uprisings&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAGoVChMI1lfSqMz0xgIVR5SICH2UZgzg#v=onepage&q=Sectarian%20politics%20in%20the%20Gulf%3A%20from%20the%20Iraq%20war%20to%20the%20Arab%20uprisings&f=false>>.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "Shattering the myths about Kuwaiti Shia." *Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera, 30 June 2015. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/06/shattering-myths-kuwaiti-shia-150629081723864.html>>.
- 6 Crystal, Jill. *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar*. N.p.: Cambridge University Press, 1995. *Google Books*. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <https://books.google.com/books?id=D8di8GN_hKsC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Coalitions+in+oil+monarchies:+Kuwait+and+Qatar&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CB4Q6AEwAGoVChMIh8PFwMz0xgIVSTiCh02qQK2#v=onepage&q=Coalitions%20in%20oil%20monarchies%3A%20Kuwait%20and%20Qatar&f=false>.
- 7 Matthiesen, Toby. *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring That Wasn't*. N.p.: Stanford University Press, 2013. *Google Books*. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <<https://books.google.com/books?id=cv9-wwT0tHcC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Sectarian+gulf:+Bahrain,+Saudi+Arabia,+and+the+Arab+Spring+that+wasn%27t&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CB4Q6AEwAGoVChMIrKO7zcz0xgIVjTSiCh2kdgbB#v=onepage&q=Sectarian%20gulf%3A%20Bahrain%2C%20Saudi%20Arabia%2C%20and%20the%20Arab%20Spring%20that%20wasn%27t&f=false>>.
- 8 "Kuwait mourns after deadly Shia mosque attack." *BBC*. BBC, 27 June 2015. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33297462>>.
- 9 Fahim, Kareem. "Kuwait, Fighting Dissent From Within, Revokes Citizenship." *The New York Times*. New York Times Company, 30 Sept. 2014. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/01/world/middleeast/kuwait-fighting-dissent-from-within-uses-citizenship-as-a-weapon-.html?_r=0>.
- 10 Alsaafin, Linah. "Kuwaiti security forces violently disperse anti-government protest." *Middle East Eye*. Middle East Eye, 23 Mar. 2015. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/kuwaiti-security-forces-violently-disperse-anti-government-protest-1878869579>>.

- 11 Donaghy, Rori. "Kuwait cracks down on online dissent." *Middle East Eye*. Middle East Eye, 29 Jan. 2015. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/kuwait-cracks-down-online-dissent-1723924785>>.
- 12 D., E. A. "A reawakening." *The Economist*. Economist Newspaper, 17 Apr. 2014. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.economist.com/blogs/pomegranate/2014/04/kuwaits-opposition>>.
- 13 Al-Rasheed, Madawi. "Kuwaiti activists targeted under GCC security pact." *Al Monitor*. Al-Monitor, 20 Mar. 2015. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/saudi-gcc-security-dissident-activism-detention-opposition.html>>.
- 14 Goemans, H.E. *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War*. N.p.: Princeton University Press, 2000. *Google Books*. Web. 4 Aug. 2015. <https://books.google.com/books?id=gSrFn2iR0eUC&pg=PA232&dq=War+and+Punishment:+The+Causes+of+War+Termination+and+the+First+World+War&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAGoVChMI6_VgJD3xglVD-Bc-Ch2MBQLT#v=onepage&q=War%20and%20Punishment%3A%20The%20Causes%20of%20War%20Termination%20and%20the%20First%20World%20War&f=false>.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 Blanchard, Christopher M. "Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations." *Federation of American Scientists*. FAS.org, 29 Apr. 2015. Web. 4 Aug. 2015. <<http://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33533.pdf>>.
- 17 Brecher, Gary. "The War Nerd: To lighten the mood, here's the cheery tale of Dammaj." *Pando*. Pando-Media, 30 Mar. 2015. Web. 20 Aug. 2015. <<https://pando.com/2015/03/30/the-war-nerd-to-lighten-the-mood-heres-the-cheery-tale-of-dammaj/>>.
- 18 Priest, Dana. "U.S. military teams, intelligence deeply involved in aiding Yemen on strikes." *The Washington Post*. Washington Post, 27 Jan. 2010. Web. 20 Aug. 2015. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/26/AR2010012604239_2.html?sid=ST2010012700394>.
- 19 Shane, Scott, and Souad Mekhennet. "Imam's Path From Condemning Terror to Preaching Jihad." *The New York Times*. New York Times Company, 8 May 2010. Web. 20 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/09/world/09awlaki.html>>.
- 20 Hider, James. "Double life of 'gifted and polite' terror suspect Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab." *The Sunday Times*. Times Newspapers, 1 Jan. 2010. Web. 20 Aug. 2015. <http://web.archive.org/web/20110629111749/http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6973007.ece>.
- 21 "UN says '25,000 foreign fighters' joined Islamist militants." *BBC*. BBC, 2 Apr. 2015. Web. 20 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32156541>>.
- 22 "Yemen attack on military checkpoint 'kills 20 soldiers.'" *BBC*. BBC, 24 Mar. 2015. Web. 20 Aug. 2015.

- <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26712897>>.
- 23 AFP. "'US drone strike' kills 5 Qaeda militants in Yemen." *Hindustan Times*. HT Media, 17 Apr. 2012. Web. 20 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/us-drone-strike-kills-5-qaeda-militants-in-yemen/article1-841830.aspx>>.
- 24 McConnell, Dugald, and Brian Todd. "Al Qaeda branch calls for new attacks against United States." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 5 Aug. 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/04/middleeast/al-qaeda-branch-yemen-united-states/>>.
- 25 MEE. "Al-Qaeda blow up 700-year-old mosque in Yemen." *Middle East Eye*. Middle East Eye, 7 Aug. 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/al-qaeda-blow-700-year-old-mosque-yemen-1289890507>>.
- 26 Abi-Habib, Maria, and Mohammed Al-Kibsi. "Al Qaeda Fights on Same Side as Saudi-Backed Militias in Yemen." *The Wall Street Journal*. Dow Jones & Company, 16 July 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.wsj.com/articles/al-qaeda-fights-on-same-side-as-saudi-backed-militias-in-yemen-1437087067>>.
- 27 Atassi, Basma. "Bahrain tightens security amid ISIL threats." *Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera, 3 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/bahrain-tightens-security-isil-threats-150703062006728.html>>.
- 28 Toumi, Habib. "Bahrain minister hails public response to terror attacks." *Gulf News*. Al Nisr, 4 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-minister-hails-public-response-to-terror-attacks-1.1545107>>.
- 29 "EU parliament calls for tear gas ban for Bahrain, release of Nabeel Rajab." *RT*. Autonomous Nonprofit Organization, 9 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.rt.com/news/272740-eu-parliament-resolution-bahrain/>>.
- 30 "Bahrain forces attack anti-regime demonstrators." *Press TV*. Press TV, 12 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2015/07/12/419907/Bahrain-regime-forces-protesters-Sitra-Akr-Ibrahim-Sharif>>.
- 31 Brunnstrom, David. "U.S. concerned by Bahrain moves against opposition." Ed. Christian Plumb. *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 14 July 2015. Web. 11 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/14/us-bahrain-arrest-usa-idUSKCN0PO29H20150714>>.
- 32 "Man killed while planting bomb in Bahrain." *Al Bawaba*. Press TV, 15 July 2015. Web. 11 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.albawaba.com/news/man-killed-while-planting-bomb-bahrain-719812>>.
- 33 "Bahrain police escape blast in Shiite village." *DT News*. DT News, 19 July 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.dt.bh/viewNews.php?ppId=3922&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=>>>.
- 34 AFP. "Bahrain police escape blast in Shia village." *Ahram Online*. Ahram Online, 19 July 2015. Web. 11 Aug. 2015. <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/135743/World/Region/Bahrain-police-escape-blast-in-Shia-village.aspx>>.

- 35 El Dahan, Maha, and William Maclean. "Bahrain says foils arms smuggling bid, recalls Iran envoy." Ed. Angus MacSwan. *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 25 July 2015. Web. 11 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/25/us-bahrain-iran-idUSKCNOPZ0HD20150725>>.
- 36 AFP. "Iran accuses Bahrain of stoking Gulf tensions." *Business Standard*. Business Standard Private, 27 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/iran-accuses-bahrain-of-stoking-gulf-tensions-115072700014_1.html>.
- 37 Shaheen, Kareem. "Bahrain police officers killed in bomb attack." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 28 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/28/bahrain-police-officers-killed-bomb-attack>>.
- 38 "Bahrain: UN chief condemns bomb attack in southern village." *UN News Centre*. UN News Centre, 29 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51531#.Vcu1PIViko>>.
- 39 Reuters. "Kuwait parliament approves budget with \$27bn deficit." *Gulf Business*. Motivate, 2 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://gulfbusiness.com/2015/07/kuwait-parliament-approves-budget-27bn-deficit/#.VZbzwPIViko>>.
- 40 "Kuwait mosque attack: Sunnis and Shia hold unity prayers." *BBC*. BBC, 3 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33387267>>.
- 41 AFP. "Gulf ministers vow united stand against IS mosque bombings." *Times of Oman*. Muscat Media Group, 3 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://timesofoman.com/article/62615/World/GCC/Interior-ministers-Gulf-countries-vow-to-take-united-stand-against-deadly-bombings-claimed-by-IS-group>>.
- 42 Al Jazeera, and Reuters. "Saudi brothers arrested over Kuwait mosque bombing." *Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera, 7 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/7/7/saudi-brothers-arrested-over-kuwait-mosque-bombing.html>>.
- 43 AP. "Kuwait: 29 to Be Tried in Mosque Attack." *The New York Times*. New York Times Company, 14 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/world/middleeast/kuwait-29-to-be-tried-in-mosque-attack.html?_r=0>.
- 44 Browning, Noah. "Kuwait seeks death for 11 mosque bombing suspects: newspaper." Ed. William Maclean and Ros Russell. *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 15 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/15/us-kuwait-security-idUSKCNOPP1PY20150715>>.
- 45 El Shahed, Salma. "Kuwait passes DNA law in attempt to boost security." *Al Arabiya News*. Al Arabiya Network, 22 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/analysis/2015/07/22/Kuwait-passes-DNA-law-in-attempt-to-boost-security-.html>>.
- 46 "Amir condemns terrorist attack in Turkish town." *Kuwait Times*. Kuwait Times, 22 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/amir-condemns-terrorist-attack-in-turkish-town/>>.

- 47 “Kuwait ups new refinery budget after bids exceed estimates.” *Arab News*. Arab News, 22 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.arabnews.com/news/779706>>.
- 48 El Dahan, Maha. “Saudi-Kuwait joint Wafra oilfield staff told to take leave - paper.” Ed. Richard Pullin. *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 23 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/23/saudi-kuwait-wafra-idUSL5N1030GM20150723>>.
- 49 Arab News. “Kuwait imposes limited control on entry of Saudis.” *Arab News*. Arab News, 26 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/781781>>.
- 50 Al Jazeera. “Kuwait arrests four men after ‘uncovering ISIL-cell.’” *Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera, 30 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/kuwait-arrests-men-uncovering-isil-cell-150730090651241.html>>.
- 51 Al Shaibany, Saleh. “Oman ‘helped’ clinch historic United States-Iran nuclear deal.” *Times of Oman*. Muscat Media Group, 14 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://timesofoman.com/article/63788/Oman/Government/Omans-efforts-as-a-peace-broker-help-reach-a-nuclear-deal-between-Iran-and-the-United-States>>.
- 52 Tsoleva, Tsvetelia, and Fatma Al Arimi. “Oman fund set to seek ruling against Bulgaria over bank collapse-source.” Ed. Christian Lowe and David Holmes. *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 22 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/22/bulgaria-oman-banking-idUSL5N1013IN20150722>>.
- 53 “Oman, Iran close in on \$60 billion gas plan.” *Press TV*. Press TV, 29 July 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2015/07/29/422382/iran-oman-gas-pipeline-kameli>>.
- 54 France 24. “Blatter: Sarkozy tried to influence Qatar World Cup vote.” *France 24*. France 24, 5 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.france24.com/en/20150705-blatter-sarkozy-qatar-world-cup-influence-2022-fifa-2018-world-cup-russia>>.
- 55 Ahram Online. “Qatar, Turkey invited to opening of new Suez Canal: FM Shoukry.” *Ahram Online*. Ahram Online, 16 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/135500/Egypt/Politics-/Qatar,-Turkey-invited-to-opening-of-new-Suez-Canal.aspx>>.
- 56 Reuters. “Qatar backs Iran deal, hopes Tehran will take ‘positive’ stance.” *Gulf News*. GN Media, 16 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/qatar/qatar-backs-iran-deal-hopes-tehran-will-take-positive-stance-1.1551401>>.
- 57 Abdulrazaq, Hawar. “Qatar Reaffirms Desire to Improve Relations with KRG.” *Basnews*. Basnews, 21 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.basnews.com/en/news/2015/07/21/qatari-reaffirms-desire-to-improve-relations-with-krq/>>.

- 58 Hosenball, Mark, Frank McGurty, and Fiona Ortiz. "Tennessee rampage suspect went to Qatar in 2014: sources." Ed. James Dalgleish and Lucy Shumaker. *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 20 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/20/us-usa-tennessee-shooting-idUSKCN-0PU1SY20150720>>.
- 59 "Qatar condemns attacks on Algerian soldiers, policemen." *Gulf Times*. Gulf-Times.com, 21 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.gulf-times.com/qatar/178/details/448185/qatar-condemns-attacks-on-algerian-soldiers,-policemen>>.
- 60 "Saudi Arabia steps up funding for Canadian Islamic schools – leaked docs." *RT*. Autonomous Nonprofit Organization "TV-Novosti", 3 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.rt.com/news/271396-saudi-funding-canada-schools/>>.
- 61 AFP. "Saudi policeman killed in raid, ISIS flags found." *Al Arabiya News*. Al Arabiya Network, 3 July 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/07/03/Saudi-policeman-killed-in-raid-ISIS-flags-found-Interior-ministry-.html>>.
- 62 Al Arabiya News. "Saudi kills ISIS supporter in western city of Taif." *Al Arabiya News*. Al Arabiya Network, 4 July 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/07/04/Saudi-kills-wanted-ISIS-supporter-in-western-city-of-Taif-.html>>.
- 63 Ellyatt, Holly. "Saudi Arabia to invest \$10B in Russia." *CNBC*. CNBC, 7 July 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/07/07/saudi-arabia-to-invest-10b-in-russia.html>>.
- 64 Reuters, and AFP. "US, Saudi Arabia discuss 'urgent' need to end Yemen fighting." *Deutsche Welle*. Deutsche Welle, 15 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.dw.com/en/us-saudi-arabia-discuss-urgent-need-to-end-yemen-fighting/a-18584371>>.
- 65 Kirkpatrick, David D., and Ben Hubarb. "King Salman of Saudi Arabia Meets With Hamas Leaders." *The New York Times*. New York Times Company, 17 July 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/18/world/middleeast/king-salman-of-saudi-arabia-meets-with-hamas-leaders.html>>.
- 66 AP. "Saudi Arabia Says Thwarts ISIS Attacks, Hundreds Arrested." *The World Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 18 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/saudi-arabia-isis-attacks_55aa5262e4b065dfe89e8490>.
- 67 Yeranian, Edward. "Carter: Saudi Leaders Support Iran Nuclear Deal." *Voice of American*. VOANews.com, 22 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.voanews.com/content/us-defense-chief-visting-saudi-arabia-for-talks-on-iran-nuclear-deal/2872962.html>>.
- 68 "Saudis land in Aden with equipment to re-open airport - Arabiya TV." *The Star Online*. Star Media Group Berhad, 25 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.thestar.com.my/News/World/2015/07/25/Saudis-land-in-Aden-bringing-equipment-to-reopen-airport--Arabiya-TV/>>.

- 69 AP. "Saudi Arabia-led coalition calls ceasefire in Yemen after air strike kills 120 people." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 25 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/26/saudi-arabia-led-coalition-calls-ceasefire-yemen-120-die-airstrike>>.
- 70 AFP, and AP. "Saudi Arabia and Egypt sign 'Cairo Declaration.'" *Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera, 31 July 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/saudi-arabia-egypt-sign-cairo-declaration-150731005229377.html>>.
- 71 "WikiLeaks: UAE maintains secret talks with Iran." *Middle East Monitor*. Middle East Monitor, 2 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/19611-wikileaks-uae-maintains-secret-talks-with-iran>>.
- 72 Egypt State Information Service. "Egypt: UAE Condemns Sinai Terrorist Attacks." *AllAfrica*. AllAfrica, 2 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://allafrica.com/stories/201507030242.html>>.
- 73 Pearson, Michael. "UAE executes woman who killed American teacher at shopping mall." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 13 July 2015. Web. 21 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/13/world/uae-us-mall-killing/>>.
- 74 Edwards, Julia. "CORRECTED-Obama called Abu Dhabi crown prince about Iran deal." Ed. Sandra Maler. *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 15 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/07/15/iran-nuclear-emirates-obama-idUKW1N0ZM00I20150715>>.
- 75 "UAE confirms second officer killed in Yemen war." *Press TV*. Press TV, 16 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2015/07/16/420560/UAE-Saudi-Yemen->>.
- 76 McDowall, Angus. "UAE, concerned about militant Islam, passes law against race, faith hate." Ed. Mark Heinrich. *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 20 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/20/us-emirates-law-idUSKCN0PU1F620150720>>.
- 77 The Express Tribune. "Anti-discrimination law: UAE criminalises hate speech, abuse of religion." *The Express Tribune*. Express Tribune News Network, 26 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/926671/anti-discrimination-law-uae-crimilises-hate-speech-abuse-of-religion/>>.
- 78 Reuters. "UAE to scrap fuel subsidies from August." *Al Arabiya News*. Al Arabiya Network, 22 July 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. <<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/business/energy/2015/07/22/UAE-energy-ministry-says-to-liberalise-gasoline-diesel-prices.html>>.