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Qatar's Isolation: A Geopolitical Trick?

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The sudden shift in Qatar's standings in the Middle East has left much of the world perplexed, suspicious, and skeptical. Others are hopeful that it indicates a fraying in an axis that has been sowing violence and destabilization across much of North Africa and the Middle East for years.

The Irish Times reported in its article, *"Saudi Arabia threatens to blockade Qatar over terrorism," t*hat:

> Saudi Arabia has threatened to blockade neighbouring Qatar by air, land and sea unless Doha cuts ties with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, closes global channel al-Jazeera, and expels local branches of the US Brookings Institution and Rand Corporation think tanks.
>
> The threat was issued by Riyadh before it withdrew its ambassador to Doha and branded as "terrorist organisations" the brotherhood, Lebanon's Hizbullah and al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and Jabhat al-Nusra.
>
> Although the kingdom has long been the font of Sunni ultra-orthodox Salafism and jihadism, it now seeks to contain radical movements and media and other organisations giving them publicity.

The Irish Times would then go on to point out the bizarre contradiction of the Saudis' move, reminding readers that:

> While the law and decree are meant to curb jihadi operations on Saudi soil as well as counter non-jihadi dissidence, these legal instruments appear to contradict government policy on foreign jihad.
>
> While 400 Saudis have returned home from Syrian battlefields, another 1,000-2,000 are believed to be fighting with jihadi groups funded by the government as well as wealthy Saudis, Kuwaitis and Qataris.

What then could the reason be for this clearly hypocritical, conflicting foreign policy shift? Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates have also joined Saudi Arabia in isolating Qatar leaving many to speculate over a wide range of possibilities.

1. An Axis in Need of Renewed Credibility?

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Israel, and the United States have been inexorably linked geopolitically, financially, and even militarily for decades. In recent years, this axis has worked in tandem to destabilize,

destroy, and reorder North Africa and the Middle East through a combination of covertly-backed political uprising (the US-engineered Arab Spring), terrorism, proxy-war (Syria), and outright invasion (Libya). The proxy networks used to carry out this vast geopolitical reordering includes the terrorist organization Al Qaeda and its various regional franchises, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood which provides the sociopolitical scaffolding upon which Al Qaeda builds its support, its ranks, and its material resources.

With Libya left decimated and in the hands of Western-aligned proxies, and Syria emerging from a prolonged proxy-war the victors over Western-backed militants, the spanning and vulnerable axis may no longer be needed to operate in such an overt manner upon the global stage.

Moves to isolate Qatar as the remaining facilitator of both the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Qaeda, could be an attempt to streamline and compartmentalize further destabilizations across the region in the future – granting other axis members the opportunity to regain much needed legitimacy while maintaining plausible deniability of Qatar's continued role as chief sponsor of global terror.

Of course, the US, Israel, and Saudi Arabia will continue on in collusion with Qatar, but just behind the facade of a renewed and refocused strategy of tension.

Coordinated multinational geopolitical stunts like this are nothing new. During the opening phases of the "Arab Spring," the US and Israel intentionally feigned support for Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak in an attempt to politically poison him among growing numbers of dissenters in the streets, including members of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. False reports of weapon shipments in Mubarak's support were made to further bolster the illusion – with a similar trick tried soon after in Libya. Simultaneously, the US and Israel condemned Egyptian opposition leaders such as Mohammed ElBaradei, despite ElBaradei literally sitting around the same table with prominent American and Israeli politicians and corporate-financiers in his capacity as trustee of the corporate and foundation-funded International Crisis Group.

In March of 2010, the Council on Foreign Relations had revealed this ploy through articles featured in its Foreign Affairs magazine. In Steve Cook's piece "Is ElBaradei Egypt's Hero?" he explicitly states:

> "Further, Egypt's close relationship with the United States has become a critical and negative factor in Egyptian politics. The opposition has used these ties to delegitimize the regime, while the government has engaged in its own displays of anti-Americanism to insulate itself from such charges. If ElBaradei actually has a reasonable chance of fostering political reform in Egypt, then U.S. policymakers would best serve his cause by not acting strongly."

A similar stunt could be seen during the more recent Israeli-Gaza conflict in 2012, which saw new life breathed into both Turkey and Qatar after nearly two years of exposure as collaborators with the US and Israel versus Syria. Carefully staged geopolitical maneuvering by Ankara and Doha against Israel was meant to portray the two Western proxies as "anti-Israeli" and "anti-West," despite the fact that both regimes had, were, and would continue to play a pivotal role alongside the US and Israel in continued hostilities with Syria.

If the Saudis fail to carry out their threats and allow Qatar to continue hosting both Brookings and RAND, as well as continue funding, arming, and otherwise supporting both the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Qaeda globally, it will be clear that this latest foreign policy "shift" regarding Qatar was simply for show. If Saudi Arabia and others in the Persian Gulf have truly turned on their once ally, and assuming they cease their own support for global terrorism, there will be an immediate drop-off of militant support in and around Syria and the the Syrian government will finally be able to fully restore order within and along its borders.

2. Persian Gulf States Scramble For the Exits – Leaving Qatar Behind

Another possibility is that the Persian Gulf despots have finally realized the global blitzkrieg they have collaborated with the West to execute starting in 2011 with the "Arab Spring" is ending badly and they will be the first to reap the whirlwind in an impending backlash.

Starting in 2011, counterstrokes, however ineffective, seemed to have been in motion – destabilizing regions in eastern Saudi Arabia, across Bahrain, and even in the UAE. While these uprisings were managed by draconian crackdowns carried out amid a self-imposed media blackout in the West, the threat of greater destabilization still linger across the Persian Gulf's hereditary dictatorships.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE may have calculated that now is the best time to divest from collaborating so directly with the West's regional ambitions and consolidate their positions and concentrate inward while projecting a better image internationally.

Qatar's ties and dependence on the West are perceived by some as somewhat more acute than some of its Persian Gulf neighbors. With US military assets stationed permanently there at what is considered one of America's most important regional facilities, Al Udeid Air Base, and with Qatar's capital Doha hosting the US corporate-funded think tank, the Brookings Institution, and its Doha and Saban policy centers (many of Saban Center's "fellows" and "directors" are based in Doha, Qatar, with the Doha Center itself funded by the State of Qatar), it would be difficult indeed to see Qatar severing ties with the West abruptly or even incrementally.

The Brookings Saban Center has been responsible for the "Which Path to Persia?" report, a self-indicting manifesto aimed at achieving Western hegemony across the Middle East, using both the US and Israel as a medium to do so – and by specifically attacking, subverting, and destroying both Syria and Iran.

The Saban Center was founded and named after Haim Saban, an Israeli-American media mogul and businessman ranked by Forbes as the 134th richest person in America. For Qatar to host such a collection of policy makers within its own capital, the very people manipulating both sides of a purposefully perpetuated regional conflict shamelessly admitted to be seeking the reassertion of Western interests across the region, could explain why nations like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE might want to isolate it ahead of their own alleged geopolitical reorientations.

Should Qatar's neighbors truly be divesting from their relationship with the West, again, they will carry out their threats to isolate and hobble the nation of Qatar, while expelling US forces, corporate interests and other facades of their own long-standing collaboration with the West in the weeks and months to come. Should they fail to do so, again, the recent "shift" in foreign policy may be a ploy to manipulate regional and international perceptions ahead of a joint US-Israeli-Persian Gulf push toward a yet to-be-revealed agenda.

3. You Are Either With Us or Against Us

Yet another interpretation of Qatar's sudden geopolitical quandary is what some suspect may have been its establishment of closer ties with Iran. Should Qatar have attempted to strike out an independent foreign policy out of sync with the US-Israeli-Persian Gulf axis, the recent swift and severe measures would be expected.

The supposed pro-Iranian moves on Qatar's part originate from a US Neo-Con think-tank, the Washington Institute For Near East Policy report titled, "Gulf Arabs in Crisis." In the report, it claims:

> Earlier today, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates recalled their ambassadors from Qatar, choosing a high-visibility tactic to emphasize long-simmering tensions within the Gulf Cooperation Council. The diplomatic rift — which comes a day after fellow GCC member Oman invited Iran's president to visit, and a few weeks before President Obama's planned visit to Riyadh — further complicates U.S. efforts to build broad support for its regional policies. Washington had been hoping that the upcoming Saudi trip would not only reassure King Abdullah about U.S. policies on the Iran nuclear issue and Syria, but also serve as an opportunity to win broader Gulf Arab support.

Ultimately, the report's premise is baseless, and appears to support the notion that the recent posturing is for show – with mention of Iran revealing perhaps another dimension to the recent GCC row. It may be perhaps that the GCC and its Western partners are attempting to lure Iran into a false sense of growing security in the wake of recent setbacks in Syria and ahead of yet another strategy aimed at undermining

and ultimately destroying the Islamic Republic.

Should Qatar truly be building closer ties with Iran, enough for the GCC to withdraw its ambassadors and threaten a full spectrum blockade of the tiny peninsula nation, and for the US to fear its regional designs are in jeopardy, then not only will the GCC carry out their threats, but in the days, weeks, and months to come, clear moves by the US will be made to undermine, destabilize and overthrow the regime in Qatar, just as it does around the world through color revolutions, terrorism, and overt military force.

Should these steps not materialize in swift succession, then Iran and its allies should remain vigilant as Qatar's outreached hand is only a distraction for the dagger it hides behind its back. Treachery has defined the foreign policy of the GCC and its Western sponsors for decades. To believe that sense has returned to the Persian Gulf would require more substantial, demonstrated moves from the GCC. Only time will tell regarding the truth behind the recent row between Qatar and its traditional allies.

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