



Brothers in Arms

The Consolidation of the Turkey-Qatar Axis

Aykan Erdemir & Varsha Koduvayur

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Introduction

On June 5, 2017, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) severed diplomatic ties with Qatar, enacting a land, sea, and air blockade. Qatar's neighbors charged the country with supporting terrorists, collaborating with Iran, and sowing the seeds of chaos around the Middle East. The sudden move closed Qatar's only road link to foreign markets, through which it received nearly 40 percent of its food requirements. Qatari residents panicked, picking clean supermarket shelves.¹ But the panic subsided less than 48 hours later, as Turkey began sending cargo planes with food and other goods.²

Turkey's assistance was not simply a humanitarian gesture. Rather, it was the most visible sign of Ankara and Doha's strategic convergence. This was also evident when Qatar was one of the few actors, alongside Hamas and Pakistan, that supported Turkey's cross-border operation into northeast Syria in October 2019.³

Diplomatic relations between the emirate of Qatar and the Republic of Turkey go back almost 50 years but picked up steam only after the Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power

in Ankara in 2002.⁴ During the first decade of AKP rule, the two countries held more than 70 high-level bilateral meetings.⁵ Qatar remains the most popular destination for Turkish diplomatic missions. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan alone made seven visits as prime minister and made it a priority to visit Doha upon assuming the presidency in 2014.⁶

Turkey and Qatar are fully brothers in arms. Both states share an affinity for Islamism that shapes their regional engagement. Fueled by shared ideological commitments, Turkish-Qatari cooperation extends into a variety of sectors, including defense, banking, media, and energy, and is likely to increase as their partnership deepens.

The Turkish-Qatari axis represents a challenge for the United States and its partners because Ankara and Doha pursue not only legitimate forms of cooperation but also joint ventures in illicit finance, support for Islamist insurgents abroad, promotion of extremist ideologies, and harboring terrorists associated with Hamas and al-Qaeda. These actions are especially disconcerting because both Turkey and Qatar are also important partners of the United States. Turkey, a NATO member for over 60 years, hosts the Incirlik airbase, home to the U.S. Air Force 39th Air Base Wing and American theater nuclear weapons.⁷ Qatar's Al-Udeid Air Base, meanwhile, is

1. David Harding, "Panicked Qatar shoppers stock up as Gulf rift bites," *Yahoo News*, June 5, 2017. (<https://www.yahoo.com/news/panicked-qatar-shoppers-stock-gulf-rift-bites-164944336.html>)

2. "Turkey and Qatar: Behind the strategic alliance," *Al-Jazeera* (Qatar), August 16, 2018. (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/turkey-qatar-strategic-alliance-171024133518768.html>)

3. Varsha Koduvayur, "Qatar Extends Support for Turkey's Assault in Northern Syria," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, October 25, 2019. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2019/10/25/qatar-extends-support-for-turkeys-assault-in-northern-syria>)

4. "Turkey and Qatar prove to be true friends, says Erdoğan," *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), November 27, 2018. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-and-qatar-prove-to-be-true-friends-says-erdogan-139210>)

5. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General of Middle East Affairs, "Bursa Milletvekili Doç. Dr. Aykan Erdemir Tarafından Yönetilen 7/17258 Esas Numaralı Soru Önergesinin Yanıtı (Response to Parliamentary Question Submitted by Bursa Deputy Dr. Aykan Erdemir Numbered 7/17258)," June 18, 2013. (<http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d24/7/7-17258sgc.pdf>)

6. "Erdoğan visits Qatar to discuss regional issues, bilateral ties," *Daily Sabah* (Turkey), September 15, 2014. (<http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2014/09/15/erdogan-visits-qatar-to-discuss-regional-issues-bilateral-ties>)

7. John Cappello, Patrick Megahan, John Hannah, and Jonathan Schanzer, "Covering the Bases: Reassessing U.S. Military Deployments in Turkey After the July 2016 Attempted Coup d'État," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, August 25, 2016. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2016/08/25/covering-the-bases>); Eric Schmitt and Dan Bilefsky, "Turkey Interrupts U.S. Air Missions Against ISIS at Major Base," *The New York Times*, July 16, 2016. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/17/world/europe/turkey-us-incirlik-isis.html>); "Incirlik Air Base," accessed November 21, 2019. (<https://www.incirlik.af.mil/Units/39th-Air-Base-Wing>)

the forward headquarters of U.S. Central Command, which oversees U.S. military operations throughout the Middle East.⁸

Washington has failed to hold these two countries to account over the years. The United States should have long ago explored alternative sites for the U.S. military facilities hosted by Qatar and Turkey. Such a study is still needed. For now, however, the United States should be prepared to welcome Turkey and Qatar back into the fold if they turn back decisively from their reckless path. But a combination of inducements and disincentives is needed if this is to happen.

Champions of Islamism

In recent years, the Sunni Middle East has cleaved into two competing axes, pitting the Turkish-Qatari combine against a Saudi-Emirati axis. Across the region, from Iraq to Libya, these opposing blocs are now contesting each other's influence.

Islamism is the glue that holds together the Turkish-Qatari axis. Erdogan's Islamist-rooted AKP has a long history with the Muslim Brotherhood, which the Turkish leader began to embrace openly after securing a sizeable majority in Turkey's 2007 elections. Within Qatar, the Muslim Brotherhood – known in Arabic as *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin* or simply the *Ikhwan* – has no room to operate, yet Doha energetically promotes the organization's ideology and interests abroad. Meanwhile, both Saudi Arabia and the UAE have designated the

Brotherhood as a terrorist organization in light of the threat it poses to them both at home and abroad.

Following its 2007 electoral victory, Erdogan's party began co-opting the Brotherhood to cultivate influence throughout the region. Ankara established ties with Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, which the United States designated as a terrorist group in 1997. Erdogan himself enjoys a close relationship with Hamas leader Khaled Meshal.⁹ Turkey also cheered the election of Mohammed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate in Egypt's 2012 presidential race. Turkey then pursued a flurry of diplomacy with the Morsi government, negotiating 24 different agreements on trade and other issues.¹⁰ Erdogan has also funded mosques and religious education centers in numerous countries, including Albania, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, and even the United States,¹¹ in an effort to promulgate political Islam and expand his influence.¹²

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At home, Erdogan has supported Islamist social engineering of the Turkish state and society. He has sidelined secular civil servants, expanded compulsory religious education and state-run preacher schools to “raise a pious generation,” and even hiked the price of

8. Jeff Wilkinson, “U.S. base in Qatar is nerve center for command of Iraq war,” *McClatchy*, March 11, 2003. (<https://www.mcclatchydc.com/latest-news/article24434308.html>)

9. Merve Tahiroglu, “Turkey's Terrorism Policies and the Case of Hamas,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, August 17, 2015. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2015/08/17/turkeys-terrorism-policies-and-the-case-of-hamas>) ; Soner Cagaptay, “The AKP's Hamas Policy: Transformation of Turk Foreign Policy and the Turk View of the West,” *The FAO Journal*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, February 2010. (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/4b7c32f9b0278.pdf>)

10. Ahmed Charai, “Turkey's Foreign Policy Priorities are Shifting,” *The National Interest*, February 7, 2019. (<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/turkeys-foreign-policy-priorities-are-shifting-43832>)

11. John M. Beck, “Turkey's Global Soft-Power Push Is Built on Mosques,” *The Atlantic*, June 1, 2019. (<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/06/turkey-builds-mosques-abroad-global-soft-power/590449>)

12. Gonul Tol, “Turkey's Bid for Religious Leadership,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 10, 2019. (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2019-01-10/turkeys-bid-religious-leadership>)

alcoholic drinks by more than 600 percent.¹³ Seeking to institutionalize sectarian hegemony, he has taken over and weaponized Turkey's media to blare Islamist propaganda and attack the pro-secular opposition, while scapegoating Turkey's religious minorities.¹⁴

Qatar, for its part, is officially a Wahhabi state, practicing the same form of Islam as Saudi Arabia. The ruling al-Thani family claims descent from Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the creed's founder.¹⁵ Likewise, the emirate's Grand Mosque is named after Abd al-Wahhab,¹⁶ and Qatari state textbooks are notably Wahhabi in the doctrine that they teach.¹⁷ Yet Qatar does not have an active domestic Islamist movement, because the state has co-opted Islamist currents and directed them outward.¹⁸

Qatar's brand of Wahhabism is infused with a Brotherhood-style philosophy of political activism, yet the al-Thani ensure it poses no challenge to their absolute authority. Thus, the Brotherhood's chapter in

Qatar voluntarily disbanded in 1999.¹⁹ Doha's massive hydrocarbon wealth provides cradle-to-grave benefits for its 300,000-odd citizens, thereby preventing Islamist movements in Qatar from building their traditional influence as an opposition force by providing social services, as the Brotherhood does elsewhere. Over time, Qatar and the Brotherhood "came to develop a mutually beneficial relationship so long as the Ikhwan in Qatar were, inevitably, outward facing," notes scholar David Roberts.²⁰

Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, on the other hand, have long viewed the Brotherhood and other Islamist movements in the region as existential threats. These governments' fears stem from their desire to preserve absolute control over religious affairs and domestic politics while maintaining a firewall between the two. Indeed, the Brotherhood's admixture of Islam and politics has proven dangerous to autocratic regimes around the region, as was recently demonstrated during the Arab Spring.²¹

13. Carlotta Gall, "Erdogan's Plan to Raise a 'Pious Generation' Divides Parents in Turkey," *The New York Times*, June 18, 2018. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/18/world/europe/erdogan-turkey-election-religious-schools.html>); Tuvan Gumrukcu and Dirimcan Barut, "Steep alcohol taxes drive Turkey's drinkers to home-brew," *Reuters*, November 17, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-alcohol/steep-alcohol-taxes-drive-turkeys-drinkers-to-home-brew-idUSKBN1DH1SF>)

14. Aykan Erdemir and Merve Tahiroglu, "The Islamist Takeover of Turkish Media" *Digital Dictators: Media, Authoritarianism, and America's New Challenge*. Ilan Berman, ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), pages 53–76; Aykan Erdemir, "Scapegoats of Wrath, Subjects of Benevolence: Turkey's Minorities Under Erdoğan," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, April 19, 2019. (<https://www.hudson.org/research/14970-scapegoats-of-wrath-subjects-of-benevolence-turkey-s-minorities-under-erdo-an>); Eric Edelman, Svante Cornell, Aaron Lobel, Halil Karaveli, Blaise Misztal, Ayhan Ucock, and Jessica Michek, "Turkey Transformed: The Origins and Evolution of Authoritarianism and Islamization Under the AKP," *Bipartisan Policy Center*, October 29, 2015. (<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BPC-Turkey-Transformed.pdf>)

15. "Qatar: Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, April 11, 2019. (<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R44533.pdf>)

16. Habib Toumi, "Qatar names its largest mosque after Muslim scholar," *Gulf News* (UAE), December 14, 2011. (<https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/qatar/qatar-names-its-largest-mosque-after-muslim-scholar-1.950858>)

17. "Review of Qatari Islamic Education School Textbooks For The First Half Of The 2018-2019 School Year," *Middle East Media Research Institute*, accessed November 21, 2019. (http://www.memri.org/pdf/MEMRI_Review_Of_Qatari_Islamic_Education_School_Textbooks_For_The_First_Half_Of_The_2018-2019_School_Year.pdf)

18. "Qatar," *World Almanac of Islamism*, accessed November 21, 2019. (<http://almanac.afpc.org/Qatar>)

19. Ahmed Azem, "Qatar's ties with the Muslim Brotherhood affect entire region," *The National* (UAE), May 18, 2012. (<https://www.thenational.ae/qatar-s-ties-with-the-muslim-brotherhood-affect-entire-region-1.408742>)

20. David Roberts, "Qatar, the Ikhwan, and transnational relations in the Gulf," *Project on Middle East Political Science*, March 9, 2014. (<https://pomeps.org/2014/03/18/qatar-the-ikhwan-and-transnational-relations-in-the-gulf/#fn5>)

21. Eric Trager, "The Muslim Brotherhood Is the Root of the Qatar Crisis," *The Atlantic*, July 2, 2017. (<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/07/muslim-brotherhood-qatar/532380>)

The UAE has sought to dissolve its Brotherhood branch, al-Islah, since 1994.²² Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, faced a strong internal challenge in the 1990s and 2000s from clerics affiliated with the *Sahwa* (“awakening”) movement, which mixed the kingdom’s Salafi Islamist teachings with the Brotherhood’s political activism. Starting in 2003, Riyadh also faced a domestic insurgency led by al-Qaeda, which heightened its perception of the Islamist threat.²³ It was this crisis that ultimately prompted Saudi Arabia to cease funding Palestinian terrorist groups and to begin questioning its own practice of financing extremism abroad through its widespread Wahhabi networks.

In 2011 and 2012, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi deeply feared that the Brotherhood’s success at the ballot box in Egypt and Tunisia would spark a revival of Islamist opposition within their borders.²⁴ In both cases, Qatari broadcaster Al-Jazeera provided extensive and highly favorable coverage to Brotherhood factions.²⁵ Similar propaganda has been ubiquitous not only in Turkey’s pro-government media but also in Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood outlets broadcasting from Istanbul.²⁶

In March 2014, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE withdrew their ambassadors from Doha,

sparking a diplomatic crisis among the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).²⁷ Saudi Arabia designated the Brotherhood as a terrorist group soon thereafter, and the UAE followed suit that November.²⁸ The three countries claimed that Qatar had violated a November 2013 pledge to the GCC, in which Doha promised not to support “the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as outside groups in Yemen and Saudi Arabia that pose a threat to security and stability of Gulf Cooperation Council countries.” Doha also committed, they said, to “preventing Al Jazeera from being used as a platform for groups or figures challenging the Egyptian government.”²⁹

In September 2014, Qatar’s neighbors forced Doha to expel seven leading Muslim Brotherhood ideologues and officials. Every single one of those seven moved, at least temporarily, to Turkey.³⁰ The list included Secretary General of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Mahmoud Hussein, as well as Brotherhood members Amr Darrag, Hamza Zoubaa, Gamal Abd el-Sattar, Essam Telima, Ashraf Badr, and Wagdy Ghoneim.³¹ Ghoneim, an extremist preacher, issued a video statement immediately after arriving in Turkey that condemned the “crusader” air campaign against the Islamic State, referring to the U.S.-led Global Coalition

22. Ibid.

23. “Saudi Arabia,” *World Almanac of Islamism*, accessed November 21, 2019. (<http://almanac.afpc.org/Saudi-Arabia>)

24. “Qatar,” *World Almanac of Islamism*, accessed November 21, 2019. (<http://almanac.afpc.org/Saudi-Arabia>)

25. Bob Dreyfuss, “Al Jazeera’s Muslim Brotherhood Problem,” *The Nation*, July 10, 2013. (<https://www.thenation.com/article/al-jazeeras-muslim-brotherhood-problem>)

26. “Ölüm emirleri İstanbul’dan (Death orders from Istanbul),” *Cumhuriyet* (Turkey), February 2, 2015. (http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/203813/Olum_emirleri_istanbul_dan.html)

27. “Gulf ambassadors pulled from Qatar over ‘interference,’” *BBC News* (UK), March 5, 2014. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26447914>)

28. “Saudi Arabia designates Muslim Brotherhood terrorist group,” *Reuters*, March 7, 2014. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-security/saudi-arabia-designates-muslim-brotherhood-terrorist-group-idUSBREA260SM20140307>); “UAE lists Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist group,” *Reuters*, November 15, 2014. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uae-emirates-politics-brotherhood/uae-lists-muslim-brotherhood-as-terrorist-group-idUSKCN0IZ0OM20141115>)

29. Jim Sciutto and Jeremy Herb, “Exclusive: The secret documents that help explain the Qatar crisis,” *CNN*, July 11, 2017. (<https://www.cnn.com/2017/07/10/politics/secret-documents-qatar-crisis-gulf-saudi/index.html>)

30. David Andrew Weinberg and Oren Kessler, “Rapprochement’ Aside, Egypt and Qatar Remain Rivals,” *Now Lebanon* (Lebanon), December 29, 2014. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2014/12/29/rapprochement-aside-egypt-and-qatar-remain-rivals>)

31. Islam Mosaad, “Qatar Asks 7 Brotherhood Figures To Leave,” *Anadolu Agency* (Turkey), September 13, 2014. (<https://en.haberler.com/qatar-asks-7-brotherhood-figures-to-leave-534638>); Zeinab El-undy, “Exit Qatar: What’s next for Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood?” *Al-Abram* (Egypt), September 18, 2014. (<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/111007/Egypt/Politics-/Exit-Qatar-Whats-next-for-Egypt-Muslim-Brotherhoo.aspx>)

to Defeat ISIS.³² Only after he described the president of Tunisia – a country with which Turkey has close ties – as an “infidel” did Ankara take steps to discourage Ghoneim’s incitement.³³

Those tensions erupted once again during the run-up to the blockade of 2017. Egypt, along with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain – known as the Arab, or anti-Qatar, quartet – severed relations with Qatar, fuming over Qatar’s support for the Muslim Brotherhood and extremist groups and usage of Al-Jazeera as a mouthpiece for those groups. The Qataris have remained defiant, continuing to back the Brotherhood, Hamas, and other Islamist groups that the other Gulf states seek to counter. Turkey has kept the embers of the conflict glowing by allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to operate freely from its soil, including Muslim Brotherhood television stations that spew hatred and even incite violence toward the Egyptian regime.

“This intra-Sunni conflict adds another layer of complexity to a region already grappling with the Sunni-Shia sectarian divide.”

Ankara further stoked this conflict following the murder of Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents. For weeks, the Turkish government leaked a steady stream of damaging information to the Turkish and international press, weaponizing Khashoggi’s gruesome death to score geopolitical points against Saudi Arabia.³⁴ All the while, at public events, Erdogan continues to flash the four finger salute of the Muslim Brotherhood, a sign made in memory of the Rabaa massacre, which

saw the Egyptian army kill more than 800 pro-Brotherhood protestors.³⁵

This intra-Sunni conflict adds another layer of complexity to a region already grappling with the Sunni-Shia sectarian divide. Both axes now seek to project their power and influence while diminishing that of their rivals across North Africa, the Levant, the Persian Gulf, and even the Horn of Africa. The stability of regional states could become collateral damage in this battle for primacy.

Libya

Libya was one of the first battlefields where the rivalry between the Turkish-Qatari and Saudi-Emirati axes began to play out.³⁶ Qatar and Turkey support western Libya’s mostly Islamist-aligned militias, while the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt back eastern Libya’s Khalifa Haftar, a septuagenarian warlord who leads the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA), which contests the authority of the country’s internationally recognized government in Tripoli. Both axes’ involvement has exacerbated the conflict and undermined UN-led multilateral efforts to stitch the country back together.

When the rebellion against Muammar Gaddafi began in 2011, Qatar became the first Arab country to formally recognize Libya’s rebels and sent fighter jets to aid in the NATO-led intervention.³⁷ Doha even sent hundreds of Qatari troops to support the rebels. Qatar’s chief of staff, Major General Hamad bin Ali al-Attiyah, admitted that Qatari troops were “in every region”

32. “Exiled Egyptian Cleric Wagdi Ghoneim: No to Crusader War against ISIS,” *The Middle East Media Research Institute*, September 16, 2014. (<https://www.memri.org/tv/exiled-egyptian-cleric-wagdi-ghoneim-no-crusader-war-against-isis>)

33. “تركيا تقاضي وجدي غنيم بعد هجومه على تونس” (Turkey sued Wagdi Ghoneim after his attack on Tunisia), *CNN*, August 25, 2017. (<https://arabic.cnn.com/middle-east/2017/08/25/tunisia-wagdi-ghoneim>)

34. Laura Pitel, Andrew England, “Turkey’s Erdogan turns Khashoggi case to his advantage,” *Financial Times* (UK), October 26, 2018. (<https://www.ft.com/content/f27d7702-d83f-11e8-ab8e-6be0dcf18713>)

35. David D. Kirkpatrick, “Hundreds Die as Egyptian Forces Attack Islamist Protesters,” *The New York Times*, August 14, 2013. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/15/world/middleeast/egypt.html>)

36. Giorgio Cafiero and Daniel Wagner, “How the Gulf Arab Rivalry Tore Libya Apart,” *The National Interest*, December 11, 2015. (<http://www.nationalinterest.org/feature/how-the-gulf-arab-rivalry-tore-libya-apart-14580>)

37. Clifford Krauss, “For Qatar, Libyan Intervention May Be a Turning Point,” *The New York Times*, April 3, 2011. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/04/world/middleeast/04qatar.html>)

of Libya and “supervised the rebels’ plans.”³⁸ Qatari advisors, moreover, were reported to have trained Libyan fighters in both western and eastern Libya. In August 2011, as Libyans surged towards Gaddafi’s Bab al-Aziziya compound in Tripoli, Qatari special forces were present on the front line.

Qatar’s generosity to the 2011 revolution was so great that Libyans flew the Qatari flag alongside the Libyan flag on October 23, 2011, when they proclaimed the liberation of Benghazi.³⁹ Libyans even changed the name of Algeria Square in Tripoli to Qatar Square.⁴⁰

When civil war broke out in 2014, Qatar and Turkey both supported the Islamist-led, Tripoli-based General National Congress. They also maintained close links with the now-defunct Libya Dawn coalition, a grouping of pro-Islamist militias led by the Muslim Brotherhood⁴¹ that attacked Tripoli International Airport and seized large parts of the capital in 2014.⁴² According to a UN panel of experts, Turkish companies delivered weapons to the Libya Dawn coalition.⁴³ The UN panel also accused Qatar of sending arms and cash to Islamist militants since the beginning of the crisis in

2011. A March 2013 UN report concluded that Qatar sent arms to anti-Gaddafi forces in 2011 and 2012, in violation of a UN arms embargo.⁴⁴

According to the LNA, Turkey has provided “direct military support” to Islamist militias operating in western Libya. The secretary general of the LNA claimed to have witnesses and satellite pictures proving that Turkey provides weapons, ammunition, vehicles, and even Turkish combatants in the area of Misrata.⁴⁵ In 2017, a spokesperson for the LNA said, “[A] number of Qatari aircraft are regularly landing in Libya ... to support terrorist groups.”⁴⁶ In May 2019, one month after Haftar began his assault on Tripoli, a shipment of Turkish armored vehicles and armed drones arrived in the Libyan capital.⁴⁷ According to *The Wall Street Journal*, Turkey sold \$350 million worth of equipment to its allied militias in Tripoli in the wake of Haftar’s assault.⁴⁸ Turkish officials claim that the arms sales do not violate the UN arms embargo on Libya and were conducted under a 2012 bilateral defense agreement. In July, LNA troops claimed to have taken down a Turkish-made drone near Tripoli.⁴⁹

38. Ian Black, “Qatar admits sending hundreds of troops to support Libya rebels,” *The Guardian* (UK), October 26, 2011. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/26/qatar-troops-libya-rebels-support>)

39. Jonathan Schanzer, “Qatar’s Support for the Worst of the Worst in Libya Must End,” *Newsweek*, August 6, 2017. (<https://www.newsweek.com/qatar-support-worst-worst-libya-must-end-646280>)

40. Kristian Ulrichsen, *Qatar and the Arab Spring* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), page 128.

41. Giorgio Cafiero and Daniel Wagner, “How the Gulf Arab Rivalry Tore Libya Apart,” *The National Interest*, December 11, 2015. (<http://www.nationalinterest.org/feature/how-the-gulf-arab-rivalry-tore-libya-apart-14580>)

42. “Guide to key Libyan militias,” *BBC* (UK), January 11, 2016. (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19744533>)

43. “A Quick Guide to Libya’s Main Players,” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed November 21, 2019. (http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/mapping_libya_conflict)

44. United Nations Security Council, “Final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) concerning Libya,” March 9, 2013. (http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_99.pdf)

45. Brooks Tigner, “LNA accuses Turkey of shipping weapons directly to jihadists in Libya,” *Jane’s 360*, October 13, 2016.

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20170211175858/http://www.janes.com/article/64604/lna-accuses-turkey-of-shipping-weapons-directly-to-jihadists-in-libya>); “The scramble for Sirte,” *The Economist* (UK), May 12, 2016. (<http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21698671-libyas-armed-groups-take-aim-jihadists-and-each-other-scramble>)

46. “Official says Qatar, Sudan and Turkey are ‘triad of terrorism’ in Libya,” *Al-Arabiya* (UAE), June 29, 2017. (<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/gulf/2017/06/29/Libyan-army-complains-about-foreign-backed-domestic-terrorism-.html>)

47. Adam Nathan, “Cargo ship loaded with Turkish military vehicles arrives in Tripoli,” *Al-Arabiya* (UAE), May 19, 2019. (<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/north-africa/2019/05/19/Cargo-ship-loaded-with-Turkish-military-vehicles-arrives-in-Tripoli.html>)

48. Raja Abdulrahim, “Foreign Backing Brings Militias in Libya to a Stalemate—and No Further,” *The Wall Street Journal*, October 1, 2019. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/foreign-backing-brings-militias-in-libya-to-a-stalemateand-no-further-11569942469>)

49. David Gauthier-Villars and Jared Malsin, “In Libyan War, Turkey Takes Sides Against Mideast Rivals,” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 2, 2019. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-libyan-war-turkey-takes-sides-against-mideast-rivals-11562065082>)

Neither Turkey nor Qatar has been able to exert the same level of influence on any major Libyan actor that Egypt and the UAE have on the LNA.⁵⁰ Haftar's forces have enjoyed increasing support from France and Italy and, most recently, received an offer from the Saudis to fund the general's siege of western Libya.⁵¹ Increasingly, Russia, too, is directly backing Haftar's campaign after years of providing background support for the warlord, even sending mercenaries, including snipers, to aid Haftar's forces.⁵² This complicated mix of foreign actors pursuing disparate interests only exacerbates the country's instability.

Somalia

The Horn of Africa is the latest arena of Turkish-Qatari cooperation. Like Libya, the region's troubles have worsened because of the clash between the Turkish-Qatari and Saudi-Emirati axes, with the UAE and Qatar leading the battle for influence in the region. Unsurprisingly, Qatar's moves in the Horn are complemented by Turkey. Both countries seek to revive the Muslim Brotherhood in East Africa and retain Somalia as an asset.

Qatar's activity in Somalia stretches back to 2012, when it funded Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's successful presidential bid, according to a UN report.⁵³ Hassan Sheikh came from the Damul Jadiid faction of al-Islah, the Muslim Brotherhood's Somali branch. Damul Jadiid, meaning "new blood," devoted its efforts to spreading Islamism and received support from both Turkey and Qatar.⁵⁴

But Qatar soon lost patience with its client, coming to see Hassan Sheikh's government as corrupt and weak, like its predecessors.⁵⁵ In the 2017 election, Qatar allegedly gave Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, known as Farmajo, a last-minute financial boost that propelled him to victory.⁵⁶ Farmajo allegedly has connections to the al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist group al-Shabaab through Fahad Yasin, an ex-Al-Jazeera journalist who purportedly couriered Qatari money to Somalia during the 2012 elections and ran Farmajo's 2017 campaign.⁵⁷ Yasin became one of Farmajo's early cabinet appointments, named as chief of staff

“The Horn of Africa is the latest arena of Turkish-Qatari cooperation... Both countries seek to revive the Muslim Brotherhood in East Africa and retain Somalia as an asset.”

50. “A Quick Guide to Libya’s Main Players,” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed November 21, 2019. (http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/mapping_libya_conflict)

51. Jared Malsin and Summer Said, “Saudi Arabia Promised Support to Libyan Warlord in Push to Seize Tripoli,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 12, 2019. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia-promised-support-to-libyan-warlord-in-push-to-seize-tripoli-11555077600>)

52. David D. Kirkpatrick, “Russian Snipers, Missiles and Warplanes Try to Tilt Libyan War,” *The New York Times*, November 5, 2019. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/world/middleeast/russia-libya-mercenaries.html>)

53. United Nations Security Council, “Letter dated 12 July 2013 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council,” July 12, 2013. (http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_413.pdf)

54. Marcin Buzanski, “Turning Somalia Around,” *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, Fall 2015. (<https://www.thecaireview.com/essays/turning-somalia-around>)

55. Berouk Mesfin, “Qatar’s diplomatic incursions into the Horn of Africa,” *Institute for Security Studies*, November 8, 2016. (<https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/ear8.pdf>)

56. “Somalia and the Gulf Crisis,” *International Crisis Group*, June 5, 2018. (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/260-somalia-and-gulf-crisis>); “Somalia PM says will quit only if parliament agrees,” *Reuters*, June 11, 2011. (<https://af.reuters.com/article/burundiNews/idAFLDE75A09320110611>)

57. “Somalia and the Gulf Crisis,” *International Crisis Group*, June 5, 2018. (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/260-somalia-and-gulf-crisis>); “Somalia: Confidential report warns against former Islamist’s close ties with president,” *Garowe Online* (Somalia), November 12, 2017. (<https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-confidential-report-warns-against-former-islamists-close-ties-with-president>)

– a move which added to perception that the Farmajo administration was tied to Doha.⁵⁸ In August 2018, Farmajo promoted Yasin to deputy director of Somalia's National Intelligence Security Agency.⁵⁹

While it supports Somalia's government, Qatar is among al-Shabaab's main foreign backers, according to a 2017 interview in Germany's *Der Spiegel* with an al-Shabaab commander-turned-informant. He claimed Qatari sheikhs brought \$20 million to Somalia in 2016 to line the pockets of his al-Shabaab bosses, who used the funds both for personal expenditures and to pay fighters and buy weapons.⁶⁰

In July 2019, *The New York Times* disclosed an audio recording of a phone call between Qatar's ambassador to Somalia and a businessman close to the Qatari emir in which the latter, Khalifa Kayed al-Muhanadi, suggests that Qatar is sponsoring terror attacks in Somalia to further its interests. Commenting on a car bombing at the port of Bosaso in northern Somalia, Muhanadi claimed, "we know who are [*sic*] behind" the attack, which was "intended to make Dubai people run away," referring to the UAE's business interests in Somalia. An Emirati company called P&O Ports manages the Bosaso port. "[L]et them kick out the Emiratis," Muhanadi added, "and I will bring the contract here to Doha."⁶¹

According to a former senior advisor to the previous president of Somalia, Qatari charities—including Qatar

Charity, Eid Charity, and the RAF Foundation – work with people whom the Somali government suspects are tied to al-Shabaab. The advisor further claimed that these charities operate in areas controlled by militants or with a heavy militant presence. This adds to the evidence that Qatar cooperates with Somali militants.⁶² Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Bahrain placed these charities on a blacklist in June 2017, claiming they funded al-Qaeda.⁶³

Doha has heavily invested in Somalia since Farmajo rose to power in February 2017. Farmajo visited Doha in May of that year, with Emir Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani promising budgetary support for the federal government.⁶⁴ When the blockade began in June 2017, Farmajo officially kept Somalia neutral, reportedly turning down an \$80 million offer from an unnamed Gulf minister to side with the Saudis and Emiratis – although the semi-autonomous regions of Galmudug, Puntland, and Hirshabelle did cut ties with Qatar, a result of successful UAE and Saudi leverage.⁶⁵ In November 2017, Qatar agreed to provide \$200 million to fund the construction of two highways linking Mogadishu to Somalia's northern and southern regions as well as the restoration of several federal government buildings in the capital.⁶⁶

In May 2018, a Qatari official told Reuters that Doha had given \$385 million in infrastructure, education,

58. "Somalia and the Gulf Crisis," *International Crisis Group*, June 5, 2018. (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/260-somalia-and-gulf-crisis>)

59. "A Somali spy chief sought on Kenyan soil," *The Indian Ocean Newsletter* (France), August 31, 2018. (Accessed via LexisNexis)

60. Fritz Schaap, Christian Werner, "The Business of Fear in Boomtown Mogadishu," *Der Spiegel* (Germany), October 27, 2017. (<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-business-and-violence-driving-the-boom-in-mogadishu-a-1174243.html>)

61. Ronen Bergman and David D. Kirkpatrick, "With Guns, Cash and Terrorism, Gulf States Vie for Power in Somalia," *The New York Times*, July 22, 2019. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/22/world/africa/somalia-qatar-uae.html>)

62. Interview on February 15, 2018, with a former senior advisor to the president of Somalia.

63. "43 new designations specifically address threats posed by Qatar linked and based Al Qaida Terrorism Support Networks," *Emirates News Agency* (UAE), June 6, 2017. (<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302618259>)

64. "Qatar to support Somalia budget," *Qatar News Agency* (Qatar), May 26, 2017. (<http://www.qatar-tribune.com/news-details/id/67045>)

65. Diana Alghoul, "Somalia rejects secret \$80m bribe to stand against Qatar in ongoing boycott," *The New Arab* (Qatar), June 12, 2017. (<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/6/12/revealed-somalia-rejects-secret-80m-qatar-blockade-bribe>); Abdi Sheikh, "Somalia rebukes its states for breaking with Qatar," *Reuters*, September 21, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-gulf/somalia-rebukes-its-states-for-breaking-with-qatar-idUSKCN1BW2O5>)

66. "Qatar supports Somalia with projects worth \$200 million," *Qatar Tribune* (Qatar), November 29, 2017. (<http://www.qatar-tribune.com/news-details/id/98729>)

and humanitarian assistance to Farmajo's government.⁶⁷ In December 2018, Qatar and Somalia signed eight memoranda of understanding covering such diverse fields as maritime transport, taxation, investments, trade and technical cooperation, and ports, among others.⁶⁸ In January 2019, Qatar donated 68 armored vehicles to Somalia, stating that it would bolster Somali efforts to combat Islamist insurgents.⁶⁹

Ankara has also stepped up its engagement with Somalia in recent years. In fact, Turkey is Somalia's largest foreign investor.⁷⁰ Ankara's largest overseas military base and school is in Mogadishu, opened in September 2017 at a cost of \$50 million. Turkish interest in the country dates back to 2011, when Erdogan coordinated relief efforts for the crippling famine that struck Somalia that year. At a time when the West was ignoring Somalia, Erdogan led a delegation of senior cabinet officials, journalists, leaders of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and others on an official visit to the country during Ramadan – the implicit message being that

Turkey would not abandon fellow Muslims.⁷¹ In doing so, Erdogan became the first non-African leader to visit Somalia in two decades.⁷²

Since 2011, Turkey has pumped in more than \$1 billion of aid to the country, including by building schools and hospitals.⁷³ Albayrak Holding, a Turkish conglomerate known for its ownership of various pro-Erdogan media outlets,⁷⁴ received a 20-year contract in 2014 to operate the Mogadishu port, while Turkish company Favori runs Mogadishu's international airport.⁷⁵ Turkish Airlines is the sole international carrier flying to Somalia.⁷⁶ In 2016, Turkey opened its largest embassy in the world in Mogadishu.⁷⁷ Turkish-Somali trade has blossomed, skyrocketing from a paltry \$5.1 million in 2010 to \$123 million by 2016. In early 2018, the two governments inked a bilateral trade deal, building on previous pacts that covered energy, electricity, education, and fisheries, among other sectors.⁷⁸

67. "Why Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey Are Battling Over Somalia," *Reuters*, May 3, 2018. (<https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/asia-and-australia/somalia-the-latest-saudi-arabia-qatar-battleground-1.6051936>)

68. "Qatar, Somalia sign pacts to strengthen bilateral ties," *Qatar News Agency* (Qatar), December 14, 2018. (<https://www.gulf-times.com/story/616305/Qatar-Somalia-sign-pacts-to-strengthen-bilateral-t>)

69. Eric Knecht, "Qatar gives Somalia armored vehicles," *Reuters*, January 17, 2019. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-qatar-somalia-defence/qatar-gives-somalia-armored-vehicles-idUSKCN1PB186>)

70. Jon Lunn, "Somalia: January 2019 update," *House of Commons Library*, January 17, 2019. (<file:///hs/defdem/root/redirection/varsha/Downloads/CBP-7298.pdf>)

71. Gonul Tol, "Turkey's Bid for Religious Leadership," *Foreign Affairs*, January 10, 2019. (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2019-01-10/turkeys-bid-religious-leadership>)

72. Abdirahman Hussein and Orhan Coskun, "Turkey opens military base in Mogadishu to train Somali soldiers," *Reuters*, September 30, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-turkey-military/turkey-opens-military-base-in-mogadishu-to-train-somali-soldiers-idUSKCN1C50JH>)

73. Gonul Tol, "Turkey's Bid for Religious Leadership," *Foreign Affairs*, January 10, 2019. (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2019-01-10/turkeys-bid-religious-leadership>)

74. "Albayrak Media Group," *Media Ownership Monitor Turkey*, accessed November 21, 2019. (<https://turkey.mom-rsf.org/en/owners/companies/detail/company/company/show/albayrak-media-group>)

75. "Why Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey Are Battling Over Somalia," *Reuters*, May 3, 2018. (<https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/asia-and-australia/somalia-the-latest-saudi-arabia-qatar-battleground-1.6051936>); Feisal Omar and Abdi Sheikh, "Somali port poised for facelift with Turkish help," *Reuters*, October 23, 2014. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-ports/somali-port-poised-for-facelift-with-turkish-help-idUSKCN0IC1DW20141023>)

76. Gonul Tol, "Turkey's Bid for Religious Leadership," *Foreign Affairs*, January 10, 2019. (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2019-01-10/turkeys-bid-religious-leadership>)

77. "Somalia and the Gulf Crisis," *International Crisis Group*, June 5, 2018. (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/260-somalia-and-gulf-crisis>)

78. "Somalia, Turkey ink trade deals to boost bilateral ties," *Xinhua News Agency* (China), January 16, 2018. (http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/16/c_136897763.htm)

Hamas

The cases of Libya and Somalia are not anomalies. Qatar and Turkey have both inserted themselves into the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as patrons of the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, a splinter faction of the Brotherhood. For Turkey and Qatar, two patrons of the Muslim Brotherhood and self-styled champions of Islamist causes, support for Hamas comes naturally. In fact, Qatar has directly funded Hamas for years, having given the group more than \$1.1 billion between 2012 and 2018.⁷⁹ Qatar's funding continues to this day, with Doha budgeting around \$330 million in aid payments since 2018 to families living in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. Qatar insists that none of its largesse goes to Hamas directly.⁸⁰

Turkey and Qatar have both welcomed Hamas members on their soil.⁸¹ In Turkey's case, this practice stretches back at least a decade. While living in Turkey, Saleh al-Arouri, commander of Hamas' military wing in the West Bank, reportedly planned the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers in June 2014.⁸² Arouri had initially lived in Syria after Israel released him from prison in 2010, but he traveled to Turkey when Hamas publicly opposed Syria's slaughter of Sunnis in the civil

war.⁸³ After he had operated out of Turkey for five years, American and Israeli pressure on Ankara forced him to relocate to Qatar.⁸⁴ Arouri reportedly moved to Lebanon two years later, after the onset of the 2017 blockade, due to pressure by the other Gulf states.

During the 2014 Israel-Hamas conflict, Qatar and Turkey negotiated on behalf of Hamas, pushing for a one-sided ceasefire that would have benefitted Hamas by relaxing Israel's blockade of Gaza and connecting Hamas to the global economy, at the cost of ignoring Israel's legitimate security concerns.⁸⁵ They almost got what they wanted, helping to draft a ceasefire plan presented to Israel by then-Secretary of State John Kerry. Kerry's plan acknowledged Hamas' position in Gaza, pledged billions of dollars to the group, and made no demands on Hamas to dismantle its rockets, heavy weapons, or tunnels.⁸⁶

GCC pressure has since influenced other cases of Qatar sheltering Hamas figures. At the end of 2014, pressure from the GCC forced Qatar to take a harder line against Hamas for several weeks, before the death of Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah derailed that effort.⁸⁷ During that brief interval, the chief of Hamas's Politburo, Khaled Meshal, who had taken up residence in Doha after Hamas exited

79. Yaniv Kubovich, "With Israel's Consent, Qatar Gave Gaza \$1 Billion Since 2012," *Haaretz* (Israel), February 10, 2019. (<https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/.premium-with-israel-s-consent-qatar-gave-gaza-1-billion-since-2012-1.6917856>)

80. "Qatari envoy says funds for Hamas helping prevent new Gaza war," *Agence France-Presse* and *The Times of Israel* (Israel), August 25, 2019. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/qatari-envoy-says-funds-for-hamas-helping-prevent-new-gaza-war>)

81. Jonathan Schanzer, "Hamas Still Finds Harbor in Turkey," *The Weekly Standard*, June 8, 2016. (<http://www.weeklystandard.com/hamas-still-finds-harbor-in-turkey/article/2002746>); David Andrew Weinberg, "Terrorist Financing: Kidnapping, Antiquities Trafficking, and Private Donations," *Testimony before House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade*, November 17, 2015. (<http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA18/20151117/104202/HHRG-114-FA18-Wstate-WeinbergD-20151117.pdf>)

82. Elinor Levy, "Hamas leader responsible for West Bank terror attacks made 2nd-in-command," *Ynet News* (Israel), October 5, 2017. (<https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5024978,00.html>)

83. *Ibid.*

84. "Report: Turkey Bows to US Pressure, Expels Top Hamas Operative," *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel), August 7, 2015. (<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Report-Turkey-bows-to-US-pressure-expels-top-Hamas-operative-411483>); Avi Issacharoff, "PA security raids Hamas cell planning attacks against Israelis," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), March 8, 2016. (<http://www.timesofisrael.com/pa-security-raids-hamas-cell-planning-attacks-against-israelis>)

85. Jonathan Schanzer, "Hamas's BFFs," *Foreign Policy*, August 4, 2014. (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/08/04/hamass-bffs>)

86. Barak Ravid, "Kerry's Latest Cease-fire Plan: What Was He Thinking," *Haaretz* (Israel), July 27, 2014. (<https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-what-was-kerry-thinking-1.5256917>)

87. David Andrew Weinberg, "Terrorist Financing: Kidnapping, Antiquities Trafficking, and Private Donations," *Testimony before House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade*, November 17, 2015. (<http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA18/20151117/104202/HHRG-114-FA18-Wstate-WeinbergD-20151117.pdf>)

Damascus in 2012, was briefly forced to relocate, making his way to Turkey instead.⁸⁸ But Meshal returned to Doha in 2015 and was spotted next to radical preacher Yousef al-Qaradawi at prayers in September 2017.⁸⁹ Meshal is under U.S. sanctions for financing terrorism as well as for “supervising assassination operations, bombings, and the killing of Israeli settlers.”⁹⁰

Qatar also briefly detained two Hamas officials in response to GCC pressure.⁹¹ But soon after, reports indicated that one of the two men, Zahir Jabareen, a senior official with financial as well as military duties, relocated from Qatar to Turkey.⁹² News reports suggest Jabareen assumed the role of Arouri’s Istanbul-based deputy, overseeing a bureau that “serves as the military wing’s recruiting station for Palestinian students, where they receive training in terrorist activity” less than half an hour outside the city.⁹³

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, which designated Jabareen along with several other Turkey-based Hamas supporters in September 2019, Jabareen headed Hamas’ “Finance Office” and created a

“financial network in Turkey” that enables Hamas to “raise, invest, and launder money prior to transferring it to Gaza and the West Bank.”⁹⁴ Jabareen – who, according to Treasury, has a Qatari passport – is also the main contact between Hamas and Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.⁹⁵

The sanctions Treasury announced in September also targeted Redin Exchange, a Turkey-based company identified as a “key part of the infrastructure used to transfer money to Hamas.”⁹⁶ Since 2017, Redin has transferred millions to Hamas’ military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. Treasury also designated the company’s CEO and deputy CEO, both Iraqi nationals based in Istanbul. Redin’s deputy CEO, Ismael Tash, has maintained contact since 2017 with a money-transfer channel overseen by Treasury-designated Hamas financier Muhammad Sarur.⁹⁷

Mahir Salah, a top Hamas official under U.S. sanctions for channeling tens of millions of dollars for Iran, reportedly controlled Hamas’s finances throughout the Gulf and has continued to visit Turkey.⁹⁸ Maher Ubeid,

88. Taylor Luck, “In Hamas leader’s exit from Qatar, signs of growing Saudi-Egyptian influence,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 26, 2015. (<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2015/0126/In-Hamas-leader-s-exit-from-Qatar-signs-of-growing-Saudi-Egyptian-influence>)

89. Sami Moubayed, “Qatar crisis: Two years but no end in sight,” *Gulf News* (UAE), June 4, 2019. (<https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/qatar/qatar-crisis-two-years-but-no-end-in-sight-1.64343589>)

90. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “U.S. Designates Five Charities Funding Hamas and Six Senior Hamas Leaders as Terrorist Entities,” August 22, 2003. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/js672.aspx>)

91. Taylor Luck, “In Hamas leader’s exit from Qatar, signs of growing Saudi-Egyptian influence,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 26, 2015. (<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2015/0126/In-Hamas-leader-s-exit-from-Qatar-signs-of-growing-Saudi-Egyptian-influence>)

92. “The Corruption at the Head of Hamas,” *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel), July 20, 2014. (<http://www.jpost.com/Business/Business-Features/The-corruption-at-the-head-of-Hamas-363550>)

93. Amos Harel, “Stopping the Nuclear Deal Won’t Halt the Funding of Regional Terror,” *Haaretz* (Israel), August 9, 2015. (<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.670067>)

94. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Treasury Targets Wide Range of Terrorists and Their Supporters Using Enhanced Counterterrorism Sanctions Authorities,” September 10, 2019. (<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm772>)

95. U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Executive Order Amending Counter Terrorism Sanctions Authorities; Counter Terrorism Designations and Designations Updates; Iran-related Designation; Syria Designations Updates,” September 10, 2019. (<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20190910.aspx>)

96. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Treasury Targets Wide Range of Terrorists and Their Supporters Using Enhanced Counterterrorism Sanctions Authorities,” September 10, 2019. (<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm772>)

97. Ibid.

98. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Treasury Sanctions Major Hamas Leaders, Financial Facilitators and a Front Company,” September 10, 2015. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0159.aspx>); Suhib Mohammad Nemed Abed and Mehmet Nuri Uçar, “Mursi’nin Filistin direnişine verdiği destek unutulmayacak” (The support that Morsi gave to the Palestinian resistance will not be forgotten), Anadolu Agency (Turkey), June 21, 2019. (<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/mursinin-filistin-direnisine-verdigi-destek-unutulmayacak/1511913>)

a Hamas politburo member reportedly responsible for laundering tens of millions of dollars through Turkey, has also been spotted in Doha.⁹⁹

Both Qatar and Turkey were embroiled in a terror finance scandal involving the Union of the Good, a charitable network that the U.S. government sanctioned in 2008 as a fundraising front for Hamas.¹⁰⁰ Members of the network included Turkey's Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) and three Qatari charities.¹⁰¹

“Both Qatar and Turkey were embroiled in a terror finance scandal involving the Union of the Good, a charitable network that the U.S. government sanctioned in 2008 as a fundraising front for Hamas.”

The Union's chair is Yousef al-Qaradawi, an exiled Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood cleric who enjoys safe haven in Qatar and serves as the spiritual guide of Hamas. On a visit to Gaza in 2013, Qaradawi stated, “[W]e should seek to liberate Palestine, all of Palestine,

inch by inch,” a position consistent with Hamas' denial of Israel's right to exist. Hamas's then Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh greeted the aging cleric, who also said, “[O]ur wish should be that we carry out Jihad to the death,” calling upon Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims to unite and overthrow Israel.¹⁰²

Qaradawi became a global personality by hosting religious programming on Al-Jazeera for many years. On his show, Qaradawi incited violence against Americans, arguing at the outbreak of the Iraq war in 2003 that “fighting American civilians in Iraq is a duty for all Muslims.”¹⁰³ He also sanctioned suicide bombings against Israeli civilians during the Second Intifada.¹⁰⁴ Qatar has shielded its guest from Egyptian efforts to try him for alleged crimes, including Cairo's issuance of an Interpol Red Notice for Qaradawi on charges of “incitement and assistance to commit intentional murder.”¹⁰⁵

Qaradawi reportedly bragged that the only reason he was not himself sanctioned by the United States was his political backing from Qatar's emir at the time.¹⁰⁶ In 2009, the U.S. Treasury Department urged

99. “السياسة: استياء داخل أوساط رسمية تركية من دعم أردوغان اللامحدود لحماس,” *Lebanon Files* (Lebanon), June 28, 2013. (<http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/565918>);

“40 مليون يورو من تركيا لحماس، لتعزيز سيطرتها على غزة,” *Palestine Press News Agency* (Palestinian Territories), November 6, 2012. (<http://www.palpress.co.uk/arabic/>)

100. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Treasury Designates the Union of Good,” November 12, 2008. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp1267.aspx>)

101. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Defense Minister signs order banning Hamas-affiliated charitable organizations,” July 7, 2008. (http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2008/pages/defense_minister_signs_order_banning_hamas-affiliated_charitable_organizations_7-jul-2008.aspx)

102. Nidal al Mughrabi, “Influential Muslim cleric visits Hamas-ruled Gaza,” *Reuters*, May 8, 2013. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-gaza-cleric/influential-muslim-cleric-visits-hamas-ruled-gaza-idUSBRE94714Y20130508>)

103. Jonathan Schanzer and Varsha Koduvayur, “Qatar's Soft Power Experiment,” *Digital Dictators: Media, Authoritarianism, and America's New Challenge*, Ed. Ilan Berman (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), page 12; Andrew C. McCarthy, “The Bin Bayyah Bungle,” *National Review*, June 29, 2013. (<https://www.nationalreview.com/2013/06/bin-bayyah-bungle-andrew-c-mccarthy>)

104. Dov Lieber, “The cleric who legitimized suicide attacks against Israel has reversed his ruling. Hamas isn't listening,” *The Times of Israel* (Israel), January 10, 2017. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-cleric-who-legitimized-suicide-attacks-against-israel-has-reversed-his-ruling-hamas-isnt-listening>)

105. Ahmad Al-Ghamrawi, “Interpol issues arrest warrants for more than 40 senior Muslim Brotherhood figures,” *Asharq al-Awsat* (UK), December 6, 2014. (<https://english.aawsat.com/ahmad-al-ghamrawi/news-middle-east/interpol-issues-arrest-warrants-for-more-than-40-senior-muslim-brotherhood-figures>)

106. State of Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Defense Minister signs order banning Hamas-affiliated charitable organizations,” July 7, 2008. (http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2008/pages/defense_minister_signs_order_banning_hamas-affiliated_charitable_organizations_7-jul-2008.aspx); “Thanks Qatar, says Qaradawi,” *Gulf News* (UAE), February 2, 2010. (<http://web.archive.org/web/20100217103848/http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp>)

Qatar's leadership to ensure Qaradawi was removed from the sharia supervisory board of Qatar Islamic Bank, one of Qatar's most important banks, arguing that his "public support for Hamas ... poses a risk both to the bank and to the Qatari financial sector as a whole."¹⁰⁷ Qaradawi is now under sanctions by Qatar's Gulf rivals.¹⁰⁸

Though residing in Doha, Qaradawi has hosted several events in Turkey over the years through another organization he heads, the International Union for Muslim Scholars. When Erdogan criticized the aforementioned Interpol notice calling for Qaradawi's arrest, Qaradawi returned the favor by headlining a three-day "Thanks Turkey" festival held by his organization in Istanbul, at which he called Erdogan "the Sultan" and a defender of Islam and the Quran.¹⁰⁹ At that event, Qaradawi handed an award to Turkey's deputy prime minister to pass on to Erdogan, who had welcomed him for a meeting earlier in the week.¹¹⁰

Iraq

In 2014, the United States imposed sanctions on two Jordanian nationals with Qatari ID cards, brothers Ashraf and Abdulmalik Abdulsalam, for funding al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).¹¹¹ Abdulmalik was also known as Umar al-Qatari, or "the Wolf of al-Qaeda."¹¹² He was captured by Lebanese authorities carrying tens of thousands of dollars intended for the terrorist group.¹¹³ According to a local press report, his work for al-Qaeda also allegedly included providing 200,000 Qatari riyals and 18,000 euros to contacts in Antakya, Turkey, for transfer to Syria, along with night-vision goggles, communications equipment, weapons, and ammunition. The U.S. government subsequently concurred that he "gave thousands of dollars and material support to a Syria-based al-Qaida associate intended for ... operatives" of Jabhat al-Nusra,¹¹⁴ also known as al-Nusra Front – a UN-designated terrorist group that then served as al-Qaeda's local branch in Syria.¹¹⁵

107. "Ambassador Discusses Qaradawi with MFA Minister of State Al-Mahmoud: GOQ to Provide Written Response to Treasury Letter," *Wikileaks Cable 09Doha689*, November 25, 2009. (https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09DOHA689_a.html)

108. "43 new designations specifically address threats posed by Qatar linked and based Al Qaida Terrorism Support Networks," *Emirates News Agency* (UAE), June 9, 2017. (<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302618259>)

109. Tulin Daloglu, "Erdogan defends Brotherhood's Qaradawi after arrest warrant," *Al-Monitor*, December 12, 2014. (<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/qaradawi-egypt-turkey-interpol-arrest-warrant-brotherhood.html>); "Qaradawi: Thanks to Turkey and to the President Erdogan," *International Union of Muslim Scholars*, April 23, 2016. (<http://www.iumsonline.org/en/ContentDetails.aspx>)

110. @iumsonline, "أردوغان يمثله #إيشلر و#قورماز. #العلماء والنهوض بالأمّة," *Twitter*, August 20, 2014. (<https://twitter.com/iumsonline/status/502158700157878273>); David Andrew Weinberg, "The Worst Club in the Middle East," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, August 21, 2014. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2014/08/21/the-worst-club-in-the-middle-east>)

111. David Andrew Weinberg, "Qatar and Terror Finance Part II: Private Funders of al-Qaeda in Syria," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, January 2017. (https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/defenddemocracy/uploads/documents/11717_Weinberg_Qatar_Report.pdf)

112. "صقر يتوسط لإطلاق «الذئب»," *Al-Akhbar* (Lebanon), January 17, 2013. (<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/175702>)

113. Robert Mendick, "Qatar's moneymen behind the kidnappers," *The Telegraph* (UK), October 5, 2014. (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/qatar/11141419/Qatars-moneymen-behind-the-kidnappers.html>)

114. "صقر يتوسط لإطلاق الذئب," *Al-Akhbar* (Lebanon), January 17, 2013. (<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/175702>); U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, "Treasury Designates Twelve Foreign Terrorist Fighter Facilitators," September 9, 2014. (<http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2651.aspx>)

115. "UN adds Jabhat al-Nusra to sanctions blacklist," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), May 31, 2013. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-adds-jabhat-al-nusra-to-sanctions-blacklist>)

Abdulmalik Abdulsalam allegedly transferred \$4 million through a Jordanian bank to his father, a jihadist leader also known as Abu Abdulaziz al-Qatari.¹¹⁶ The group Abu Abdulaziz founded, Jund al-Aqsa, was sanctioned by the United States and United Kingdom as an al-Qaeda splinter group.¹¹⁷ According to his supporters, Abu Abdulaziz is a former leader of AQI who left the fight “to work from Qatar in supporting the *mujahideen* materially and logistically.”¹¹⁸

There is also the case of Abdulrahman al-Nu’aymi. In 2013, the United States sanctioned Nu’aymi, a Qatari national, accusing him of providing millions of dollars to al-Qaeda over more than a decade – including, at one point, more than two million dollars a month to AQI.¹¹⁹ The United Nations also sanctioned Nu’aymi for his ties to al-Qaeda.¹²⁰ At the time of Nu’aymi’s U.S. designation, the press first made contact with him not in Doha but in Istanbul, although he quickly returned to Qatar, where he convened a press conference.¹²¹

Qatar briefly arrested Nu’aymi in July 2017 following the onset of the Saudi-led blockade, before releasing him in February 2018.¹²² He remains free. In April 2018, Qatari Prime Minister Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al Thani attended the wedding of Nu’aymi’s son, where the prime minister posed for a picture with the terror financier.¹²³ In May 2019, Qatar’s highest court overturned Nu’aymi’s inclusion on Qatar’s terrorism list.¹²⁴

Nu’aymi also chaired the Global Anti-Aggression Coalition, a group that held conferences on Turkish soil and voiced support for terrorists in places such as Gaza and Iraq.¹²⁵ He was also a founding member of Eid Charity, a Qatari charity that reportedly works with figures the Somali government believes are associated with al-Shabaab.¹²⁶

Institutions and officials of the Qatari and Turkish governments have also regularly hosted the late Harith al-Dhari and his son Muthanna al-Dhari,

116. “ترك ثروة طائلة والتحق بـ ‘جماعة الدعوة’” (Left a fortune and joined ‘Jamaat da’wa),” *Al-Mustaqbal* (Lebanon), January 25, 2014. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160812170427/http://www.almustaqbal.com/v4/Article.aspx?Type=np&Articleid=603284>); David Andrew Weinberg, “Qatar and Terror Part II: Private Funders of al-Qaeda in Syria,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, January 2017. (https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/defenddemocracy/uploads/documents/11717_Weinberg_Qatar_Report.pdf)

117. U.S. Department of State, “State Department Terrorist Designation of Jund al-Aqsa,” September 20, 2016. (<https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/09/262158.htm>); UK Home Office, “Explanatory Memorandum To the Terrorism Act 2000 (Proscribed Organisations),” 2015. (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/55/pdfs/ukxiem_20150055_en.pdf)

118. David Andrew Weinberg, “Qatar and Terror Part II: Private Funders of al-Qaeda in Syria,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, January 2017. (https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/defenddemocracy/uploads/documents/11717_Weinberg_Qatar_Report.pdf)

119. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Treasury Designates Al-Qa’ida Supporters in Qatar and Yemen,” December 18, 2013. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2249.aspx>)

120. United Nations Security Council, “QDi.334’ Abd al-Rahman bin ‘Umayr al-Nu’aymi,” September 23, 2014. (https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/qa_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/%27abd-al-rahman-bin-%27umayr-al-nu%27aymi)

121. Simeon Kerr, “US sanctions prominent rights activist for alleged al-Qaeda links,” *Financial Times* (UK), December 20, 2013. (<https://www.ft.com/content/4f6bd02a-68f2-11e3-bb3e-00144feabdc0>); “توثيق 1000 حالة قتل خارج القانون برابعة العدوية” (Documenting 1,000 extra-judicial killings in Adawiya), *Al Raya* (Qatar), December 24, 2013. (<https://www.raya.com/locals/2013/12/23/توثيق-1000-حالة-قتل-خارج-القانون-برابعة-العدوية>)

122. United Nations Human Rights Council, Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, “Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its eighty-first session, 17-26 April 2018,” August 7, 2018. (https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session81/A_HRC_WGAD_2018_29.pdf)

123. “The Qatari Regime’s Doublespeak: Condemnations Of Terrorism vs Social And Official Support for Terrorists,” *Memri*, April 30, 2018. (<https://www.memri.org/reports/qatari-regimes-doublespeak-condemnations-terrorism-vs-social-and-official-support-terrorists>)

124. “Qatari cassation court removes Al Nuaimi from terrorist listing,” *Alkarama*, accessed November 21, 2019. (<https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/qatari-cassation-court-removes-al-nuaimi-terrorist-listing>)

125. David Andrew Weinberg, “Qatar and Terror Part I: Negligence,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, December 2014. (https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/defenddemocracy/uploads/publications/Qatar_Part_I.pdf)

126. Interview on February 15, 2018, with a former senior advisor to the president of Somalia.

both of whom the United States and United Nations designated for funding AQI.¹²⁷

Harith al-Dhari, leader of the extremist Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq, was a prominent speaker at events hosted by the Global Anti-Aggression Coalition, the Islamist group chaired by Nu'aymi. The Iraqi government in 2006 issued an arrest warrant for Harith.¹²⁸ Yet he was often hosted in Qatar and met Qatar's then Emir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. In 2008, Emir Hamad met with Harith just a month after Washington designated the latter as a sponsor of AQI.¹²⁹ Qatar's rulers even welcomed Harith as an honored guest when Emir Hamad inaugurated the state's new Grand Mosque in 2011.¹³⁰

Harith al-Dhari lived in exile in Jordan but ultimately died in Turkey in 2015.¹³¹ After his death, now-former Emir Hamad, who had ceded power to his son in 2013, visited Jordan to relay his condolences and was videotaped exchanging hugs and kisses with Muthanna al-Dhari.¹³²

Muthanna al-Dhari has been under U.S. sanctions since 2010 for allegedly providing more than \$1 million to AQI.¹³³ Qatar, however, did not designate him as part of the terrorism list it published in 2018.¹³⁴ Though Muthanna is under a UN travel ban, Qatar has repeatedly let him into the country, including for in-studio appearances on Al-Jazeera to rail against the U.S.-led coalition fighting the Islamic State.¹³⁵ In May 2017, the president of Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), Mehmet Gormez, met with Muthanna in Ankara. Gormez said he knew him intimately and expressed appreciation for his work in Iraq.¹³⁶

Syria

Of all the places where Turkey and Qatar support extremists, the two have done the most damage in Syria. Since the beginning of the civil war that erupted in 2011, Qatar and Turkey have worked to establish

127. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, "Treasury Targets Al Qai'da In Iraq," March 25, 2010. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg612.aspx>); U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, "Treasury Designates Individuals and Entities Fueling Violence in Iraq," September 16, 2008. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp1141.aspx>)

128. Kirk Semple, "Iraq Issues Warrant for Arrest of Sunni Cleric," *The New York Times*, November 17, 2006. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/17/world/middleeast/17iraq.html>)

129. David Andrew Weinberg, "Qatar and Terror Part I: Negligence," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, December 2014. (https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/defenddemocracy/uploads/publications/Qatar_Part_I.pdf)

130. Jamie Dettmer, "Qatar's a U.S. Ally Against ISIS, So Why's It Cheerleading the Bad Guys?" *The Daily Beast*, February 19, 2015. (<https://www.thedailybeast.com/qatars-a-us-ally-against-isis-so-whys-it-cheerleading-the-bad-guys>)

131. Joel Wing, "Spiritual Leader To Iraq's Insurgency Harith Dhari Dies In Exile," *Musings on Iraq*, March 17, 2015. (<http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/spiritual-leader-to-iraqs-insurgency.html>)

132. David Andrew Weinberg, "UN official reportedly meets with Iraqi on al Qaeda sanctions list," *FDD's Long War Journal*, October 30, 2015. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/10/un-official-reportedly-meets-with-iraqi-on-al-qaeda-sanctions-list.php>)

133. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, "Treasury Targets Al Qai'da In Iraq," March 25, 2010. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg612.aspx>); United Nations Security Council, "QDi.278 Muthanna Harith al-Dari," March 25, 2010. (https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1267/qa_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/muthanna-harith-al-dari)

134. David Weinberg, "Qatar's Swiss Cheese Terrorism List," *Anti-Defamation League*, April 11, 2018. (<https://www.adl.org/news/op-ed/qatars-swiss-cheese-terrorism-list>)

135. "مثنى حارث الضاري: قد يحمل المتظاهرون السلاح دفاعا عن أنفسهم" (Muthanna Harith al-Dari: Demonstrators may carry weapons in defense of themselves), *Asharq al-Awsat* (UK), March 14, 2014. (<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp>); "التحويلات في التحولات في الحركات الإسلامية - اليوم الثاني" (Transformations in Islamic Movements - Day Two), *YouTube*, September 25, 2016. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch>); "الأمين العام وأعضاء الهيئة في قطر والأردن وتركيا يقدمون العزاء والمواساة لذوي الدكتور عدنان الدليمي رحمه الله" (The Secretary-General and members of the Commission in Qatar, Jordan and Turkey offer condolences to the family of Dr. Adnan al-Dulaimi), *Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq*, July 5, 2017. (<http://www.iraq-amsi.net/ar/94637>)

136. "Diyanet İşleri Başkanı, BM'nin 'El Kaide' listesindeki kişi ile görüştü (Religious Affairs President met with person on UN "al-Qaeda" list)," *BirGün* (Turkey), October 5, 2017. (<https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/diyanet-isleri-baskani-bm-nin-el-kaide-listesindeki-kisi-ile-gorustu-158876.html>)

joint patronage of Sunni opposition groups bent on toppling the regime of Bashar al-Assad.¹³⁷ Qatar has provided arms and financing to his opponents, while Turkey has assisted with training and logistics. By early 2012, Qatar was reportedly flying arms to Turkey, where the Turkish intelligence services helped deliver them across the border. The Qataris reportedly relied on Turkish intelligence and exiled Muslim Brotherhood members to identify recipients.¹³⁸

“Of all the places where Turkey and Qatar support extremists, the two have done the most damage in Syria.”

Underpinning Turkish support is the AKP’s ideology, which holds that secular Middle Eastern regimes should be replaced by governments that more accurately represent the region’s “Muslim majorities.” Yet Turkish priorities shifted in response to the rise of Syrian Kurdish autonomy, which Ankara sees as a threat to Turkey’s efforts to contain its own separatist Kurdish insurgency.¹³⁹ Following the advances made by U.S.-backed Kurdish forces in Syria, Turkey has recalibrated its policy: While Ankara continues to support an array of extremist militias fighting Assad, it is now focused primarily on preventing the establishment of a Kurdish statelet along the Turkish-Syrian border.

Qatar, meanwhile, threw its weight behind Syrian Islamist groups as part of its broader Arab Spring policy of supporting popular uprisings that could enable “friendly Muslim Brotherhood-aligned governments,” as Christopher Phillips notes, to take control, thus boosting Qatar’s regional influence.¹⁴⁰ This policy initially put Qatar at odds with Saudi Arabia, which at the war’s onset supported only the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and secular groups. Yet Saudi Arabia shifted its policy after Iran increased its involvement in Syria. As Yehuda Blanga points out, Riyadh then “became willing to support Salafi groups and cooperate with Qatar.”¹⁴¹

In Turkey in 2011, Syrian army dissenters founded the FSA, a loose network of brigades fighting the Assad regime. Since 2011, the group’s leadership has been based in Turkey, where the government has allowed the FSA access to supply lines running into Syria.¹⁴² Some FSA groups received training from Turkey as well.¹⁴³ Factions within the FSA work with hardline extremists, including al-Qaeda-linked jihadists and Ahrar al-Sham.¹⁴⁴ Jihadist groups also have opportunistically partnered with FSA factions to fight rival extremist outfits.¹⁴⁵

In 2012, Turkey set up a “nerve center” in Adana, roughly 60 miles from the Syrian border, through which Ankara and Doha funneled weapons and

137. Giorgio Caferio and Daniel Wagner, “Turkey and Qatar: Close Allies, Sharing a Doomed Syria Policy,” *The National Interest*, November 9, 2015. (<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/turkey-qatar-close-allies-sharing-doomed-syria-policy-14283>)

138. Roula Khalaf and Abigail Fielding-Smith, “How Qatar seized control of the Syrian revolution,” *Financial Times* (UK), May 17, 2013. (<https://www.ft.com/content/f2d9bbc8-bdbc-11e2-890a-00144feab7de>)

139. Faysal Itani and Aaron Stein, “Turkey’s Syria Predicament,” *Atlantic Council*, May 2016. (https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Turkey_s_Syria_Predicament.pdf)

140. Christopher Phillips, “Eyes Bigger than Stomachs: Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in Syria,” *Middle East Policy Council*, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, Spring 2017. (<https://www.mepec.org/journal/eyes-bigger-stomachs-turkey-saudi-arabia-and-qatar-syria>)

141. Yehuda U. Blanga, “Saudi Arabia’s Motives in the Syrian Civil War,” *Middle East Policy Council*, Vol. XXIV, No. 4, Winter 2017. (<https://www.mepec.org/journal/saudi-arabias-motives-syrian-civil-war>)

142. “Syrian Rebels’ Supply Lines,” *Stratfor*, February 3, 2012. (<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/syrian-rebels-supply-lines>)

143. Sirwan Kajjo, “Who Are The Turkey-backed Syrian Rebels?” *Voice of America*, August 25, 2016. (<https://www.voanews.com/a/backed-turkey-syrian-rebels-take-fight-islamic-state-kurds/3481582.html>);

144. “Guide to the Syrian rebels,” *BBC* (UK), December 13, 2013. (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24403003>)

145. Sam Heller, “A Deadly Delusion: Were Syria’s Rebels Ever Going to Defeat the Jihadists?” *War on the Rocks*, August 10, 2017. (<https://warontherocks.com/2017/08/a-deadly-delusion-were-syrias-rebels-ever-going-to-defeat-the-jihadists>)

communications assistance.¹⁴⁶ Between 2012 and 2013, Qatar sent more military cargo planes to Turkey to arm Syrian rebels than did any other country involved, according to reporting by *The New York Times*.¹⁴⁷ In 2016, Qatar doubled down on its support for the rebels, vowing to keep arming them even if the United States pulled its support.¹⁴⁸

Some FSA elements participated in the Turkey-led Euphrates Shield offensive against the Islamic State and Kurdish groups in northern Syria.¹⁴⁹ During the operation, which began in August 2016, groups within the FSA received direction from Turkey and pivoted from fighting Assad's forces to attacks against the Kurds and the Islamic State.¹⁵⁰

In May 2018, Turkey created the “National Liberation Front,” composed of nearly 10 FSA factions along with Ahrar al-Sham and Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki, another extremist militia. Turkey also sought the

participation of Jabhat al-Nusra – which by 2016 had rebranded as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham before merging with several other jihadist groups to form Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in 2017¹⁵¹ – but the group refused to join. Turkey's efforts to consolidate these rebel groups stemmed largely from its desire to exercise “stronger command and control.”¹⁵²

Turkey's state intelligence agency (MIT), meanwhile, seems to have a regular relationship with the al-Qaeda-aligned Jabhat al-Nusra,¹⁵³ even after Ankara reluctantly designated al-Nusra as a terrorist group in 2014.¹⁵⁴ According to testimony from Turkish gendarmes, rocket parts, ammunition, and semi-finished mortar shells were carried in trucks accompanied by MIT officials to parts of Syria controlled by Nusra in 2013 and 2014.¹⁵⁵ Weapons and money sent to less extreme Islamists have also made their way to al-Nusra and other extremist groups. Qatar and Turkey likely turned a blind eye to

146. Regan Doherty and Amena Bakr, “Exclusive: Secret Turkish nerve center leads aid to Syria rebels,” *Reuters*, July 27, 2012. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-centre/exclusive-secret-turkish-nerve-center-leads-aid-to-syria-rebels-idUSBRE86Q0JM20120727>)

147. Sergio Pecanha, “An Arms Pipeline to the Syrian Rebels,” *The New York Times*, March 25, 2013. (<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/03/25/world/middleeast/an-arms-pipeline-to-the-syrian-rebels.html>)

148. William Maclean and Tom Finn, “Qatar will help Syrian rebels even if Trump ends U.S. role,” *Reuters*, November 26, 2016. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-qatar/qatar-will-help-syrian-rebels-even-if-trump-ends-u-s-role-idUSKBN13L0X7>)

149. Tom Perry, Suleiman Al-Khalidi, and John Walcott, “Exclusive: CIA-backed aid for Syrian rebels frozen after Islamist attack – sources,” *Reuters*, February 21, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebels/exclusive-cia-backed-aid-for-syrian-rebels-frozen-after-islamist-attack-sources-idUSKBN1601BD>)

150. Sirwan Kajjo, “Who Are The Turkey-backed Syrian Rebels?” *Voice of America*, August 25, 2016. (<https://www.voanews.com/a/backed-turkey-syrian-rebels-take-fight-islamic-state-kurds/3481582.html>); Zvi Bar'el, “The Free Syrian Army Follows Orders From Turkey,” *Haaretz* (Israel), November 26, 2016. (<https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium-1.755348>)

151. Jabhat al-Nusra rebranded in July 2016 as Jabhat Fatah al-Sham after ostensibly terminating its association with al-Qaeda. The group now plays a dominant role in Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, a merger formed in January 2017 with several other jihadist groups, including the Ansar al-Din Front, Jaysh al-Sunna, Liwa al-Haqq, the Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement, and parts of Ansar al-Sham. See: Thomas Joscelyn, “Analysis: Al Nusrah Front rebrands itself as Jabhat Fath Al Sham,” *FDD's Long War Journal*, July 28, 2016. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/07/analysis-al-nusrah-front-rebrands-itself-as-jabhat-fath-al-sham.php>); Thomas Joscelyn, “Al Qaeda and allies announce ‘new entity’ in Syria,” *FDD's Long War Journal*, January 28, 2017. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/01/al-qaeda-and-allies-announce-new-entity-in-syria.php>)

152. Maxwell B. Markusen, “Idlib Province and the Future of Instability in Syria,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, September 21, 2018. (<https://www.csis.org/analysis/idlib-province-and-future-instability-syria>)

153. “Turkey: An Increasingly Undependable Ally,” *Bipartisan Policy Center*, April 2015. (<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/turkey-an-increasingly-undependable-ally>)

154. “Turkey lists al-Nusra Front as terrorist organization,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), June 3, 2014. (<http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/turkey-lists-al-nusra-front-as-terrorist-organization.aspx>)

155. Humeyra Pamuk and Nick Tattersall, “Exclusive: Turkish intelligence helped ship arms to Syrian Islamist rebel areas,” *Reuters*, May 21, 2015. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-turkey-arms/exclusive-turkish-intelligence-helped-ship-arms-to-syrian-islamist-rebel-areas-idUSKBN0061L220150521>)

these diversions because these groups were generally more effective against the Assad regime.¹⁵⁶

In March 2015, a number of Sunni Islamist militias including al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, and the Muslim Brotherhood affiliate Sham Legion began joint operations against the Syrian regime, under the name of Jaish al-Fatah (Army of Conquest).¹⁵⁷ Al-Nusra reportedly led the coalition.¹⁵⁸ The emir of Qatar reportedly brokered the formation of Jaish al-Fatah with Ankara's encouragement.¹⁵⁹ The umbrella organization took control of Idlib province in March 2015 and began receiving funding from Qatar, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.¹⁶⁰

In August 2016, two rebels told the *Financial Times* that Qatar and Saudi Arabia were consistently delivering cash and supplies to Aleppo via trucks routed through Turkey, to support a military offensive against the regime by al-Nusra (which by that point had rebranded as Jabhat Fatah al-Sham).¹⁶¹

Ankara and Doha also supported al-Nusra by granting impunity to individuals and charities in Turkey and Qatar that raised funds for the group. In 2014, then-Undersecretary of Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen called Qatar a “permissive jurisdiction” for terror financiers who raised funds for al-Nusra and the Islamic State, among others.¹⁶² Cohen's successor, Adam Szubin, said Qatar lacked “the necessary political will” to crack down on terror financing.¹⁶³

“Ankara and Doha also supported al-Nusra by granting impunity to individuals and charities in Turkey and Qatar that raised funds for the group.”

Kuwaiti preacher Hajjaj al-Ajmi provides a case in point. Ajmi is under sanctions by the United States, United Nations, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE on charges of funding al-Qaeda in Syria.¹⁶⁴ He was accused of directing his followers to donate money through

156. David Ignatius, “Foreign nations’ proxy war in Syria creates chaos,” *The Washington Post*, October 2, 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/david-ignatius-foreign-nations-proxy-war-creates-syrian-chaos/2014/10/02/061fb50c-4a7a-11e4-a046-120a8a855cca_story.html)

157. “Army of Conquest’ rebel alliance pressures Syria regime,” *Agence France-Presse*, April 28, 2015. (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3058816/Army-Conquest-rebel-alliance-pressures-Syria-regime.html>)

158. David Ignatius, “A new cooperation on Syria,” *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2015. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-new-cooperation-on-syria/2015/05/12/bdb48a68-f8ed-11e4-9030-b4732caefe81_story.html)

159. Ibid.

160. “Mapping Militants – Syria,” *Stanford University*, accessed November 21, 2019. (<http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/maps/view/syria>); David Ignatius, “A new cooperation on Syria,” *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2015. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-new-cooperation-on-syria/2015/05/12/bdb48a68-f8ed-11e4-9030-b4732caefe81_story.html); Jaish al-Fatah imploded in 2017. See: “Fighting in Syria’s Idlib province spreads to Turkey border crossing,” *Agence France-Presse*, July 21, 2014. (<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/fighting-in-syria-s-idlib-province-spreads-to-turkey-border-crossing-1.612890>)

161. Erika Solomon, “Outside help behind rebel advances in Aleppo,” *Financial Times* (UK), August 8, 2016. (<https://www.ft.com/content/da076830-5d77-11e6-a72a-bd4bf1198c63>)

162. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Remarks of Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen before the Center for a New American Security on ‘Confronting New Threats in Terrorist Financing,’” March 4, 2014. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2308.aspx>)

163. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Remarks of Acting Under Secretary Adam Szubin on Countering the Financing of Terrorism at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies,” October 20, 2016. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0590.aspx>)

164. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Treasury Designates Three Key Supporters of Terrorists in Syria and Iraq,” August 6, 2014. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2605.aspx>); United Nations Security Council, “Hajjaj bin Fahd Al Ajmi,” accessed November 21, 2019. (https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/hajjaj-bin-fahd-al-ajmi); “43 new designations specifically address threats posed by Qatar linked and based Al Qaida Terrorism Support Networks,” *Emirates News Agency* (UAE), June 6, 2017. (<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302618259>)

the Turkey-based Kuveyt Turk Participation Bank, although his U.S. district court case was ultimately dismissed for jurisdictional and standing issues.¹⁶⁵ He reportedly called for arming Syrian jihadists while on a trip to Qatar sponsored by the Qatari government. When the United States designated Ajmi in 2014, he was reportedly on another trip to Qatar.¹⁶⁶

In 2015, the United States and United Nations placed two Qatari nationals, Sa'd bin Sa'd al-Ka'bi and 'Abd al-Latif bin Abdullah al-Kawari, under terror finance sanctions; the anti-Qatar quartet followed suit in sanctioning them in 2017.¹⁶⁷ Ka'bi and Kawari served as leaders of a Qatar-based fundraising campaign for Syrian humanitarian relief called Madad Ahl al-Sham (MAS), which reportedly also raised funds to arm Syrian fighters. In a Twitter message that MAS itself retweeted, al-Nusra endorsed the MAS campaign in 2013 as “one of the preferred conduits for donations intended for the group,” according to *The Washington*

Post.¹⁶⁸ According to the U.S. Treasury Department, Ka'bi “set up donation campaigns in Qatar to aid with fundraising in response to a request from [an al-Nusra] associate for money to purchase both weapons and food.”¹⁶⁹

MAS reportedly worked under the umbrella of a quasi-governmental Qatari institution to send donations via Turkish and Jordanian territory.¹⁷⁰ A video posted by a Turkish charity in 2014 appeared to promote its work “in cooperation with the [MAS] campaign” in Turkish territory.¹⁷¹

A wide array of publications have also accused Doha of indirectly financing al-Nusra through ransoms.¹⁷² Turkish columnist Yusuf Kanli wrote in October 2013 that Qatar helped negotiate the release of two Turkish pilots who were flown home from Lebanon on a Qatar Airways plane in exchange for nine Shi'ite pilgrims held

165. “ABD’de Kuveyt Türk Bankası’na IŞİD davası! (ISIS lawsuit for Kuveyt Turk Bank in U.S),” *soL* (Turkey), June 15, 2016. (<http://haber.sol.org.tr/dunya/abdde-kuveyt-turk-bankasina-isis-davasi-159121>); Ragıp Soylu, “US judge dismisses terror funding case against Kuveyt Türk bank,” *Daily Sabah* (Turkey), January 27, 2017. (<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/2017/01/27/us-judge-dismisses-terror-funding-case-against-kuveyt-turk-bank>); “Company Overview of Kuveyt Turk Katilim Bankasi A.S,” *Bloomberg News*, October 30, 2017. (<https://www.bloomberg.com/profile/company/2665369Z:TI>)

166. Elizabeth Dickinson, “The Case Against Qatar,” *Foreign Policy*, September 30, 2014. (<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/30/the-case-against-qatar>); “Kuwait releases detained cleric suspected of financing militants,” *Reuters*, August 21, 2014. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-kuwait-cleric/kuwait-releases-detained-cleric-suspected-of-financing-militants-idUSKBN0GL1X120140821>)

167. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Treasury Designates Financial Supporters of Al-Qaida and Al-Nusrah Front,” August 5, 2015. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0143.aspx>); United Nations Security Council, “Sa’d bin Sa’d Muhammad Shariyan al-Ka’bi,” accessed November 21, 2019. (https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aa_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/sa%27d-bin-sa%27d-muhammad-shariyan-al-ka%27bi); “43 new designations specifically address threats posed by Qatar linked and based Al Qaida Terrorism Support Networks,” *Emirates News Agency* (UAE), June 6, 2017. (<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302618259>)

168. Joby Warrick, “Syrian conflict said to fuel sectarian tensions in Persian Gulf,” *The Washington Post*, December 18, 2013. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/syrian-conflict-said-to-fuel-sectarian-tensions-in-persian-gulf/2013/12/18/e160ad82-6831-11e3-8b5b-a77187b716a3_story.html)

169. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Treasury Designates Financial Supporters of Al-Qaida and Al-Nusrah Front,” August 5, 2015. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0143.aspx>)

170. David Andrew Weinberg, “Analysis: Qatar still negligent on terror finance,” *FDD’s Long War Journal*, August 19, 2015. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/08/analysis-qatar-still-negligent-on-terror-finance.php>)

171. İBD İnsani Bağış Derneği (IBD Humanitarian Relief Foundation), “توزيع بطاقات غذائية مزودة من حملة مدد أهل الشام من أهالي قطر,” (Distribution of food cards supplied by the campaign extended to the people of Syria by the people of Qatar), *YouTube*, February 12, 2014. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch>)

172. David Andrew Weinberg, “Qatar and Terror Finance Part II: Private Funders of al-Qaeda in Syria,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, January 2017. (https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/defenddemocracy/uploads/documents/11717_Weinberg_Qatar_Report.pdf);

by al-Nusra in Syria. Kanli alleged that Qatar paid a \$150 million ransom to al-Nusra as part of the exchange.¹⁷³

A Lebanese security official said that “the \$150 million figure seemed high” but acknowledged that “the deal did include money paid by Qatar.”¹⁷⁴ Qatar’s then Foreign Minister Khalid al-Attiya personally negotiated the deal with the Syrian rebels.

In 2014, press reports alleged that Qatar had paid millions of dollars in ransoms to al-Nusra for the release of Syrian nuns, the U.S. journalist Peter Theo Padnos, and 45 Fijian peacekeepers.¹⁷⁵ The emirate reportedly also played an important role in hostage talks with al-Nusra that resulted in the December 2015 release from Lebanon of some of al-Qaeda’s most important prisoners.¹⁷⁶ One of the prisoners, the ex-wife of Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, said she would be going to Turkey as part of the deal, despite having helped finance terrorists.¹⁷⁷ Another concession granted to al-Nusra as part of the deal permitted the

extremist group to send its wounded to Turkey for medical treatment, according to Al-Jazeera.¹⁷⁸

In May 2016, al-Nusra released Spanish reporters Angel Sastre, Antonio Pampliega, and Jose Manuel Lopez after 10 months of captivity.¹⁷⁹ The Spanish government thanked Ankara and Doha for their role in the release, which was reportedly brokered after six meetings in Turkey and Qatar.¹⁸⁰ According to the pro-regime Turkish daily *Yeni Şafak*, the deal entailed a ransom of \$3.7 million per reporter as well as an unspecified amount of “humanitarian aid” on the Syrian side of the Turkish border.¹⁸¹

In April 2017, Qatar may have paid the largest ransom in history – nearly \$1 billion – to secure the release of Qatari royal family members kidnapped in Iraq while on a hunting trip. Nearly \$400 million of the total reportedly went to Kataib Hezbollah, an Iran-backed Shiite militia in Iraq.¹⁸² According to the *Financial Times*, nearly \$120 million to \$140 million of the

173. Yusuf Kanli, “Is Turkish foreign policy successful?” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), October 21, 2013. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/yusuf-kanli/is-turkish-foreign-policy-successful-56527>)

174. Mitchell Prothero, “Lebanese pilgrims held for year by Syrian rebels back in Beirut,” *McClatchy*, October 19, 2013. (<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24757552.html>)

175. David Andrew Weinberg, “Terrorist Financing: Kidnapping, Antiquities Trafficking, and Private Donations,” *Testimony before House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade*, November 17, 2015. (<http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA18/20151117/104202/HHRG-114-FA18-Wstate-WeinbergD-20151117.pdf>)

176. David Andrew Weinberg, “Wrong Way: The Problem With Al Qaeda Prisoner Swaps,” *The National Interest*, January 4, 2016. (<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/wrong-way-the-problem-al-qaeda-prisoner-swaps-14794>)

177. Hugh Naylor and Suzan Haidamous, “Arrest in Lebanon lifts veil on life of Islamic State leader’s ex-wife, Saja al-Dulaimi,” *The Washington Post*, January 28, 2015. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/an-arrest-in-lebanon-lifts-the-veil-on-the-life-of-islamic-state-leaders-ex-wife/2015/01/26/081820b4-86d5-11e4-abcf-5a3d7b3b20b8_story.html)

178. Nour Samaha, “Lebanese army and al-Nusra Front conduct prisoner swap,” *Al-Jazeera* (Qatar), December 2, 2015. (<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/lebanese-hostages-released-prisoner-swap-151201072408599.html>)

179. Miguel González, “El intercambio de los periodistas duró más de tres horas en la frontera siria (The exchange of journalists lasted more than three hours on the Syrian border),” *El País* (Spain), May 9, 2016. (https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2016/05/08/actualidad/1462735992_910670.html)

180. “La prensa internacional resalta la colaboración de Qatar y Turquía en la liberación de los periodistas (The international press highlights the collaboration of Qatar and Turkey in the release of journalists),” *Radiocable* (Spain), May 9, 2016. (<http://www.radiocable.com/nm-liberacion-periodistas-esp-qatar-turquia384.html>)

181. Cihat Arpacık, “Türkiye’nin diplomasi trafiğiyle kurtuldular (They were saved with Turkey’s diplomatic efforts),” *Yeni Şafak* (Turkey), May 16, 2016. (<http://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/turkiyenin-diplomasi-trafigiyle-kurtuldular-2466723>)

182. Robert F. Worth, “Kidnapped Royalty Become Pawns in Iran’s Deadly Plot,” *The New York Times Magazine*, March 14, 2018. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/14/magazine/how-a-ransom-for-royal-falcons-reshaped-the-middle-east.html>)

\$1 billion total went to HTS, with an additional \$80 million going to Ahrar al-Sham.¹⁸³

Until 2017, Ahrar al-Sham was one of the closest allies of al-Nusra in Syria.¹⁸⁴ Authorities stopped short of labeling the former group as al-Qaeda, however, thanks in part to a re-branding campaign on the part of Turkey and Qatar.

Turkey began sending arms and money to the group in 2015.¹⁸⁵ Turkish and Qatari NGOs have also reportedly backed Ahrar al-Sham via their joint aid for the Syrian Islamic Front (SIF), a Salafist umbrella organization Ahrar al-Sham dominated. SIF reportedly received money and humanitarian goods from Qatar's largest NGO, Qatar Charity, as well as from Turkey's IHH, allowing SIF to increase its legitimacy through the provision of public services.¹⁸⁶ IHH and Qatar Charity have very close ties, and in December 2015, the two organizations signed a partnership agreement in Syria.¹⁸⁷

Ahrar al-Sham and HTS turned against each other in July 2017, demonstrating the limits of Turkish

and Qatari influence, despite their long-standing patronage. Ahrar al-Sham and HTS battled each other for supremacy in Syria's last rebel-held province, Idlib.¹⁸⁸ HTS prevailed. Fighting briefly reignited in January 2018 but ended with another HTS victory.¹⁸⁹ Following the escalation, Ankara maintained support for Ahrar al-Sham against HTS in Idlib, until the former merged with the Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement in February 2018 to form the Syrian Liberation Front.¹⁹⁰

The Islamic State

In the summer of 2014, the Islamic State kidnapped 49 employees of the Turkish consulate in Mosul, including 46 Turks and three Iraqis. According to the Turkish daily *Taraf*, 180 Islamic State members in Turkish prisons or hospitals were traded by Ankara in exchange for the Mosul hostages, despite a U.S. request not to do so.¹⁹¹ Turkey, for example, detained thousands of suspected Islamic State backers in 2015 and 2016 but

183. Erika Solomon, "The \$1bn hostage deal that enraged Qatar's Gulf rivals," *Financial Times* (UK), June 5, 2017. (<https://www.ft.com/content/dd033082-49e9-11e7-a3f4-c742b9791d43>)

184. Guido Steinberg, "Ahrar al-Sham: The 'Syrian Taliban,'" German Institute for International and Security Affairs, May 2016. (https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2016C27_sbg.pdf)

185. Kim Sengupta, "Turkey and Saudi Arabia alarm the West by backing Islamist extremists the Americans had bombed in Syria," *The Independent* (UK), May 12, 2015. (<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-crisis-turkey-and-saudi-arabia-shock-western-countries-by-supporting-anti-assad-jihadists-10242747.html>)

186. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Aaron Y. Zelin, "Uncharitable Organizations," *Foreign Policy*, February 26, 2013. (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/uncharitable-organizations>); Liz Sly, "Syrian Islamists protest U.S. strikes; Americans exit embassy in Beirut; Syrian Islamists protest U.S. strikes; Americans exit embassy in Beirut," *The Washington Post*, September 6, 2013. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/us-orders-partial-evacuation-of-embassy-in-beirut-as-tensions-rise-over-syria-strike/2013/09/06/6af006a8-16f5-11e3-804b-d3a1a3a18f2c_story.html)

187. "İHH ve Qatar Charity arasında 5 yıllık anlaşma (5-year agreement between IHH and Qatar Charity)," *İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı*, December 12, 2016. (<https://www.ihh.org.tr/haber/ihh-ve-qatar-charity-arasinda-5-yillik-anlasma>)

188. Dylan Collins, "Idlib's rebel split: A crossroads for Syrian opposition," *Al-Jazeera* (Qatar), February 2, 2017. (<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/01/idlib-rebel-split-crossroads-syrian-opposition-170131134053716.html>)

189. "The Best of Bad Options for Syria's Idlib," *International Crisis Group*, March 14, 2019. (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria/197-best-bad-options-syrias-idlib>)

190. Tamer Osman, "Syrian Islamist factions join forces against Hayat Tahrir al-Sham," *Al-Monitor*, February 28, 2018. (<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/02/syria-liberation-front-battles-against-hayat-ahrar-al-sham.html>)

191. Constanze Letsch and Ewen MacAskill, "Turkey freed British jihadist in swap deal for ISIS hostages – reports," *The Guardian* (UK), October 6, 2014. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/06/turkey-britons-swap-deal-isis-hostages-reports>); Huseyin Ozay, "Turkey swapped 180 IS militants for 49 hostages," *Al-Monitor*, October 2, 2014. (<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/10/turkey-iraq-syria-isis-hostages.html>)

did not file even a single terror finance prosecution in either year.¹⁹²

Likewise, Qatar did not file a single prosecution for terror finance until 2015.¹⁹³ Qatar finally issued a terror blacklist in 2018 as a result of pressure from the United States and its allies in the GCC. However, the Qataris omitted the Islamic State's main branch in Syria and Iraq, among others.¹⁹⁴

When Turkey launched a long-threatened offensive into northeast Syria on October 9, 2019, it sparked fears of an Islamic State resurgence in the area. Warnings ensued that by attacking the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Washington's key partner in the war against the Islamic State, Ankara could allow thousands of captured jihadists to break free.¹⁹⁵ SDF forces had been guarding more than 10,000 Islamic State fighters and their families in make-shift prisons in northeast Syria, but Turkey's intervention pushed Kurdish forces farther back from the Turkish-Syrian border, resulting in the

escape of more than 800 Islamic State detainees.¹⁹⁶ Turkey, the Trump administration claims, has vowed to contain Islamic State prisoners in the area, but it remains unclear whether Ankara will fulfill that promise given the blind eye it has turned to jihadists in the past.¹⁹⁷

Military Cooperation

With their interests and values aligned, the Turkish-Qatari partnership entered a new phase in December 2014 with the signing of a comprehensive military agreement.¹⁹⁸ The deal, which came into effect the day after Turkey's national elections on June 7, 2015, allowed Turkish troops back into Qatar on the centennial of their departure from the peninsula at

“With their interests and values aligned, the Turkish-Qatari partnership entered a new phase in December 2014 with the signing of a comprehensive military agreement.”

192. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2015,” June 2016. (<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258249.pdf>); U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016,” June 2017. (<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf>)

193. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016,” June 2017. (<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf>); David Andrew Weinberg, “Qatar and Terror Finance Part II: Private Funders of al-Qaeda in Syria,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, January 2017. (https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/defenddemocracy/uploads/documents/11717_Weinberg_Qatar_Report.pdf); U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Remarks of Acting Under Secretary Adam Szubin on Countering the Financing of Terrorism at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies,” October 20, 2016. (<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0590.aspx>); Sigurd Neubauer, “The Rift between Qatar and the GCC Could Threaten Trump’s Foreign Policy,” *The National Interest*, August 8, 2017. (<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-rift-between-qatar-the-gcc-could-threaten-trumps-foreign-21829>)

194. David Weinberg, “Qatar’s Swiss Cheese Terrorism List,” *Anti-Defamation League*, April 11, 2018. (<https://www.adl.org/news/op-ed/qatars-swiss-cheese-terrorism-list>); “Qatar puts 28 people and entities on new terrorism list,” *Reuters*, March 22, 2018. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gulf-qatar-security/qatar-puts-28-people-and-entities-on-new-terrorism-list-idUSKBN1GY222>)

195. Aki Peritz, “The Coming ISIS Jailbreak: The Strategy That Enabled the Caliphate’s Rise Just Became Viable Again,” *Foreign Affairs*, October 23, 2019. (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2019-10-23/coming-isis-jailbreak>)

196. Natasha Turak, “Hundreds of ISIS prisoners are escaping from camps in northern Syria amid Turkish offensive,” *CNBC*, October 14, 2019. (<https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/14/isis-prisoners-are-escaping-from-camps-in-syria-amid-turkish-offensive.html>)

197. Merve Tahiroglu and Jonathan Schanzer, “Islamic State Networks in Turkey,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, March 2017. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2017/03/29/islamic-state-networks-in-turkey>)

198. David Roberts, “The Emerging Military Dimension to the Qatari-Turkish Relationship,” *Royal United Services Institute*, March 16, 2015. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150817194903/https://www.rusi.org/analysis/commentary/ref:C5506C7E787889>); Burak Ege Bekdil, “Turkey Seeks Bigger Military Role in Gulf Region,” *Defense News*, March 8, 2015. (<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/mideast-africa/2015/03/08/turkey-seeks-bigger-military-role-in-gulf-region/24615457>)

the close of the Ottoman era.¹⁹⁹ The agreement paved the way for Turkey to set up a military base – its first anywhere overseas – in Qatar in April 2016 and for Turkish and Qatari forces to conduct joint military exercises.²⁰⁰ Turkish officials stated that the base would help the two countries confront “common enemies.”²⁰¹

Turkey and Qatar have an asymmetric security arrangement; the former, after all, has nearly three times the number of military personnel as the latter has citizens.²⁰² Qatar, therefore, is the primary beneficiary of the budding partnership, using Turkish troops as a deterrent against regional threats.²⁰³

The Tariq bin Ziyad base in southern Doha has a total capacity of 3,000 troops. Turkey initially deployed a force of 130 to the base, falling to 94 as of June 2017.²⁰⁴ After the Gulf blockade began, the Turkish government not only rejected a call from the Arab quartet to shut down its military base in Qatar – one of the 13 formal

demands they made²⁰⁵ – but fast-tracked legislation within two days to deploy additional troops.²⁰⁶

On July 31, 2017, a Turkish frigate carrying 214 sailors arrived in Hamad Port for two days of naval exercises with the Qatari navy.²⁰⁷ The exercise, codenamed “Rapid Response,” included “combat maritime maneuvers.”²⁰⁸ A Turkish force consisting of 30 armored vehicles and 250 soldiers also held joint military exercises with Qatar’s armed forces to prepare for the defense of “vital economic, strategic and infrastructure facilities.”²⁰⁹ Qatar’s Al-Jazeera claimed that Turkey sent additional troops in December 2017 and plans to increase its total deployment to 3,000 personnel.²¹⁰

Military ties continue to expand. In March 2018, Qatar and Turkey held joint military exercises dubbed “Lion’s Den,” which included drills to “fight against psychological warfare and to activate the role of the

199. Serkan Demirtaş, “Turkey to deploy troops in Qatar in line with military deal,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), June 9, 2015. (<http://www.hurriyettailynews.com/turkey-to-deploy-troops-in-qatar-in-line-with-military-deal.aspx>);

200. Tom Finn, “Seeing shared threats, Turkey sets up military base in Qatar,” *Reuters*, April 28, 2016. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-qatar-turkey-military/seeing-shared-threats-turkey-sets-up-military-base-in-qatar-idUSKCN0XP2IT>)

201. Tom Finn, “Turkey to set up Qatar military base to face ‘common enemies,’” *Reuters*, December 15, 2015. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-qatar-turkey-military-idUSKBN0TZ17V20151216>)

202. Aykan Erdemir and Emre Çalışkan, “Turkey and Qatar: An asymmetric partnership that harms Ankara,” *Abram Online* (Egypt), August 3, 2015. (<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/4/136865/Opinion/Turkey-and-Qatar-An-asymmetric-partnership-that-ha.aspx>)

203. Giorgio Cafiero, “How Turkey fits into the Qatar puzzle,” *Al-Monitor*, July 2, 2017. (<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/07/turkey-military-qatar-crisis-egypt-saudi-arabia-uae.html>)

204. “Türk askeri başkent Doha’daki ‘El Rayyan Üssü’nde (Turkish soldiers in the El Reyyan Base in the capital Doha),” *Habertürk* (Turkey), June 8, 2017. (<https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1523169-turk-askeri-baskent-dohadaki-el-rayyan-ussunde>)

205. Colin Dwyer, “Neighboring Arab Nations Slap Qatar With 13-Point List Of Demands,” *NPR*, June 23, 2017. (<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/06/23/534079045/neighboring-arab-nations-slap-qatar-with-13-point-list-of-demands>)

206. Daren Butler, “Turkey’s Erdogan calls for lifting of Qatar blockade, approves troop deployment,” *Reuters*, June 9, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/US-gulf-qatar-turkey-idUSKBN1900HK>)

207. “Turkey, Qatar start joint military exercise,” *Daily Sabah* (Turkey), August 1, 2017. (<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/08/01/turkey-qatar-start-joint-military-exercise>)

208. “Qatar, Turkey conclude joint maritime exercise,” *Gulf Times* (Qatar), August 8, 2017. (<https://www.gulf-times.com/story/559399/Qatar-Turkey-conclude-joint-maritime-exercise>)

209. Tom Finn, “Turkish troops hold exercises in Qatar,” *Reuters*, August 7, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gulf-qatar-turkey-idUSKBN1AN0TE>)

210. “Turkey sends more troops to Qatar,” *Al-Jazeera* (Qatar), December 27, 2017. (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/171227051912500.html>)

press.”²¹¹ In April 2019, Qatar and Turkey kicked off a week-long joint air drill in Doha.²¹²

Another landmark in Turkish-Qatari defense cooperation was Erdogan’s decision in December 2018 to give the Turkish-Qatari vehicle producer BMC the right to operate Turkey’s national tank factory for 25 years, a move that generated controversy in Ankara. The Qatari government owns 49.9 percent of BMC.²¹³ The factory, worth \$20 billion, will produce Turkey’s new Altay tanks, which led opposition politicians to question whether it is in Turkey’s security interests to let a foreign-backed firm participate in a major Turkish defense project.²¹⁴

Meanwhile, Ankara and Doha are also developing defense links with Russia. Both Turkey and Qatar are in the process of procuring the Russian S-400 air defense system, which violates U.S. restrictions. Turkey received its first S-400 battery in July 2019 and its second in September 2019.²¹⁵ In response, the United States removed Turkey from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, while Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Washington is “looking

at” sanctioning Turkey for its S-400 purchase.²¹⁶ Qatar is also in talks with Russia for the acquisition of the S-400 system,²¹⁷ a situation Washington says it is monitoring.²¹⁸

Qatar’s Economic Support for Erdogan

The economic relationship between Ankara and Doha is the mirror image of their military cooperation. Financially, Turkey is the endangered beneficiary, whereas Qatar plays the role of provider. Qatar’s foreign direct investment in Turkey between 2005 and 2018 stands at \$1.6 billion, making it the 18th largest investor in the country.²¹⁹ While Qatari inflows represent less than one percent of Turkey’s cumulative foreign direct investment, Doha’s strategic targeting of the finance, media, and defense sectors make it an indispensable partner for Erdogan.²²⁰

These investments have also created a safety net for the Turkish government after its support for the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East led to Turkey’s isolation

211. “Qatar, Turkey hold joint military drills,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), April 28, 2019. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/qatar-turkey-hold-joint-military-drills-129357>)

212. “Turkish, US, Qatari forces hold joint air drill in Doha,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), March 27, 2018. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-us-qatari-forces-hold-joint-air-drill-in-doha-142988>)

213. Zulfikar Dogan, “Qatar wins big as Erdoğan privatizes \$20 billion tank factory,” *Ahval* (Turkey), January 18, 2019. (<https://ahvalnews.com/qatar-turkey-qatar-wins-big-erdogan-privatizes-20-billion-tank-factory>)

214. Metin Gürcan, “Privatization of Turkish military factory draws strong criticism,” *Al-Monitor*, January 18, 2019. (<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/01/turkey-privatization-military-factory-draws-criticism.html>)

215. “U.S. eyeing sanctions over Turkey’s S-400 buy: Mnuchin,” *Reuters*, September 9, 2019. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-sanctions/mnuchin-considering-u-s-sanctions-over-turkeys-s-400-purchase-idUSKCN1VU1DF>)

216. Idrees Ali and Phil Stewart, “Exclusive: U.S. may soon pause preparations for delivering F-35s to Turkey,” *Reuters*, March 21, 2019. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-defense-exclusive/exclusive-us-may-soon-pause-preparations-for-delivering-f-35s-to-turkey-idUSKCN1R20AY>); “U.S. eyeing sanctions over Turkey’s S-400 buy: Mnuchin,” *Reuters*, September 9, 2019. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-sanctions/mnuchin-considering-u-s-sanctions-over-turkeys-s-400-purchase-idUSKCN1VU1DF>)

217. Vladimir Soldatkin, “Russia and Qatar discuss S-400 missile systems deal TASS,” *Reuters*, July 21, 2018. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-qatar-arms/russia-and-qatar-discuss-s-400-missile-systems-deal-tass-idUSKBN1KB0F0>)

218. Paul McLeary, “Despite US Threats, Another Ally Mulls Russia’s S-400,” *Breaking Defense*, March 5, 2019. (<https://breakingdefense.com/2019/03/despite-us-threats-another-ally-mulls-russias-s-400>)

219. Pelin Ünker, “Katar ev için geldi! (Qatar came for houses),” *Cumhuriyet* (Turkey), August 17, 2018. (http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/ekonomi/1057520/Katar_ev_icin_geldi_.html)

220. Güven Sak, “Qatari investments in Turkey: An urban legend,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), June 17, 2017. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/guven-sak/qatari-investments-in-turkey-an-urban-legend-114422>); Mustafa Sonmez, “Qatari money increasingly important for Turkey,” *Al-Monitor*, May 31, 2017. (<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/en/originals/2017/05/turkey-qatar-how-important-doha-money.html>)

and the loss of economic allies.²²¹ Furthermore, since Turkey has a high current account deficit, Qatari injections of foreign currency are a lifeline for its balance of payments.²²²

In August 2018, when Turkey suffered its worst currency crisis in decades, Qatar provided Ankara an economic lifeline of \$15 billion to prop up the Turkish lira and aid the Turkish economy.²²³ The aid package included a mix of economic projects, currency deposits, and investments, plus a \$3 billion currency swap to shore up the lira.²²⁴ Qatar's investment – a sum equal to \$420,000 per Qatari family – actually exceeded Turkey's total inflow of foreign direct investment in 2017.²²⁵ As of early 2019, Turkish Deputy Finance Minister Osman Dincbas said “a portion of the \$15 billion” had been delivered, without clarifying further.²²⁶

But Qatar's financial dealings with Turkey have not all been philanthropic. Doha has shown interest in investing in Turkey's financial sector since 2012, when Qatar National Bank – the emirate's biggest lender – made a failed bid to acquire Denizbank.²²⁷ In 2013, the Commercial Bank of Qatar²²⁸ became the first Qatari lender to enter the Turkish banking sector after becoming the primary shareholder of Alternatifbank.²²⁹

The following year, Qatar Islamic Bank sought to acquire a stake in Turkey's Islamic lender Bank Asya,²³⁰ which was under pressure to sell off its assets after a power struggle between then-Prime Minister Erdogan and his former ally-turned-arch-nemesis, the U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen.²³¹ The Turkish government seized the bank in May 2015 and shuttered it in July 2016.²³²

Qatar National Bank ultimately succeeded in buying Finansbank, Turkey's fifth-largest privately owned bank

221. Soner Çağaptay, “Erdogan's Failure on the Nile,” *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs* (Egypt), Spring 2019. (<https://www.thecaireview.com/essays/erdogans-failure-on-the-nile>)

222. Fehim Taştekin, “Is Qatar still Turkey's foul-weather friend?” *Al-Monitor*, June 28, 2019. (<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/06/turkey-gulf-is-qatar-still-foul-weather-friend.html>)

223. “Qatar's Emir pledges \$15 billion direct investment in Turkey: Erdogan's office,” *Reuters*, August 15, 2018. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-currency-qatar/qatars-emir-pledges-15-billion-direct-investment-in-turkey-erdogans-office-idUSKBN1L01MX>)

224. Eric Knecht, “Booming Qatar-Turkey trade to hit \$2 billion for 2018 as Gulf rift drags on,” *Reuters*, January 17, 2019. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-qatar-turkey/booming-qatar-turkey-trade-to-hit-2-billion-for-2018-as-gulf-rift-drag-on-idUSKCN1PB0G7>)

225. @gnuseibeh, “Qatar has pledged to pay Turkey today the equivalent of \$420,000 per Qatari family. That's a total of \$15 b to save Erdogan. That's money very badly spent,” *Twitter*, August 15, 2018. (<https://twitter.com/gnuseibeh/status/1029781566707429376>); Laura Pitel, Adam Samson, Andrew England, and Demetri Sevastopulo, “Lira rallies after Turkey gets tough on short selling,” *Financial Times* (UK), August 15, 2018. (<https://www.ft.com/content/61603f1e-a04c-11e8-85da-eeb7a9ce36e4>)

226. Eric Knecht, “Booming Qatar-Turkey trade to hit \$2 billion for 2018 as Gulf rift drags on,” *Reuters*, January 17, 2019. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-qatar-turkey/booming-qatar-turkey-trade-to-hit-2-billion-for-2018-as-gulf-rift-drag-on-idUSKCN1PB0G7>)

227. “Qatar bank makes higher bid for Dexia Turkish unit-sources,” *Reuters*, April 1, 2012. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/deniz-qatar-dexia/rpt-qatar-bank-makes-higher-bid-for-dexia-turkish-unit-sources-idUSL6E8FB1VL20120411>)

228. Camilla Hall and Daniel Dombey, “CBQ agrees terms for Alternatifbank stake,” *Financial Times* (UK), March 18, 2013. (<https://www.ft.com/content/4b7bbc04-8fdc-11e2-9239-00144feabdc0>)

229. “Fitch upgrades Alternatifbank on ownership change” *Reuters*, July 23, 2013. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/fitch-upgrades-alternatifbank-on-ownership/rpt-fitch-upgrades-alternatifbank-on-ownership-change-idUSFit66445520130723>); “Turkish Banks – Ranked by Total Assets,” *The Banks Association of Turkey*, December 31, 2013. (https://www.tbb.org.tr/en/Content/Upload/istatistikiraporlar/tablolari/1418/table_1_turkish_banks_-_ranked_by_total_assets.xls)

230. Tom Finn, “Qatar Islamic Bank may use sukuk funding for M&A -chairman,” *Reuters*, February 22, 2016. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/qib-sukuk/qatar-islamic-bank-may-use-sukuk-funding-for-ma-chairman-idUSL8N1613K6>)

231. “Turkey's Bank Asya, Qatar's QIB end exclusive talks over Asya stake sale -sources,” *Reuters*, July 2, 2014. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/turkey-banks/turkeys-bank-asya-qatars-qib-end-exclusive-talks-over-asya-stake-sale-sources-idUSL6N0P439G20140702>)

232. Emre Peker, “Turkish Authorities Seize Bank Asya,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 31, 2015. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/turkish-authorities-seize-bank-asya-1433102306>); “Turkey: Bank Asya's banking license cancelled,” *Anadolu Agency* (Turkey), July 22, 2016. (<http://aa.com.tr/en/economy/turkey-bank-asyas-banking-license-cancelled/613864>)

by assets.²³³ The purchase provided relief for Turkish markets as foreign investors withdrew some \$1.5 billion from Turkish stocks and bonds in the aftermath of the snap elections in November of that year.²³⁴

“Qatari firms have formed partnerships with or invested in media firms with close ties to Erdogan and his family.”

Turkey’s sovereign wealth fund, which Erdogan created to shield the country’s publicly owned companies from public audits,²³⁵ could be the next major Qatari acquisition in Turkey. In June 2017, the Turkish government claimed that Qatar provided \$600 million to Turkey through the sovereign wealth fund,²³⁶ although the fund’s chairman later denied it.²³⁷ In September 2017, Erdogan dismissed the chairman, which led to speculation that the reshuffle stemmed from his failure to acquire the promised funds from Qatar.²³⁸

Media and Communications

To further their mutual interests, Qatari firms have formed partnerships with or invested in media firms with

close ties to Erdogan and his family. Transactions have often involved the purchase of media properties that fell under state control because of indebtedness. At times, the failure of Qatari investors to account for Erdogan’s interests has undermined their projects.

Sabah-ATV

In 2008 an obscure Qatari company paid \$1.1 billion to acquire Sabah-ATV, Turkey’s second largest media group. Qatar accomplished the acquisition by working with a firm tied to Erdogan.²³⁹ At the time, both Berat Albayrak, Erdogan’s son-in-law and Turkey’s current minister of Treasury and Finance, and his brother, Serhat Albayrak, were senior executives at Calik Holding, which partnered with Qatar’s Lusail International Media Group to acquire Sabah-ATV.²⁴⁰

Al-Jazeera Turk

Al-Jazeera first attempted to enter the Turkish market through a partnership with TVNET, a broadcaster owned by Berat Albayrak. The Qatari network withdrew from the TVNET deal in 2011, reportedly due to tensions with the Turkish government.²⁴¹ That

233. “Qatar National Bank says it has completed acquisition of Turkey’s Finansbank,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), June 16, 2016. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/qatar-national-bank-says-it-has-completed-acquisition-of-turkeys-finansbank.aspx>)

234. Zülfiyar Doğan, “Amid financial hardship, Erdogan looks to Qatar as ‘rich daddy,’” *Al-Monitor*, December 29, 2015. (<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/en/originals/2015/12/turkey-israel-russia-qatari-money-props-up-erdogan.html>)

235. Aykan Erdemir and Yağmur Menzilioğlu, “Erdogan Builds a Parallel Budget,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, February 10, 2017. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2017/02/10/erdogan-builds-a-parallel-budget/>)

236. Aslı Işık, “İki sıkı müttefik: Türkiye ve Katar (Two close allies: Turkey and Qatar),” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), May 7, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/tr/iki-siki-muttefik-turkiye-ve-katar/a-39150551>)

237. Turkish Grand National Assembly, “İzmir Milletvekili Selin Sayek Böke Tarafından Yönetilen 7/14953 Esas Numaralı Soru Önergesi (Parliamentary Question Submitted by Izmir Deputy Selin Sayek Böke Numbered 7/14953),” June 21, 2017. (<http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d26/7/7-14953s.pdf>); Turkish Grand National Assembly, “İzmir Milletvekili Selin Sayek Böke Tarafından Yönetilen 7/14953 Esas Numaralı Soru Önergesinin Yanıtı (Response to Parliamentary Question Submitted by Izmir Deputy Selin Sayek Böke Numbered 7/14953),” September 28, 2017. (<http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d26/7/7-14953c.pdf>)

238. “Erdogan’ın Varlık Fonu hayal kırıklığının sebebi belli oldu (Reason behind Erdogan’s Sovereign Welfare Fund disappointment revealed),” *soL* (Turkey), October 4, 2017. (<http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/erdoganin-varlik-fonu-hayal-kirikliginin-sebebi-belli-oldu-212120>)

239. “Turkish media group Sabah-ATV sold to Kalyon group,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey); December 20, 2013. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-media-group-sabah-atv-sold-to-kalyon-group-59898>); Craig Shaw and Zeynep Sentek, “Turkish President Erdogan’s son-in-law in off-shore tax scheme,” *The Black Sea* (Romania), May 19, 2017. (<https://theblacksea.eu/stories/malta-files/turkish-president-erdogans-son-in-law-in-off-shore-tax-scheme>)

240. Zülfiyar Doğan, “Amid financial hardship, Erdogan looks to Qatar as ‘rich daddy,’” *Al-Monitor*, December 29, 2015. (<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/en/originals/2015/12/turkey-israel-russia-qatari-money-props-up-erdogan.html>)

241. “El Cezire Türk’te büyük kavga (Big fight at Al Jazeera Turk),” *Gerçek Gündem* (Turkey), May 17, 2011. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110820085959/http://www.gercekgundem.com:80/?p=372045>)

same year, Al-Jazeera tried to acquire CINE 5, a private station with national reach that had been seized by a government fund under Erdogan's control, but a Turkish court annulled the sale.²⁴²

Despite failing to acquire a broadcast license, Al-Jazeera Turk reportedly had 100 employees in 2013, at an estimated expense of \$2 million monthly (although it reportedly fired more than two dozen the next year for supporting anti-government protests).²⁴³ In 2015, the president of Al-Jazeera Turk resigned amid rumors that the network had abandoned plans for a television channel.²⁴⁴ Shortly thereafter, the network's news coordinator also resigned, announcing that Al-Jazeera Turk would be downsizing significantly.²⁴⁵ Qatar reportedly spent more than \$100 million to set up Al-Jazeera Turk, a channel that never launched.²⁴⁶ Its online platform stopped publishing in May 2017.²⁴⁷

The ultimate cause of Al-Jazeera's failure remains difficult to assess. In 2013, Turkish media claimed that Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu wanted the channel to start operations immediately, but Erdogan feared the network would favor Davutoglu.²⁴⁸ One journalist claimed Al-Jazeera met opposition because of its unwillingness to use the word "terrorist" to describe militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as the PKK.²⁴⁹

Al-Jazeera more recently attracted Erdogan's ire with its coverage in Al-Jazeera English of Turkey's October 2019 operation into Syria.²⁵⁰ In an uncharacteristically vocal rebuke of Qatar, the editorial board of the Erdogan-mouthpiece *Daily Sabah* called on Al-Jazeera "to weed out all individuals seeking to poison [the Turkish-Qatari] alliance behind the smokescreen of independent journalism."²⁵¹

242. "Cine 5, El Jazeera Türk'e devredildi (Cine 5 transferred to Al Jazeera Turk)," *Sabah* (Turkey), July 30, 2017. (<http://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2011/07/30/cine-5-el-jazeera-turke-devredildi>); İsmail Saymaz, "TMSF'ye Cine 5 davası: Hukuk tanımadılar (Cine 5 lawsuit for TMSF: They did not recognize law)," *Radikal* (Turkey), June 11, 2016. (<http://www.radikal.com.tr/ekonomi/tmsfy-cine-5-davasi-hukuk-tanimadilar-1376911>)

243. "Televizyonculuk Tarihinin En Garip 'Kuruluş' Hikayesi! (Strangest Establishment Story in Television History!)," *Medya Radar* (Turkey), November 7, 2012. (<http://www.medyaradar.com/televizyonculuk-tarihinin-en-garip-kurulus-hikayesi-haberi-90577>); "Yuh artık! Sekiz gazeteciyi hangi gerekçeyle işten atmışlar (Why they fired eight journalists)," *Odatv* (Turkey), November 5, 2013. (<http://odativ.com/yuh-artik-sekiz-gazeteciyi-hangi-gerekceyle-isten-atmislar-0511131200.html>) "El Cezire Türk'te işten çıkarmalar devam ediyor (Lay-offs continue at Al Jazeera Turk)," *Evrensel* (Turkey), November 7, 2013. (<https://www.evrensel.net/haber/71537/el-cezire-turkte-isten-cikarmalar-devam-ediyor#.Ut1roHng62w>)

244. "El Cezire Türk'te flaş gelişme! Hangi üst düzey isim görevden ayrıldı? (Flash news at Al Jazeera Turk! Which high-level name resigned?)," *Medya Radar* (Turkey), May 7, 2015. (<http://www.medyaradar.com/el-cezire-turkte-flas-gelisme-hangi-ust-duzey-isim-gorevden-ayrildi-medyaradar-ozel-haberi-138456>)

245. "Yayın yönetmeninden 'kuyruğu dik tutma' açıklaması! Al Jazeera Türk'te neler oluyor? İşte, son gelişmeler! (Face saving statement from editor! What is going on at Al Jazeera Turk? Here are the latest developments!)," *Medya Tava* (Turkey), May 8, 2015. (http://www.medyatava.com/haber/yayin-yonetmeninden-kuyrugu-dik-tutma-aciklamasi_123569)

246. "Televizyonculuk Tarihinin En Garip 'Kuruluş' Hikayesi! (Strangest Establishment Story in Television History!)," *Medya Radar* (Turkey), November 7, 2012. (<http://www.medyaradar.com/televizyonculuk-tarihinin-en-garip-kurulus-hikayesi-haberi-90577>)

247. "Al Jazeera Türk veda ediyor (Al Jazeera Turk says goodbye)," *Habertürk* (Turkey), May 3, 2017. (<http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1482441-al-jazeera-turk-kapaniyor>)

248. "Erdogan ile Davutoğlu'nun El Cezire rekabeti (Competition over Al Jazeera between Erdogan and Davutoglu)," *Odatv* (Turkey), January 2, 2013. (<http://odativ.com/erdogan-ile-davutoglundun-el-cezire-rekabeti-0201131200.html>)

249. Cengiz Semercioğlu, "El Cezire Türkiye, PKK'ya ne diyecek? (What will Al Jazeera Turk call PKK?)," *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), March 30, 2012. (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/el-cezire-turkiye-pkk-ya-ne-diyecek-20234565>)

250. "How Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera converged for Turkey's operation in Syria," *TRT World* (Turkey), November 1, 2019. (<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/how-al-arabiya-and-al-jazeera-converged-for-turkey-s-operation-in-syria-31037>)

251. "Al Jazeera English: A threat against the Turkey-Qatar alliance," *Daily Sabah* (Turkey), November 4, 2019. (<https://www.dailysabah.com/editorial/2019/11/04/al-jazeera-english-a-threat-against-the-turkey-qatar-alliance>)

Digiturk

In 2015, Qatar's beIN Group, formerly known as Al-Jazeera Sport, acquired Turkey's largest satellite television provider, Digiturk, which at the time had 3.5 million subscribers and was under state ownership because of outstanding debt.²⁵²

The \$1.4 billion deal became a highly controversial subject in Turkey due to a lack of transparency.²⁵³ Opposition members of the parliament criticized the government for keeping the purchase price a secret and for bypassing domestic buyers.

As of 2019, there are reports that beIN's investment in Digiturk has become a liability.²⁵⁴ Given Turkey's economic downturn and the government censorship of broadcasters, Digiturk's subscriber base fell to 2.4 million, and the company suffered a similar downturn in advertising revenues. As a result, the satellite television provider is considering defaulting on the \$1.5 billion it pledged to pay over the next three years for the right to broadcast Turkish soccer league games.

Energy

Turkey is dependent on foreign energy, and gas-rich Doha has been a friend to Ankara in both foul weather and fair. In 2014, amid worries that Turkey's highly industrialized Marmara region was too dependent on Russian gas, Ankara signed a deal to import 1.2 million tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar.²⁵⁵

When Ankara's relations with Moscow soured after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane in November 2015,²⁵⁶ Qatar offered additional LNG shipments to help mitigate a potential energy cut-off by Moscow.²⁵⁷ Turkey's limited LNG storage and gasification capacity reportedly was insufficient for the amount of Qatari gas it would need.²⁵⁸ Still, the episode demonstrated Qatar's readiness to support Erdogan. The following month, Erdogan and Qatari Emir Tamim signed an agreement in Doha to expand Turkey's imports of Qatari natural gas.²⁵⁹ The deal also established visa-free travel between the two countries.²⁶⁰

Energy ties have continued to expand. During a 2016 trip to Doha, Erdogan hinted at possible investment in LNG storage projects in Turkey with Qatar.²⁶¹ In

252. "Digitürk'ün satışı Meclis'e taşındı (Digiturk sale discussed in the parliament)," *Dünya* (Turkey), June 10, 2017. (<https://www.dunya.com/sirketler/digiturk039un-satisi-meclis039e-tasindi-haberi-319365>)

253. Cahit Saraçoğlu, "Satış bedeli 1.4 milyar \$ (Sale value is \$1.4 billion)," *Yeni Şafak* (Turkey), June 7, 2016. (<http://www.yenisafak.com/ekonomi/satis-bedeli-14-milyar--2476899>); Piotr Zaleski and Simeon Kerr, "Al-Jazeera's Bein buys Turkish pay-TV network Digiturk," *Financial Times* (UK), July 14, 2015. (<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d524cdce-2a17-11e5-acfb-cbd2e1c81cca.html>); Aylin Dağsalgüler, "Digitürk'ün satışı ne anlama geliyor? (What does Digiturk's sale mean?)," *Zete* (Turkey), July 21, 2015. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150725014831/http://zete.com/makaleler/digiturkun-satisi-ne-anlama-geliyor>)

254. Bahadır Özgür, "Bir Katar rüyası: Paranın prensibi olmaz! (A Qatari dream: money has no principles!)," *Gazete Duvar* (Turkey), June 19, 2019. (<https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/yazarlar/2019/06/19/bir-katar-ruyasi-paranin-prensibi-olmaz>)

255. Mehmet Cetingülec, "What will Turkey do if Russia turns off gas?" *Al-Monitor*, September 23, 2014. (<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/09/turkey-russia-ukraine-european-union-natural-gas-tanap.html>)

256. "Turkey aims to meet any Russian gas shortfall with Qatari LNG: sources," *Reuters*, December 2, 2015. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-russia-qatar-gas/turkey-aims-to-meet-any-russian-gas-shortfall-with-qatari-lng-sources-idUSKBN0TL1WX20151202>)

257. Olgu Okumuş, "Will Turkey be able to replace Russian gas with Qatari imports?" *Al-Monitor*, December 4, 2015. (<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/12/turkey-russia-qatar-cannot-replace-russian-gas.html>)

258. Ibid.

259. "Katar'la doğalgaz anlaşması (Gas deal with Qatar)," *Al-Jazeera* (Qatar), December 2, 2015. (<http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/katarla-dogalgaz-anlasmasi>)

260. Olgu Okumuş, "Will Turkey be able to replace Russian gas with Qatari imports?" *Al-Monitor*, December 4, 2015. (<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/12/turkey-russia-qatar-cannot-replace-russian-gas.html>)

261. "Turkey 'to establish military base in Qatar," *Gulf News* (UAE), December 2, 2017. (<http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/turkey/turkey-to-establish-military-base-in-qatar-1.1630691>)

February 2017, Qatari Energy Minister Mohammed Saleh al-Sada said that Qatar was ready to ship Turkey's requested amount of LNG on demand with no restriction on quantities.²⁶² In September 2017, state-run Qatargas signed an agreement with Turkey's state-owned Botas to deliver 1.5 million tons of LNG per year for three years.²⁶³ The following September, Turkey's Ministry of Trade announced a deal for the comprehensive liberalization of trade in goods and services between Qatar and Turkey, thereby aiming to secure a cheaper supply of natural gas and refined oil products.²⁶⁴

Turkey has also been looking to develop its renewable energy portfolio through partnerships with Qatar. In March 2016, Qatar Solar Technologies signed a cooperation agreement with Turkey's state-owned Electricity Generation Company to develop Turkey's solar industry. The agreement came alongside memoranda of understanding between Qatar Solar Technologies and the Turkish energy companies Bendis Enerji and Fernas Group.²⁶⁵

Qatari firms have also been financing alternative energy development in Turkey. In 2016, Qatari investment group QInvest announced it would partially finance a Turkish private equity firm's acquisition of an operational 81-megawatt hydro-electric power plant in Turkey. QInvest provided \$30 million for the acquisition.²⁶⁶

Policy Recommendations

Few recognize the extent to which the Turkey-Qatar alliance has enabled terror financiers to operate in not one but both jurisdictions. As with providing joint safe

havens, Turkey's and Qatar's willful negligence on terror finance allows these financiers to act with impunity, by providing them a back-up base from which to operate should either Qatar or Turkey face pressure.

Qatar and Turkey have each hosted Islamist radicals that espouse an anti-American worldview and advocate armed conflict, extremist policies, or both. Moreover, the two have often collaborated in this regard; when either Ankara or Doha has come under foreign pressure to expel these radicals from its territory, the other has welcomed the expellees. This trend is particularly glaring in the cases of both the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas.

The combined Turkish-Qatari effort to bolster Islamist ideology, terror finance, and radical networks requires a concerted response by the United States to compel Ankara and Doha to curb their malign conduct. Washington should pursue a multipronged approach that involves its transatlantic allies and regional partners in pressuring both states to abandon the behavior that jeopardizes their long-term military cooperation with the United States.

- The U.S. Treasury Department should continue to sanction Turkey- and Qatar-based individuals and entities involved in terror and illicit finance. The U.S. government should urge both countries to take legal and administrative measures necessary to address the problem. The president should pressure the Turkish president and the Qatari emir to end their practice of allowing impunity for known terror financiers, crack down on funding to terrorists that flows through their borders, and develop more robust domestic blacklists and enforcement methods.

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263. "Qatargas to sell annual 1.5 mln tonnes of LNG to Turkey's Botas," *Reuters*, September 20, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/qatar-lng-turkey/corrected-update-1-qatargas-to-sell-annual-1-5-mln-tonnes-of-lng-to-turkeys-botas-idUSL5N1M11CL>)

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- Washington should condition future high-level bilateral dialogue with Qatar on concrete and verifiable steps taken on terror finance. The United States should limit cabinet-level dialogue with Qatar until it takes steps to address Washington's terror and illicit finance concerns.
- The U.S. government should urge Turkey and Qatar to cease propping up Islamist proxies in the Middle East and North Africa to the detriment of Western attempts to advance regional stability. If Ankara and Doha show no changes in their policies, the U.S. government should identify and designate Turkish and Qatari officials involved in sending funds or arms to Islamist proxies. This should include branches of the Muslim Brotherhood, as appropriate.
- The United States and its transatlantic allies should coordinate efforts to push back against hate-speech and incitement in the Turkish and Qatari state-owned and pro-government media. A good place to start would be to require Turkish and Qatari state-owned media to register as foreign agents, and to conduct public awareness campaigns to expose these governments' funding for their media outlets. Washington and its allies should also join forces in supporting independent media outlets that allow the Turkish and Qatari publics to access critical news coverage.
- Washington should explore basing alternatives to U.S. bases in Turkey and Qatar to curb the ability of these two governments to use these bases as bargaining chips vis-à-vis the United States. The U.S. Department of Defense should begin studying basing options in other Gulf countries, with the goal of either downsizing or eradicating the U.S. military's presence at Al-Udeid and Incirlik.
- While Turkey has already started receiving the Russian-made S-400 air defense system, Qatar is in the process of procuring it. The United States should use incentives and disincentives, including invoking the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which directs the president to levy sanctions on buyers of Russian defense equipment. President Trump should not hesitate to use these sanctions to

discourage Qatar's purchase and Turkey's activation of the S-400 batteries and to encourage the procurement of military equipment made by NATO countries.

- The United States should support efforts to resolve the Gulf rift, but not on terms that would enable Qatar's dangerous conduct to continue. Any resolution must include a compromise from Qatar on its support for extremism, backing for the Muslim Brotherhood, and other major areas of contention. The U.S. should not support any efforts that will not require concessions from Qatar on the aforementioned areas. Welcoming Qatar back into the Gulf, without a real change from Doha on its policy priorities, will be a temporary fix, at best.

Of course, if Turkey and Qatar change their behavior, then Washington should welcome them back into its fold. The United States should be prepared to offer inducements to Doha and Ankara if they exhibit good will and cease their malign activities.

- Reinstate Turkey into the F-35 program and offer the F-35 capability to Qatar. Both countries stand to reap the benefits of having the most advanced fighter aircraft in the world – if they turn the page on their anti-American behavior.
- Establish Al-Udeid as a permanent base. Qatar would stand to benefit even more from the U.S. security umbrella if the American presence at Al-Udeid were made permanent. The Pentagon can label Al-Udeid as a permanent overseas establishment if Qatar proves it has stopped working against U.S. interests.
- Support U.S. defense projects that involve joint production with, and technology transfer to, Turkey and Qatar.

The greatest benefit Ankara and Doha would reap by changing their malign policies would be burnishing their global image as permissive jurisdictions for illicit and terrorism finance. This would ameliorate their investment climate and help remedy their public diplomacy deficit. The United States should provide a roadmap for how to arrive there.

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