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The American University in Cairo  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

# **The Power of Attraction: Qatar's Soft Power as the Means to Regional and International Prominence**

A Thesis Submitted to  
The Department of Political Science  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Arts

By

**Joseph Francis Hawkins**

Under the supervision of **Dr. Bahgat Korany**

September 2012

The American University in Cairo

# **The Power of Attraction: Qatar's Soft Power as the Means to Regional and International Prominence**

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**Joseph Francis Hawkins**

To the Department of Political Science

**September/2012**

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
The degree of Master of Arts

Has been approved by

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To the policy makers in the United States, heed the words of Mahjoob Zweiri and Simon Staffell: “The simple fact is that coercion is antithetical to persuasive diplomacy and rhetorical bellicosity can stifle practical cooperation and dialogue before it has even begun.”

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

“The foreign policies of Middle East states are shaped by the way their leaders negotiate the often conflicting pressures emanating from three conceptually distinct environments: (1) the domestic level; (2) the regional systemic level; and (3) the global (or international) level.”-Raymond Hinnebusch<sup>1</sup>

In a class she teaches at Georgetown University, Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright consistently reminds her students: “Foreign policy is just trying to get some other country to do what you want. The question is what tools you have.”<sup>2</sup> If we apply this aphorism to Qatar, we are forced to identify their tools of attraction with which to gain influence. However, due to inherent disadvantages such as small size and lack of military strength, their tools are limited. As an antidote to those disadvantages, Qatar has taken a soft power approach as its primary tool of foreign policy, and this approach has enhanced its credibility with a variety of international actors and helped distinguish it from its regional neighbors. In so doing Qatar has worked within the “three conceptually distinct environments” Hinnebusch delineates in order to achieve a more prominent and dominant position within mediation, media and culture.

The thesis will be segmented into quartiles. The first chapter will examine the methodology of soft power, derived from Joseph S. Nye, Jr., as well as categorize and elucidate Qatar’s manifestations of soft power, particularly Qatar’s political soft power. The second chapter will analyze Qatar’s leadership on the regional and international levels alongside Richard A. Higgott and Andrew Fenton Cooper’s article, “Middle power

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Hinnebusch, “Introduction: The Analytical Framework,” in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, eds. Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Madeleine Albright, “Madeleine Albright at the 92nd Street Y on The Role of Religion in World Politics,” *92nd Street Y*, July 21, 2006.

leadership and coalition building: Australia, the Cairns Group, and the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations” while also detailing Qatar’s manifestations of financial soft power. The third chapter will examine the foreign policy of two of Qatar’s neighbors and competitors, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), to situate Qatar’s rise within the regional, geopolitical context. And the fourth chapter will assess Qatar’s strengths and challenges while forecasting its regional and international positions by 2030, which is the year that has been set as a marker for the national vision.

Qatar’s soft power emanates from the framework of liberalism, which stresses interdependence among actors and undermines the traditional realist inclination to view state power solely in military terms. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Norman Angell, a liberal from the London School of Economics, stated: “We cannot ensure the stability of the present system by the political or military preponderance of our nation or alliance by imposing its will on a rival.”<sup>3</sup> This statement helps conceptualize liberalism and provides the framework for understanding Nye’s notion of soft power.<sup>4</sup> The proliferation of technology and growing interconnectedness of the globe has largely upended the traditional realist concept of balance of power between states. As the efficacy of this old model has dimmed, the appeal of the liberal concept of complex interdependence has kindled a newfound understanding of international relations. The term, attributed to Robert Keohane and Nye, is “the result of multiple transnational and interstate ties, often economic, that tie states together and potentially mute conflict.”<sup>5</sup> This new era of

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<sup>3</sup> Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1933), 137.

<sup>4</sup> The author is cognizant of the differences within liberalism (i.e. institutional liberalism, neoliberalism, etc.) but speaks generally here of the framework of the theory rather than of its individual manifestations.

<sup>5</sup> Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshemi, “Glossary,” in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 351.

cooperation and globalization commenced in the aftermath of World War II and was swiftly ushered in following the end of the Cold War. Within interdependence, international institutions, such as the IMF and the UN, receive greater focus and responsibility.

Globalization has altered old thinking by combining spheres of political activity formerly segmented. For an alternative conceptual lens, Bahgat Korany employs the neologism “intermestics” to view and analyze this transformation. He explains that intermestics “denotes the close interconnectedness and overlapping between international and domestic dimensions of socio-political processes and interactions.”<sup>6</sup> Elaborating, he says, “Intermestics as a conceptual lens is thus a reflection of creeping globalization, characterized by the retreat of the state—the traditional repository of sovereignty—and the rise instead of intense societal interconnections and the speedy circulation of ideas.”<sup>7</sup> The concept of intermestics is central to understanding Qatar’s rise. They have keenly grasped how regional disputes, such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict or the crisis in Syria, have rippling effects beyond borders. Moreover, the altered political and economic landscape, where interdependence among states and non-state entities is now non-negotiable, creates more equity in international relations, and this equity has allowed Qatar to increase its influence and attractiveness regionally and globally.

Despite the growing pervasiveness of globalization, the necessity of comprehending intermestics and interdependence is not new. Each country faces various

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<sup>6</sup> Bahgat Korany, “The Middle East Since the Cold War: Still Insecure,” in *International Relations of the Middle East*, ed. Louise Fawcett (New York: Oxford UP, 2008), 64.

<sup>7</sup> Korany, “The Middle East Since the Cold War,” 64.

constraints, pressures and opportunities that shape political, economic and social behavior. Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki note that with Arab countries, “as with the rest of the developing or dependent countries—the constraints outnumber the opportunities.”<sup>8</sup> Qatar, as this thesis will demonstrate, specifically in Chapter III, is not immune to those constraints. Michael Brecher articulates this point well, observing, “The foreign policy of states is shaped by domestic conditions, by the values and perceptions of policy-makers, and by the global and regional environments in which they exist.”<sup>9</sup>

Paul C. Noble builds on Brecher’s analysis:

National concerns influence what governments would like to do, but the environment determines what they are able to do. There are two ways in which systemic conditions shape state behavior. In the first place, systemic conditions either provide a set of opportunities, or, more commonly, serve as a set of constraints, permitting states a certain range of possible action. Second, systemic conditions generate forces that push or pull states in certain directions.<sup>10</sup>

Summarily, at the foundation of Qatar’s rise are these “systemic conditions,” which constrain or liberate decision-making depending on contextual factors.

For example, one such contextual factor is Qatar’s economic strength, manifested in its oil and natural gas deposits. Realizing the opportunities and benefits oil affords in international relations, Qatari leadership has used the resource as a catalyst to minimize the country’s disadvantages, a small military, little geographical area and lack of historical, political clout, and maximize its advantages, perceived neutrality as a mediator

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<sup>8</sup> Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, “The Global System and Arab Foreign Policies,” in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, eds. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 29-30.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel* (London: Oxford UP, 1972), 1-7.

<sup>10</sup> Paul C. Noble, “The Arab System: Opportunities, Constraints, and Pressures,” in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, eds. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 41.

and rising, cultural leader in the region. The strategic importance of oil cannot be understated and serves as the funding for Qatari soft power. Allen J. Fromherz writes, “The history of Qatar is not simply the story of oil but how oil wealth is used to project influence internally and externally.”<sup>11</sup> The export of oil, which rapidly accelerated after Sheikh Hamad’s bloodless coup in 1995, in many ways insulates Qatar from external economic stresses and allows it to have tremendous flexibility in the political realm.

Fromherz notes:

Unlike other oil-producing countries, Qatar has a very low base price—the point at which oil or gas prices no longer ensure financial stability....Venezuela requires an oil price of \$95 a barrel to ensure macroeconomic security, Saudi Arabia \$55. Qatar, however, could still remain financially stable even with oil below \$10 a barrel....It is the only significant oil exporter that was less dependent on higher oil prices in 2008 than in 2000.<sup>12</sup>

These facts are pertinent because Qatar has used the flexibility oil affords to forge partnerships and credibility with a myriad of actors within the systemic conditions, domestic, regional and international. These relationships, discussed in Chapter II, range greatly but all serve to enhance Qatar’s reputation as an honest broker of regional and international disputes. Hence, as Korany’s articulation of intermestics suggests, there is an interplay between the internal and the external, between the traditional primacy of the nation-state and the modern challenge of decentralization. Qatar’s role as a mediator is merely one manifestation of their soft power and illustrates how the balancing act of intermestics has been operationalized.

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<sup>11</sup> Allen J. Fromherz, *Qatar: A Modern History* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown UP, 2012), 21.

<sup>12</sup> Fromherz, *Qatar: A Modern History*, 111.

Qatar's rise is as extraordinary as it is shocking because of the stark difference in scrutiny and success, from its former status as an international afterthought to its current status as a regional force. In the first mention of Qatar in the Western media on January 24, 1935, the country was romantically portrayed as an outpost of wealth, pleasure and leisure.<sup>13</sup> Writing five years hence of Doha, the country's capital city, a British Political Resident was less charitable: "[Doha is] little more than a miserable fishing village straggling along the coast for several miles and more than half in ruins. The *suq* consisted of mean fly-infested hovels, the roads were dusty tracks, there was no electricity, and the people had to fetch their water in skins and cans from wells two or three miles outside of town."<sup>14</sup> Whatever the outlook was then, it has taken less than a century for Qatar's name to be regularly invoked as a growing power player, regionally and internationally, and within multiple spheres, political and economic. As Fromherz states, "So rarely has a country of so few seemed to change so quickly over such a short period of time. Qatar's rise from an economically devastated backwater to the world's richest nation per capita in a matter of decades appears unprecedented."<sup>15</sup> This thesis does not chronicle the events which have led to that transformation but rather argues that through systematic actions of regional and international activity while harnessing a soft power approach, Qatar has been able to project increased political leadership and economic strength. The goals have been twofold: to increase influence through the immensity of their resources and to attract others through the enticing nature of their diplomacy, media and culture.

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<sup>13</sup> Rosemarie Said Zahlan, preface to *The Creation of Qatar* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 11.

<sup>14</sup> Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), 117.

<sup>15</sup> Fromherz, *Qatar: A Modern History*, 1.

By this argument, this thesis intends to fill a gap in the literature regarding the methodic processes of Qatar's rise and within the scholarship of soft power, which has tended to focus on larger countries such as the U.S. and China, or on smaller, non-Arab countries such as South Korea and Singapore.



## CHAPTER II

### SOFT POWER AND ITS POLITICAL MANIFESTATIONS IN QATAR

“I hope that our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us that the less we use our power the greater it will be.”-Thomas Jefferson<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

This chapter starts by defining soft power and elucidating its strengths and weaknesses. It then expounds on Qatari manifestations of soft power, in politics, media and culture, providing specific examples of each form; Qatar’s financial soft power, which funds these three manifestations, will be discussed in Chapter III. What is evident from Qatar’s increasing soft power strength is a methodical and shrewd strategy whereby systematic steps have been taken, primarily for two reasons: to gain influence in geopolitical disputes and conflicts and attract others through the persuasion of media and culture. The chapter concentrates on specific instances where Qatar has inserted itself into the affairs of regional neighbors or invested significant financial resources in order to achieve these twin goals. By balancing the competing demands and challenges articulated in the introduction to this thesis, the interconnectedness and overlapping of domestic, regional and international spheres, Qatar has accrued substantial credibility in the aforementioned three areas, politics, media and culture. They have parleyed this credibility into a reputation, making it a part of their state’s “brand.”

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<sup>1</sup> Barack H. Obama, “Address at Cairo University,” *The Miller Center: University of Virginia* (June 4, 2009): <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/5502> (June 29, 2012).

## Soft Power: What It Means

The foundation which powers Qatar's success politically and economically is its soft power. Qatar's rise as a regional and international player has been proportional to its rise in soft power terms. The concept of soft power originates from Harvard professor Joseph S. Nye, Jr. who defines the term as "not merely the same as influence" but "also the ability to attract." He says that "in behavioral terms soft power is attractive power."<sup>2</sup> Merriam Webster defines "attraction" as an "act, process, or power" whereby one draws "forth a response." Moreover, it is also a concept which is "appealing" to the "desires and tastes" of others.<sup>3</sup> Nye's rudimentary definition of soft power and the dictionary meaning of attraction provide a foundation for conceptualizing the term.

Nye goes on to say that "attraction often leads to acquiescence," and this outcome is what makes soft power so effective in international politics.<sup>4</sup> The principle is straightforward: "If I can get you to want to do what I want, then I do not have to use carrots or sticks to make you do it...If I am persuaded to go along with your purposes without any explicit threat or exchange taking place—in short, if my behavior is determined by an observable but intangible attraction—soft power is at work."<sup>5</sup> These statements help further elucidate the concept: it does not use threats

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Merriam Webster Online, s.v. "attraction," accessed June 3, 2012, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attraction>.

<sup>4</sup> Nye, *Soft Power*, 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 6, 7.

or coercion but rather co-option in various forms such as “personality, culture, political values and institutions, and policies that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority.”<sup>6</sup>

Soft power does not replace, but is related to, hard power, and hard power is another way of “affecting the behavior of others.”<sup>7</sup> As Mahjoob Zweiri and Simon Staffell state, “Hard power is defined as the ability to force an entity to do something, typically throughout economic coercion or military force.”<sup>8</sup> The two concepts are not interchangeable but have various effects in different contexts. In order “to counter the misperception that soft power alone can produce effective foreign policy,” Nye conceived the term “smart power” which melds both concepts.<sup>9</sup> To differentiate the two, Nye states:

Soft-power resources tend to be associated with the co-optive end of the spectrum of behavior, whereas hard power resources are usually associated with command behavior. But the relationship is imperfect. For example, sometimes countries may be attracted to other with command power by myths of invincibility, and command power may sometimes be used to establish institutions that later become regarded as legitimate.<sup>10</sup>

As the central point of contrast, hard power most often manifests itself in military strength whereas soft power rests on the concept of the “power of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Mahjoob Zweiri and Simon Staffell, “Talking with a Region: Lessons From Iran, Turkey and Pakistan,” *Middle East Policy* 16 (2009): 64.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power,” *Foreign Affairs* 88 (2009): 160.

<sup>10</sup> Nye, *Soft Power*, 7.

seduction.”<sup>11</sup> This contrast is critical because even as Nye rejoices that the concept “has migrated to the front pages of newspapers and been used by top leaders in China, Indonesia, Europe, and elsewhere,” he laments that this ubiquity “has sometimes meant misuse of the concept as a synonym for anything other than military force.”<sup>12</sup> Nye’s definition of soft power can be seen as an attempt to elucidate that realm of power which differentiates itself from pure hard power. It is a “descriptive, rather than normative, concept” and “like any form of power...can be wielded for good and bad purposes.”<sup>13</sup> This last point is crucial because Nye does not view soft power as an unassailable force for good, as may be initially inferred. Some scholars suggest, even if they quarrel with Nye’s specific theory and definition, that such a distinction from hard power is needed because they likewise view realism’s conception of power as too narrow. Pinar Bilgin and Berivan Eliş note, “Accounts of world politics professedly informed by realism have continued to subscribe to an unrealistic notion of power as ‘hard’ and focused on its most visible expressions.”<sup>14</sup>

This difference between military arms and attractiveness can lead one to view soft power as weak and having little influence, and most critics of soft power have taken aim at this point. Harvard economist and historian Niall Ferguson contends, “The trouble

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 81.

<sup>13</sup> Nye, *Future of Power*, 81.

<sup>14</sup> Pinar Bilgin and Berivan Eliş, “Hard Power, Soft Power: Toward a More Realistic Power Analysis,” *Insight Turkey* 10 (2008): 6.

with soft power is that it's, well, soft."<sup>15</sup> He provides two examples to substantiate his claim: the United States in the twenty-first century and Great Britain in the nineteenth century. Of the United States, he says, "All over the Islamic world there are kids who enjoy (or would like to enjoy) bottles of Coke, Big Macs, CDs by Britney Spears, and DVDs starring Tom Cruise. Do any of these things make them love America more? Strangely not." Of Great Britain, he says that it "pioneered the use of soft power....projecting its power through the sermons of missionaries the commentaries in Anglophone newspapers....yet it was precisely from the most Anglicized parts of the indigenous populations of the British Empire that the nationalist movements sprang."<sup>16</sup> On this point, Nye acknowledges this weakness of soft power when he notes: "Soft power is not the solution to all problems. Even though North Korean dictator Kim-Jong-Il watched Hollywood movies, that had little effect on North Korea's nuclear weapons program."<sup>17</sup>

Ferguson's examples demonstrate the limitations of soft power; even though culture may be alluring, it cannot always co-opt other peoples and nations to follow a certain path. Josef Joffe holds a similar view when he says that soft power "can....make enemies."<sup>18</sup> He argues that there is a "dark side to the soft power coin" and says that "American products shape images, not sympathies, and there is little, if any, relationship

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<sup>15</sup> Niall Ferguson, "What is Power?" *Hoover Digest* 2 (2003), accessed April 27, 2012. <http://www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/7682>.

<sup>16</sup> Ferguson, "What is Power?"

<sup>17</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., preface to *The Future of Power* by Joseph S. Nye, Jr. (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), ix-xviii, xiii.

<sup>18</sup> Josef Joffe, "The Perils of Soft Power," *Hoover Digest* 3 (2006), accessed June 14, 2012. <http://www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/6314>.

between artifact and affection.”<sup>19</sup> To Joffe’s point, people have shown a cognitive dissonance when it comes to the soft power of culture, personality, and/or political institutions and how they are viewed at a local level. For instance, although many Arabs listen to American music, watch American movies, and want their children to go to American universities, a majority of Arabs, 59%, express unfavorable views of the United States and a majority, 52%, remain discouraged by the Obama administration’s policy in the Middle East.<sup>20</sup> Such statistics would seem to indicate that “soft-power” initiatives ultimately have little effect on individuals’ ideology in foreign nations.

Furthermore, there is a lack of clarity and consistency when it comes to understanding and implementing the term, in part due to its intangible and relative nature. Andrew Liaropoulos writes, “Despite the growing body of literature on the topic and the numerous policies that assert some use of soft power elements, there is still no agreement on what exactly soft power is, how it works and how to measure its effectiveness....Soft power has been highly criticized as being a rather ineffective and vague concept.”<sup>21</sup> Another criticism is that soft power is merely a “reflection of hard power.” Liaropoulos elaborates on this viewpoint: “States are able to exercise soft power, only through their hard power. Only states with a capable military, economic power and industrial strength can claim to exercise soft power effectively.”<sup>22</sup> In sum, these criticisms demonstrate some

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<sup>19</sup> Joffe, “The Perils of Soft Power.”

<sup>20</sup> Shibley Telhami, “The 2011 Arab Public Opinion Poll,” *The Brookings Institution*, November 21, 2011, accessed June 3, 2012, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2011/11/21-arab-public-opinion-telhami>.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Liaropoulos, “Being Hard on Soft Power,” *RIEAS*, accessed June 14, 2012, <http://www.rieas.gr/research-areas/global-issues/transatlantic-studies/1519-being-hard-on-soft-power-.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Liaropoulos, “Being Hard on Soft Power.”

of the limitations of soft power that often inhibit detractors from viewing soft power as an effective tool of foreign policy.

### **Qatar's Manifestations of Soft Power**

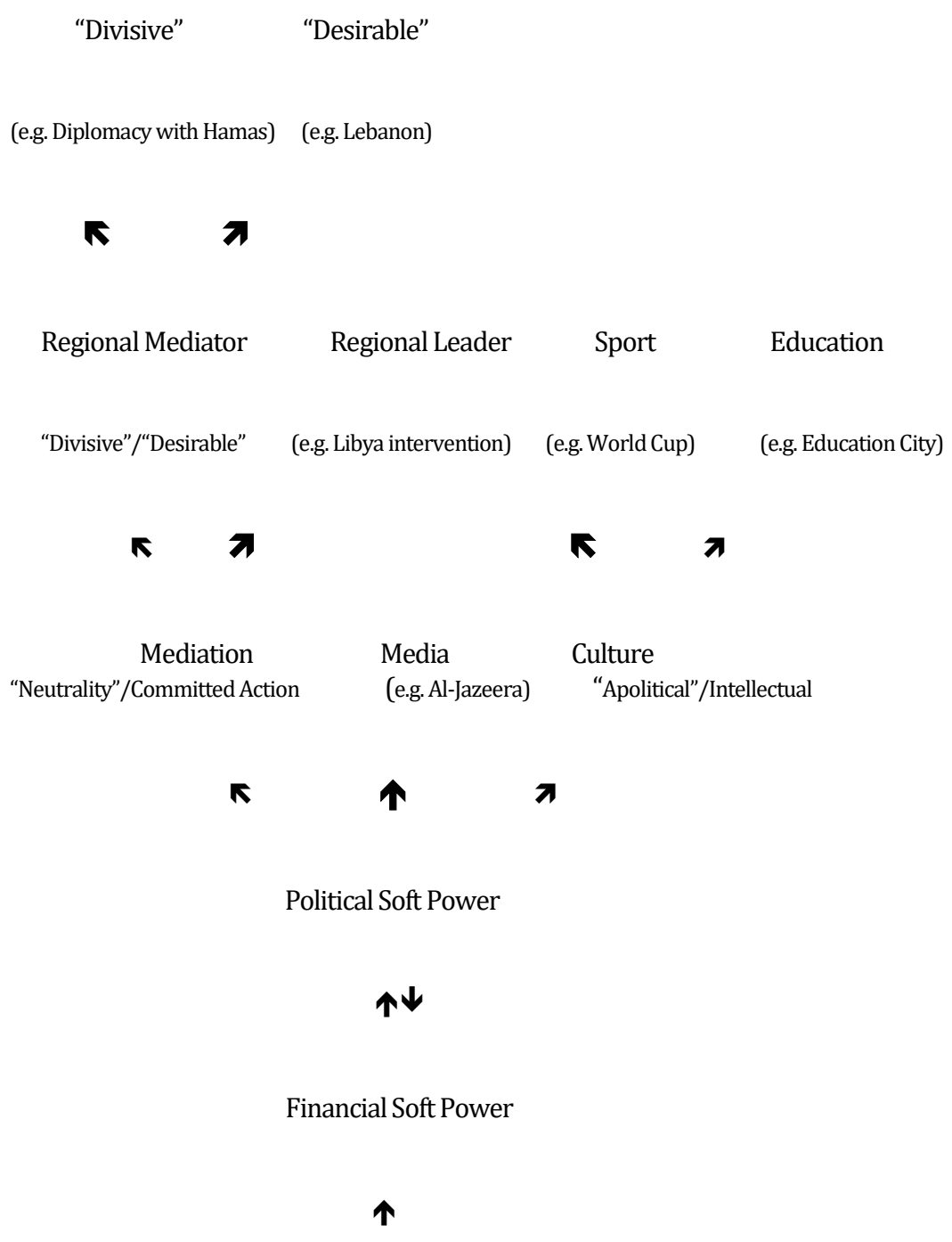
Qatar's soft power has manifested itself in two forms: political strength and financial strength, but the relationship between both forms is unequal because the political is a byproduct of the financial. Qatar's political soft power would not exist without the financial soft power which funds the political soft power, yet Qatar's deft use of its political soft power has enhanced the utility of its financial soft power. Hence, the relationship is reciprocal even as it is unequal.

Within political soft power, there are three manifestations which Qatar has emphasized: the politics of mediation, the politics of media and the politics of culture. Because of Qatar's diverse soft power forays, these macro categories are broad in an effort to try and funnel Qatar's political soft power in a meaningful, not tedious, manner. Within mediation, there are two further, distinct categories: regional mediation and regional leadership. The former is characterized by perceived neutrality while the latter is characterized by committed action. The reason for this distinction is that mediation can be seen as impartial while leadership is usually seen as more forceful. Further still within regional mediation are two sub-categories: "divisive" mediation and "desirable" mediation. The term "divisive mediation" may appear as a contradiction in terms, but it is mediation that rankles traditional powers, whether regional or international. Most of Qatar's mediation efforts fall into this category of "divisive" mediation because of their adverse effect on the traditional, regional powers: Egypt and Saudi Arabia are examples as this thesis will illustrate. On the other hand, "Desirable mediation," may appear as a

mutually-reinforcing concept and therefore redundant, but this term is meant to distinguish from “divisive mediation” where Qatari mediation has fractured public opinion or alliances or altered the power structure in the region. It is not meant to be exacting, for such a standard is impossible in international relations, but connotes in a widespread consensus for “desirable” mediation in a conflict. Qatar’s diplomacy in Lebanon in 2008 is the most prominent example of this form of mediation.

Within culture, there are two categories: sport and education. The former is perceived as being apolitical while the latter is characterized as intellectual. The graph on the following page provides examples of each form of mediation and illustrates the relationship and interaction of each category and sub-category. The larger arrows in bold denote action which is more forceful or perceived as more forceful from other actors, and it can also denote regional leadership. These three manifestations, mediation, media and culture, will be discussed and examined in succession to see how Qatar has accrued its soft power. As aforementioned, Qatar’s financial soft power will be discussed in Chapter III.





**Chart 2.1: Qatari Soft Power**

## Politics of Mediation: Framework

The central area where Qatar has acted as a mediator is in the region, where knowledgeable and persuasive diplomacy is valued and coercive military and economic action, shunned. In their article, “Talking with a Region: Lessons from Iran, Turkey and Pakistan,” Zweiri and Staffell examine the complex regional dynamics and argue that the Middle East values a culture of cooperation among nations. This culture fosters more cooperation, conducive to soft power strength, and eschews hard power alternatives, such as sanctions or military action. They assert, “The simple fact is that coercion is antithetical to persuasive diplomacy, and rhetorical bellicosity can stifle practical cooperation and dialogue before it has even begun.”<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, they note that soft power is not a short-term strategy but rather a long-term solution. Succinctly, they state:

If soft power is to be useful as a term and as a tool for obtaining desired outcomes, it must be conceived more rigorously than simply as the rhetoric of diplomatic efforts. It should begin with comprehensive attempts to understand the rapidly changing subtleties of the context and the perception of the actors...Based on these, it should involve convincing and not coercing.<sup>24</sup>

The authors expound on Iran’s increasingly close economic relationship with China as a reason that the government “need not be intimidated by sanctions.”<sup>25</sup> They also examine the deepening relationship between Turkey and Iran concerning gas and oil transit and joint energy investments. Iran’s natural resources are also important to Europe, as the

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<sup>23</sup> Zweiri and Staffell, “Lessons from Iran, Turkey and Pakistan,” 65.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 66.

proposed Nabucco pipeline is “of great importance” to European energy security.<sup>26</sup> There has been debate over whether the pipeline will indeed be built, but that potential, final outcome is of little consequence to Zweiri’s and Staffell’s argument.<sup>27</sup> The point is that these countries are regionally engaged in cooperation to ensure that their countries’ interests and the stability of the region are maintained. In conclusion, the authors argue that understanding the complex game of regional dynamics is central to mediation and soft power effectiveness. Because Qatar has engaged in mediation efforts with the aim not to alienate any partners, this analysis provides the framework to understand Qatar’s regional soft power advances in mediation in the cases of Hamas after the elections of 2006, the West Bank and Gaza in 2009, Sudan from 2008-2009, Yemen from 2007-2011 and Lebanon in 2008.

At the outset, it is important to define the term “mediation” because it is rich and can denote multiple concepts; for Qatar, its’ mediation efforts have oscillated between dispute settlement and military coercion depending on the character and context of the engagement. Lilach Gilady and Bruce Russett write, “While in practice these categories are hard to identify and are sometimes employed simultaneously, ignoring their substantial differences obscures variance in the conditions under which they can most usefully be employed and conceals the trade-offs between them.”<sup>28</sup> The former use of mediation, dispute settlement, is the more traditional form of peacekeeping and “is

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel J. Graeber, “Reports of Nabucco Pipeline’s Death are Exaggerated,” *Oilprice.com*, May 31, 2012, accessed June 10, 2012. <http://oilprice.com/Energy/Natural-Gas/Reports-of-Nabucco-Pipelines-Death-are-Exaggerated.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Lilach Gilady and Bruce Russett, “Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes et al. (London: SAGE, 2008), 394.

concerned especially with the conditions whereby mutually acceptable settlement of disputes can be achieved.”<sup>29</sup> The succeeding example of Lebanon is perhaps Qatar’s most prominent example of this kind of mediation. The latter use of mediation, military coercion, is more effective in its initial results but deficient in certain areas. It fails to establish productive dialogue and the “actual resolution of underlying conflicts.”<sup>30</sup> Perhaps Qatar’s most significant example of this form of mediation is Libya, where the initial ebullience of the victory is now tempered by the grim realities of the aftermath. These differing forms of mediation animate Qatari diplomatic efforts and help explain the dissidence between Qatar’s role as a regional mediator and regional leader.

### **Politics of Mediation: “Divisive” Mediator**

#### **Hamas Elections**

Within the politics of mediation, Qatar has forged an image as both a regional and international mediator, and this image has strengthened Qatar’s soft power. Mehran Kamrava says, “Since the mid-2000s, Qatar has become one of the world’s most active mediators in regional and intra-national conflicts across the Middle East and parts of Africa.”<sup>31</sup> This mediation has manifested itself with a broad spectrum of political actors, like Hamas, Iran and the US. Qatar’s understanding of regional dynamics and motivations has afforded it credibility as an honest broker. However, Qatar’s mediation has taken two forms: regional mediation and regional leadership. Qatar’s response to the

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<sup>29</sup> Gilady and Russett, “Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution,” 393.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 394.

<sup>31</sup> Mehran Kamrava, “Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy,” *Middle East Journal* 65 (2011): 539.

result of the Hamas election in January 2006 is an example of the former, and it represents the first case of Qatari mediation. Not only was the election significant, because it marked an end of dominance by Fatah, the dominant party in Palestine since 1964, and because it was the first democratic election since 1996, but because of the reactions to the results of the election. As Zweiri notes, Hamas demonstrated considerable political skill dealing with the main issues of the elections: “Its language was open, specific and concentrated on daily life issues.”<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, he argues that as the image of the PA and Fatah had been “heavily affected.... Hamas was able to show that it was a well organised movement which had the capacity to deal with domestic issues.”<sup>33</sup>

Predictably, the Americans and Israelis were not happy with the results, but Russia, the UN and the EU were displeased as well. Zweiri notes that the “Quartet,” a group comprised of the US, Russia, the UN and the EU, wanted Hamas “to choose between being accepted by the international community, and becoming isolated.”<sup>34</sup> In addition to these countries, reluctance to accept Hamas emanated from Middle Eastern countries as well. Zweiri states that no “Middle East governments were completely happy with the election results” but instead “they showed a sort of acceptance, considering the result the ‘choice of the Palestinians.’”<sup>35</sup> Egypt had tried to delay the election; Jordan was not pleased with the outcome; but in contrast “Qatar welcomed the

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<sup>32</sup> Mahjoob Zweiri, “The Hamas Victory: shifting sands of major earthquake?” *Third World Quarterly* 27 (2006): 677.

<sup>33</sup> Zweiri, “The Hamas Victory,” 679.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 681.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 681.

result of the elections, and asked the international community to deal with Hamas as a political group which represents all Palestinians.”<sup>36</sup> Responses like Qatar’s to the election results triggered increased pressure from the US on Middle Eastern states to condemn and isolate Hamas. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice embarked on a five-day trip to the region to try and convince governments not to support Hamas financially, but she was rebuffed from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These countries asserted that “Hamas should be given a chance, and that there is no need to punish the Palestinians because of their choice.”<sup>37</sup> And Rice’s visit failed to stop the Saudis and Qataris from funding the Palestinians; Saudi Arabia promised to pay \$20 million while Qatar promised to pay \$13 million.<sup>38</sup>

Qatar’s approval of Hamas’s victory, coupled with its rebuff to the “Quartet” and Israel, demonstrated its non-ideological agenda and helped establish its role as an honest broker in the region, even as it rankled traditional regional and international powers. This role was reinforced by the fact that Qatar had stayed neutral before the elections, not funding Hamas. Qatar had been insistent on fair elections before the vote and did not change this stance once Hamas was declared the winner. In this way, by not only accepting the election results but also by rejecting Secretary Rice’s calls to withhold financial assistance to Hamas, Qatar gained credibility with regional actors. The rebuff

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 681.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 682.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 682.

to the US in particular was enhanced by the fact that the US is Qatar's "military guarantor" in the region, providing a "military blanket" that Qatar needs for survival.<sup>39</sup>

As a general principle, credibility is an aspect of legitimacy which compounds over time; each credible action by a state reinforces that which came before it and helps to project a sturdier, more credible image. The case of Qatar's support for Hamas first established that credibility. *Prima facie*, it may seem that Qatar's support for Hamas was not neutral, that it veered into activism. However, support can be neutral if it adheres to consistent principles. In this case, Qatar supported Hamas because the results reflected the "choice of the Palestinians." By vocally and materially supporting Hamas, Qatar signaled unrelenting support for future democratic outcomes in the Middle East where the choice of the people is clear. Therefore, this support afforded Qatar credibility in future negotiations and electoral outcomes.

Due to this unbending consistency and accrued credibility, some scholars liken Qatar's status to Sweden or Switzerland, deeming it "the Sweden or the Switzerland of the Middle East."<sup>40</sup> David B. Roberts writes that this analogy is usually invoked as a "quick and simple juxtaposition, seeking to get across the idea that Qatar acts at times like something approaching a neutral state."<sup>41</sup> He continues, saying:

Its countless forays into international mediation; the use of its gas money to seek peace and for aid; its relatively good relations with diverse and antithetical actors such as Israel, Hamas, the US and Hezbollah and its support for ostracised actors like former Chechen terrorists, one of Osama

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<sup>39</sup> David B. Roberts, "The Swiss, Qatar and Neutrality," *The Gulf Blog*, September 8, 2009. <http://thegulfblog.com/2009/09/08/the-swiss-qatar-and-neutrality/>.

<sup>40</sup> Roberts, "The Swiss, Qatar and Neutrality."

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

Bin Laden's sons and Saddam Hussein's ex-wife signal, it can be argued, that Qatar seeks some level of neutrality.<sup>42</sup>

Roberts acknowledges the competing reasons for this cognitive dissidence in policy. On the one hand, "there are those that say that Qatar is simply seeking to publicise itself and will do anything for that end."<sup>43</sup> In their view, "these headline-grabbing instances are, therefore, merely tactical and not strategic."<sup>44</sup>

Zweiri, however, strongly contradicts this view. In a personal interview, he discussed the history and politics of power players in international relations. He said, "Roles are not things that are offered. You have to take them."<sup>45</sup> Zweiri argues correctly that roles of influence are not happened upon but rather calculatingly pursued. Such is the case with Qatar. As Kamrava writes, one Qatari diplomat asserted that "the country has carefully selected those conflicts in which it has played a mediating role, concluding beforehand that its chances of success are fairly positive."<sup>46</sup> This careful and focused thought-process resembles a strategic vision for its role in the international sphere. The support of Hamas in the wake of the 2006 elections was an important step that did not please the West, particularly the US, but it marked Qatar's activism in mediation and enhanced its credibility as an honest broker with regional players.

### **West Bank and Gaza**

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Mahjoob Zweiri, interview by Joseph F. Hawkins, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Doha, Qatar, May 28, 2012.

<sup>46</sup> Kamrava, "Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy, 544, 545.



Another example of mediation, in which Qatar took a strong stance against another power, was when Qatar sided with Hezbollah during the Gaza crisis in 2009. In retrospect soon after the crisis, Sophie Evans wrote that “in an attempt to leverage its relationship with Hamas during the Gaza crisis of January 2009, Qatar repeatedly called for an extraordinary meeting of the Arab League to discuss Israel’s bombardment of the Gaza strip.”<sup>47</sup> What was particularly significant about this position was that it was against the Saudi one, and up until Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani’s coup in 1995, Qatar had long mirrored Saudi policy. Qatar contended that Israel should not attack Hezbollah and stated their willingness to shoulder the responsibility to rebuild Southern Lebanon. Steven Wright views this as the key moment in Qatari mediation because Qatar stood up against the region’s traditional powers, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.<sup>48</sup> Evans notes that “Doha’s calls fell on deaf ears in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which turned down the proposal in favour of discussing the issue at an economic summit in Kuwait that had been scheduled to take place three days after the proposed Doha summit.”<sup>49</sup> The differences exposed a rift in the region over the crisis. Despite Egypt’s and Saudi Arabia’s rejection, Doha proceeded with the summit, attended by twelve Arab leaders, including Algeria, Lebanon, Sudan and Syria. The Syrian Foreign Affairs Minister Walid Mualem stated resoundingly at the summit: “This meeting is the fruit of Qatari, Arab, Syrian and Islamic determination....in defiance of the pressures exercised to prevent it.”<sup>50</sup> This act of

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<sup>47</sup> Sophie Evans, “Doha’s expanding diplomatic role,” *Middle East Economic Digest* 53 (2009): 30.

<sup>48</sup> Steven Wright, interview by Joseph F. Hawkins, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar, May 28, 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Evans, “Doha’s expanding diplomatic role,” 30.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

mediation, like Hamas in 2006, was undertaken despite external pressures. With Hamas, the “Quartet” and Israel objected, but in this case with Gaza, Saudi Arabia and Egypt opposed.

## **Sudan**

In Sudan, Qatar was thorough in its groundwork diplomacy before the negotiations and even-handed during them which enhanced their credibility as a fair mediator, even as their diplomacy drew the ire of Egypt. Kamrava notes that “Qatar’s involvement in the Sudan conflict began in earnest in 2008 with the efforts of the country’s Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ahmad bin ‘Abdullah al-Mahmud.”<sup>51</sup> Al-Mahmud went on a “fact-finding mission” to Khartoum and the Darfur region while also visiting Sudan’s neighbors, Djibouti and Chad.<sup>52</sup> These trips were “extensive and substantive, prompting one Sudanese diplomat....to claim that ‘he got to know Darfur better than we do.’”<sup>53</sup> These trips were important for Qatar’s reputation as a regional mediator because they generated goodwill from much of the Sudanese population. The level of involvement between Qatari mediators, particularly Al-Mahmud, was unprecedented in the Darfur crisis. Kamrava surmises the sentiments of the Sudanese and Darfur officials involved in the negotiations:

Qatari mediators approached the conflict from a completely different perspective as compared to all of those who had tried mediating among the Sudanese before. Al-Mahmud’s efforts at gaining detailed, in-depth knowledge of the situation on the ground had been a first, having previously only been attempted by international humanitarian and relief

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<sup>51</sup> Kamrava, “Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy,” 545.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 545.

<sup>53</sup> Kamrava, “Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy,” 545.

agencies working with the refugees. No other would be mediator had become so intimately involved in learning the lay of the land and the specifics of the issues involved....”<sup>54</sup>

Qatar’s diligent, diplomatic efforts garnered increased credibility for their ability to mediate conflicts, but Egypt’s displeasure with Qatar’s was omni-present throughout Qatar’s involvement. Egypt has looked with unease on Qatar rising as a diplomatic force, and their intimacy with Sudan, politically and economically, coupled with Qatar’s thorough diplomacy, convinced Sudan that Qatar should take the lead in negotiations. However, after Qatar pledged \$13.7 million in humanitarian aid to the Darfur region, Sunil Suri wrote, “Egypt has not relinquished its role as the mediator in Sudan without a fight. Angry editorials in *Al-Gomhouriyya* have accused Qatar of bribing the rebels to participate in negotiations.”<sup>55</sup> Qatar’s position as the chief mediator in the conflict has clearly rankled Egypt, who view Qatar as meddling. This tension demonstrates that Qatar’s mediation in Sudan, as with the Hamas elections and Gaza, has been “divisive.”

## **Yemen**

Yemen is another case which represented Qatar’s increasing credibility as a mediator, greatly contributing to its soft power, but also “divisive” mediation because it infringed on the traditional realm of Saudi Arabia, who share a border with Yemen. The brewing trouble in Yemen started in 2004 with the Huthi rebellion which “advocated a revival of the true essence and spirit of Zaydi Islam” and channeled “pervasive feelings of resentment, neglect, and discrimination that had plagued much of the country’s Zaydi

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 545, 546.

<sup>55</sup> Sunil Suri, “Qatar vs. Egypt in Sudan,” *Sudan Peace Committee BlogSpot*, July 12, 2010, <http://ncfsudan.blogspot.com/2010/07/qatar-vs-egypt-in-sudan.html>.

community since the 1990s.”<sup>56</sup> After several trips by Qatari mediators to Yemen, representatives from the Huthi rebels and the Yemeni government signed a formal peace treaty on February 2, 2008 which included a Qatari pledge of reconstruction funds and an agreement to take in several Huthi rebel leaders in exile.<sup>57</sup> Though the initial agreement garnered praise and instilled optimism, actual fighting on the ground never stopped and Saudi interference stymied Qatari efforts. Saudi Arabia had followed the Huthi rebellion intensely and has numerous interests at stake, historical, sectarian and ideological. Moreover, the Yemeni-Saudi relationship is deeply ingrained as it dates back to the pre-civil war following the 1962 coup.<sup>58</sup> And unsurprisingly, the Saudi’s general disapproval of Qatar’s mediation in Yemen was well-known.<sup>59</sup> Hassan Zeid, the General Secretary of al-Hag party in Yemen, stated that “Saudi Arabia does not accept the role [of] Qatar in resolving the conflict in Yemen, as it didn’t before when it caused the Qatari mediation to fail....Unless there is coordination between Doha and Riyadh, the fighting is Saada will regenerate.”<sup>60</sup> Although the relationship between Doha and Riyadh “has improved markedly since 2009,” Qatari efforts in Yemen are still largely dependent on Saudi acquiescence.<sup>61</sup> Ultimately, Qatar pulled out of Yemeni mediation in 2011, citing delays and intense clashes with demonstrators, but there were also serious differences with the

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<sup>56</sup> Kamrava, “Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy,” 549.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 549, 550.

<sup>58</sup> Shuaib M. al-Mosawa, “Yemen Opposition Accuses Saudi Arabia of Provoking Sa’ada War,” *Yemen Observer*, July 26, 2010, accessed June 14, 2012. <http://www.yobserver.com/local-news/10019256.html>.

<sup>59</sup> Kamrava, “Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy,” 551.

<sup>60</sup> Al-Mosawa, “Yemen Opposition.”

<sup>61</sup> Ginny Hill and Gerd Nonneman, “Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States: Elite Politics, Street Protests and Regional Diplomacy,” *Chatham House Briefing Paper*, May 2011, pp. 12.

Yemeni and Bahraini leaderships.<sup>62</sup> While these setbacks should be dissected and analyzed, Qatar's mediation in Yemen improved their soft power as an honest broker in the region but also ignited further Saudi displeasure.

### **Politics of Mediation: “Desirable” Mediator**

#### **Lebanon**

This analysis provides the framework to understand Qatar's regional soft power advances in mediation in the cases of Lebanon. In contrast to the aforementioned mediation efforts with Hamas, Gaza, Sudan and Yemen, Qatar's efforts in Lebanon were met by near-universal acclaim. A political crisis starting in November 2007 over the lack of consensus on a candidate for the presidency crested into “what amounted to a brewing civil war by May 2008 between Hizbullah forces and the government.”<sup>63</sup> After the government had tried to shut down Hizbullah's telecommunications network, Hizbullah retaliated by occupying parts of Beirut and closed the city's international airport and seaport.<sup>64</sup> Negotiators met in Doha to try and reconcile two principle points: “agreeing on who would become the country's president, a point on which they had failed to agree on 20 previous occasions, and redrafting the electoral laws in preparation for the next parliamentary elections.”<sup>65</sup> Following six days of negotiations, Lebanese politicians came

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<sup>62</sup> “Qatar withdraws from Yemen mediation bid,” *Al-Jazeera*, May 13, 2011, accessed June 14, 2012. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/05/20115136324483285.html>.

<sup>63</sup> Kamrava, “Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy,” 547.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 547.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 547.

to a compromise which, among other things, gave Hizbullah veto power in the parliament of national unity while starting a dialogue for Hizbullah to lay down its arms.

The diplomatic victory was hailed as a “historic achievement,” and one of Qatar’s Arabic newspapers declared, “Beyond a doubt, what happened in Doha is considered a proud achievement for Qatar, for Arabs, and for the Lebanese people. Qatar managed to achieve a diplomatic victory by hosting a national dialogue session.”<sup>66</sup> The messages of thanks were expressed in unique ways. Robert F. Worth reported, “Huge billboards went up on the road to the Beirut airport, proclaiming, ‘We all say: Thank you Qatar.’ An ice cream shop in downtown Beirut put out a sign offering a Doha Agreement Cone.”<sup>67</sup> Qatar’s mediation was also hailed as a success because of its stark contrast with the Bush administration, which had pursued a hardline stance in the region since 2005. Marina Ottaway had asserted: “The Bush administration’s policy in Lebanon is based on a Manichean interpretation of what is in reality an extremely complex situation.”<sup>68</sup> Seen in part as a contrast to U.S. efforts in the region, Qatar was able to capitalize on the discrepancy in political worldview for a diplomatic victory. Qatar exercised “an independent approach” based on “diplomacy and reconciliation” while the U.S., as aforementioned, harbored a “Manichean” approach.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, as in the Sudan mediation, Qatar benefitted by having relatively little history in Lebanon. Kamrava

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 547, 548.

<sup>67</sup> Robert F. Worth, “Qatar, Playing All Sides, Is a Nonstop Mediator,” *The New York Times*, July 9, 2008, accessed June 12, 2012.  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/09/world/middleeast/09qatar.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/09/world/middleeast/09qatar.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all).

<sup>68</sup> Marina Ottaway, “Diplomacy in the Middle East: Arab Allies Push Their Own Agendas,” *Harvard International Review* (2008): 70.

<sup>69</sup> Ottaway, “Diplomacy in the Middle East,” 71.

writes, “Egypt was too close to the Saudi and American camps to be seen by the different factions as an honest broker. For a country long victimized by foreign meddling in its internal politics, the very fact that Qatar had been a relative non-player in Lebanon was a major advantage.”<sup>70</sup> Qatar’s inherent advantages, lack of history in Lebanon, and its built-up advantages, diligent diplomacy throughout the negotiations, helped make their effort a widely-viewed success.

### **Politics of Mediation: Regional Leader**

#### **Libya**

More prominent than Qatar’s attempts at regional mediation have been its successes as a regional leader, first in the intervention in Libya and now in the developing situations in Syria and Egypt. In Libya, Qatar provided weapons, planes and ground forces. Additionally, Qatar “was the first Arab state (second overall after France) to recognize the NTC”; “leading proponent in the GCC and the Arab League of the no-fly zone”; “sold free Libyan oil on behalf of the rebels”; “shipped gasoline and other key items to the rebels”; “trained the rebels in Libya and back in Doha”; and provided “economic aid.”<sup>71</sup> The only other Arab country to send material help in Libya was the UAE, which donated planes toward the effort.<sup>72</sup> But there was perhaps something more important that Qatar donated than material supplies. Ian Black writes that “Qatar played

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<sup>70</sup> Kamrava, “Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy,” 548, 549.

<sup>71</sup> David B. Roberts, “Blowback for Qatar,” *The Gulf Blog*, October 25, 2011. <http://thegulfblog.com/tag/qatar-intervention-in-libya/>.

<sup>72</sup> Kareem Shaheen, “UAE fighter jets on the way to Libya,” *The National*, March 26, 2011, accessed June 14, 2012. <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/uae-fighter-jets-on-the-way-to-libya>.

a key role in galvanising Arab support for the UN Security Council resolution that mandated NATO to defend Libyan civilians.”<sup>73</sup> Qatar’s support gave political cover for Western nations, led by the United States, to intervene in Libya. Speaking of Qatar’s leader, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, US President Barack Obama stated, “We would not have been able, I think, to shape the kind of broad-based international coalition that includes not only our NATO members but also includes Arab states, without the emir’s leadership.”<sup>74</sup> Also Gérard Longuet, the defense minister of France, declared, “Qatar is essential at this time. This is the first time that there is such a level of understanding between Europe and the Arab world.”<sup>75</sup>

This praise, along with Qatar’s enhanced reputation as a result of the successful outcome, further burnishes Qatar’s political soft power credentials. It showed that it can take a leadership role, where the traditional powers in the region did not, and be a successful and reliable partner to Western nations. Speaking to Qatar’s burgeoning reputation, Toby Jones argues, “They are staking a claim to being a leading voice in defining Arab nationalism for Arabs no matter their location,” while adding that the nation’s leadership was seeking “to step out of the shadow of more powerful regional neighbors like the Saudis and Iranians.”<sup>76</sup> Although there have been concerns over

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<sup>73</sup> Ian Black, “Qatar admits sending hundreds of troops to support Libya rebels,” *The Guardian*, October 26, 2011, accessed June 14, 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/oct/26/qatar-troops-libya-rebels-support>.

<sup>74</sup> Ian Black, Chris McGreal and Harriet Sherwood, “Barack Obama: Qatar crucial to coalition’s success in Libya,” *The Guardian*, April 15, 2011, accessed June 14, 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/15/barack-obama-qatar-libya-gaddafi>.

<sup>75</sup> Clifford Krauss, “For Qatar, Libyan Intervention May Be a Turning Point,” *The New York Times*, April 3, 2011, accessed June 14, 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/04/world/middleeast/04qatar.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/04/world/middleeast/04qatar.html?_r=1).

<sup>76</sup> Krauss, “For Qatar, Libyan Intervention May Be a Turning Point.”



Qatar's ties to some Libyan Islamists as well as the souring reaction of the Libyan people to Qatar's role, few question that Qatar's involvement in the Libya intervention was a net positive.<sup>77 78</sup> These developments dampen Qatar's success but do not vanquish it. While already having taken leadership as a regional mediator, this intervention marked the first time Qatar emerged as the regional leader. It took the regional leadership role and distinguished themselves from its regional counterparts. It wielded its soft power capabilities to great effect and in so doing, further developed its regional and international credibility as a partner for future conflicts.

## Syria

The ongoing crisis in Syria is another example where Qatar is taking a regional leadership role. In January 2012, the Emir called for Arab countries to send in troops to "stop the killing" of civilians, making Qatar the first Arab country to do so.<sup>79</sup> Now, as Syria is slipping into a civil war, Qatar, along with Saudi Arabia, has drawn heavy criticism from Russia for helping arm the Syrian opposition. The Russian Ambassador to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, stated, "We hear Saudi Arabia and Qatar openly speaking about their financing of the armed opposition and supplying weapons to the armed opposition... So, we do not like that."<sup>80</sup> Iran, as well, has criticized Qatar's

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<sup>77</sup> Sam Dagher, Charles Levinson and Margaret Coker, "Tiny Kingdom's Huge Role in Libya Draws Concern," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 17, 2011, accessed June 14, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204002304576627000922764650.html>.

<sup>78</sup> Steven Sotloff, "Why the Libyans have fallen out of love with Qatar," *TIME*, January 2, 2012, accessed September 8, 2012. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2103409,00.html>.

<sup>79</sup> "Syria Crisis: Qatar calls for Arabs to send in troops," *BBC News*, January 14, 2012, accessed June 14, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16561493>.

<sup>80</sup> "Russia slams Saudi Arabia, Qatar for funding Syrian rebels," *PressTV*, June 8, 2012, accessed June 14, 2012. <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/06/08/245165/russia-slams-support-of-syrian-opposition/>.

activism in Syria. The former Revolutionary Guards Commander General Yahya Rahim Safavi asserted, “The Americans, Israelis, and some European and Persian Gulf nations, in particular Qatar and Saudi Arabia, have delegated to Turkey the task of achieving their goal to weaken or topple Bashar al-Assad’s government or make it surrender.”<sup>81</sup> As the situation escalates, Qatar, along with Turkey and Saudi Arabia, “are helping the opposition Free Syrian Army develop logistical routes for moving supplies into Syria and providing communications training.”<sup>82</sup> Jay Solomon and Nour Malas are reporting that “the U.S. in many ways is acting through proxies, primarily Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.”<sup>83</sup>

## **Egypt**

In another developing situation, Qatar has been engaged in Egypt’s transition, pledging \$2 billion to Egypt’s central bank in order to support and stimulate the Egyptian economy.<sup>84</sup> This financial aid is another example of Qatar’s regional leadership, and the visit itself, by Qatar’s emir, was symbolic: it was the first visit by a Gulf leader to Egypt since Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi was sworn in on June 30. This sum will not end Egypt’s financial woes as economists argue assert it “won’t replace the need for a

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<sup>81</sup> “Iran blasts Turkey, Saudi, Qatar over ally Syria,” *AFP*, June 2, 2012, accessed June 14, 2012. <http://news.yahoo.com/iran-blasts-turkey-saudi-qatar-over-ally-syria-153429473.html>.

<sup>82</sup> Jay Solomon and Nour Malas, “U.S. Bolsters Ties to Fighters in Syria,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 2012, accessed June 14, 2012. [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303410404577464763551149048.html?mod=googlenews\\_wsj](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303410404577464763551149048.html?mod=googlenews_wsj).

<sup>83</sup> Solomon and Malas, “U.S. Bolsters Ties.”

<sup>84</sup> “Qatar pledges \$2bn for Egypt’s central bank,” *Al-Jazeera*, August 12, 2012, accessed August 17, 2012. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/08/201281261018425841.html>.

\$3.2 billion-plus loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).”<sup>85</sup> However, the amount is a substantive beginning and demonstrates the burgeoning soft power of Qatari foreign policy. As aforementioned, Egypt’s relations with Qatar have not been harmonious in diplomatic efforts, such as in Sudan and the West Bank and Gaza. Yet despite those historical disagreements, Egypt is willing to accept Qatar’s help in this circumstance, and as a result, Egypt has signaled its readiness to reciprocate. President Morsi and Shiekh Hamad discussed Qatari investments in the country and “the president confirmed his full support to increasing such investments and removing any obstacles facing the increase of such investments.”<sup>86</sup> Therefore, both economies stand to benefit as their economic partnerships deepen. Through the persuasiveness of Qatar’s overtures, tensions have been soothed between both countries.

Despite the criticisms from Russia and Iran, Qatar is building on its soft power acquired as a regional leader during the Libya conflict and transferring that established leadership to Syria and Egypt. As aforementioned, Qatar is serving as a “proxy” for the U.S. in the developing situation in Syria. Because U.S. involvement in Syria is toxic, both for domestic, popular opinion and for the Syrian rebels in their struggle against President Bashar Al-Assad, the U.S. needs other countries to be agents or substitutes for it in its absence. Consequently, because Qatar is an active participant in Syria, the U.S. *wants* and *needs* Qatar for information and influence. This type of attraction to Qatar is precisely what Nye is talking about when he defines soft power, and it demonstrates

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<sup>85</sup> Ahmed Feteiha, “Qatar \$2 billion deposit no substitute for IMF package: Economists,” *Al-Ahram Online*, August 15, 2012, accessed August 17, 2012. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/50320/Business/Economy/Qatars--billion-deposit-to-Egypt-no-substitute-for.aspx>.

<sup>86</sup> “Egypt: President Morsi, Qatari Emir Discuss Relations, Cooperation,” *All Africa*, August 12, 2012, accessed August 17, 2012. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201208120201.html>.

strong, persuasive leadership. What is also notable about Syria thus far is that Saudi Arabia and the UAE are playing a much more active role than they did in Libya. Qatar's significant efforts in that intervention were widely reported in foreign media outlets and greatly appreciated by NATO and Western nations. The fact that Saudi Arabia and the UAE are more directly engaged now in Syria is a testament to Qatar's soft power in Libya. They led the way for Arab countries and now others are following suit. It remains to be seen whether other Arab countries will follow Qatar's lead in Egypt. All of these aspects to Qatar's present involvements, particularly in Syria with its material and diplomatic help to its partnership with other Gulf countries, are indicators of Qatar's increasing soft power as a regional leader.

### **Politics of Media**

#### **Al-Jazeera**

Perhaps Qatar's most potent manifestation of soft power is its network TV station Al-Jazeera due to both its longevity and ability to reach citizens regionally and globally on a daily basis. Founded in 1996, the Doha-based media network was the Middle East's first independent broadcasting station and remains the most prominent media organization in the Arab world. The Emir is the owner of the network and provided a loan of \$137 million to sustain the news agency in its early years.<sup>87</sup> The channel "is still largely financed by the Qatari government" which provides it with over \$300 million annually, and it "has some royal family members and senior government administrators

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<sup>87</sup> Tom Pilston, "Qatar's Calling," *Panos Pictures*, accessed May 29, 2012, <http://www.panos.co.uk/stories/2-13-1234-1740/Tom-Pilston/Qatars-Calling/>.

among its highest ranks.”<sup>88</sup> It has played a tremendous role in the Arab Spring, in part because of its ability to broadcast in both Arabic and English. Moreover, in November 2011 the network opened Al-Jazeera Balkans which broadcasts in Serbo-Croatian.<sup>89</sup>

Al-Jazeera’s institutional reputation has come under harsher scrutiny since the advent of the Arab Spring, with many arguing that the organization is merely an arm of the Qatari government and questioning why the network largely refrains from criticizing Qatar. From Al-Jazeera’s coverage it has been inferred that the network protects Qatar’s allies, i.e. the Gulf monarchies, and vilifies its foes, i.e. the Gaddafi regime in Libya. However, when asked to comment on this viewpoint, Steven Wright said firmly: “I’ve never once seen anything credible to support that. I’ve spoken off the record to expats working in Al-Jazeera and Al-Jazeera executives, and they have denied that relationship strongly.”<sup>90</sup> And he added, “They have reported on problems in Qatar. The documentary, ‘Blood, Sweat and Tears,’ which looks at the conditions of migrant workers and labor disputes in the Gulf, is a good example (emphasis added).”<sup>91</sup> David B. Roberts concurred. “They reported what was happening [in Libya and Egypt],” he said, and “What are they supposed to report in Qatar? Everyone is satisfied, and things are peaceful.”<sup>92</sup> Roberts presented a unique analogy to drive home this point, saying that the situation with Al-

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<sup>88</sup> Rasha A. Abdulla, “Arab Media over the Past Twenty Years: Opportunities and Challenges,” in *The Changing Middle East: A New Look at Regional Dynamics*, ed. Bahgat Korany (Cairo: The AUC Press, 2011), 69, 70.

<sup>89</sup> “Broadcasting in the Balkans: Al-Jazeera’s Latest Venture,” *The Economist*, November 12, 2011, accessed June 15, 2012. <http://www.economist.com/node/21538213>.

<sup>90</sup> Wright, Interview.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> David B. Roberts, interview by Joseph F. Hawkins, The Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Doha, Qatar, May 30, 2012.

Jazeera is similar to the French media in France: “Everyone in France knows that every French President has mistresses, but the French media never reports it because French citizens don't care. It is the same thing in Qatar. Everyone knows the government is unfair and repressive, but citizens don't care because they are happy.”<sup>93</sup>

Even though these observations may be true the perception is clearly that Al-Jazeera has been biased throughout the Arab Spring, and this perception has damaged the credibility of the network. Joseph Massad, an associate professor of modern Arab politics at Columbia University, asserts, “In other Arab countries, the channel was clearly on the side of the uprisings, but in Bahrain, it pretended to be impartial while pushing the line of the Bahraini regime.”<sup>94</sup> As'ad Abu Khalil, author of the *Angry Arab News Service*, a widely read blog on media coverage in the Arab world, makes the point even more forcefully: “They have lost their credibility in the Arab world, by either covering developments completely one-sided or completely ignoring them....Their political agenda is not even masked.”<sup>95</sup> These accusations have filtered throughout Western media outlets, particularly due to Qatar's prominent role in the Libya intervention. An event which provided credibility for the allegations was the resignation of Ghassan Bin Jeddo, the director of Al-Jazeera's office in Beirut. As reported, “Bin Jeddo's resignation was attributed to Al-Jazeera's

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<sup>93</sup> Roberts, Interview.

<sup>94</sup> Thomas Erdbrink, “Al-Jazeera TV Network draws criticism, praise for coverage of Arab Revolutions,” *The Washington Post*, May 13, 2011, accessed June 13, 2012, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/al-jazeera-tv-network-draws-criticism-praise-for-coverage-of-arab-revolutions/2011/05/08/AFoHWs2G\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/al-jazeera-tv-network-draws-criticism-praise-for-coverage-of-arab-revolutions/2011/05/08/AFoHWs2G_story.html).

<sup>95</sup> Erdbrink, “Al-Jazeera TV Network.”

alleged abandonment of professional and objective reporting, as it became ‘an operation room for incitement and mobilization.’”<sup>96</sup>

Despite the staying power of these criticisms thus far, Al-Jazeera has been a net positive for Qatar and continues to aid the country’s soft power. Wright asserts that only the BBC can challenge Al-Jazeera in terms of investigative journalism, which is one of the most expensive parts of journalism.<sup>97</sup> Even though other Arab news organizations have sprung up in the past decade, such as the Saudi Al-Arabiya or the Iranian Al-Alam, Al-Jazeera still sets the tone in the region, contends Zweiri; all other Arab news organizations follow its lead.<sup>98</sup> And the network has garnered praise abroad from foreign leaders. The U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton claims that “Al-Jazeera has been the leader in that are literally changing people’s minds and attitudes....In fact, viewership of Al-Jazeera is going up in the United States because it is real news (emphasis added).”<sup>99</sup> And U.S. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and 2008 U.S. Presidential Candidate John McCain have praised Al-Jazeera as well.<sup>100</sup> This praise enhances Al-Jazeera’s soft power and in turn, Qatar’s. Despite the criticisms regarding the network’s coverage, they have not damaged its

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<sup>96</sup> Shabina Akhatri, “Al-Jazeera in Arabic presenter resigns over ‘incitement,’” *Doha News*, March 7, 2011, accessed June 16, 2012. <http://dohanews.co/post/4983442103/al-jazeera-in-arabic-presenter-resigns-over>.

<sup>97</sup> Wright, Interview.

<sup>98</sup> Zweiri, Interview.

<sup>99</sup> Z. Byron Wolf, “Sec. of State Hillary Clinton: Al-Jazeera is ‘Real News’, U.S. Losing ‘Information War,’” *ABC News*, March 2, 2011, accessed June 15, 2012. <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2011/03/sec-of-state-hillary-clinton-al-jazeera-is-real-news-us-losing-information-war/>.

<sup>100</sup> Keach Hagey, “Pelosi, McCain salute Al-Jazeera,” *Politico*, May 17, 2011, accessed June 15, 2012. [http://www.politico.com/blogs/onmedia/0511/Pelosi\\_McCain\\_salute\\_Al\\_Jazeera.html](http://www.politico.com/blogs/onmedia/0511/Pelosi_McCain_salute_Al_Jazeera.html).

credibility irreparably. The fact that the network is being discussed as such a powerful opinion shaper demonstrates its regional preeminence and growing international prominence.

## **Politics of Culture**

### **Sport**

The final manifestation of Qatar's soft power is within the politics of culture, where the country has had two primary advancements: in sport and in education. First, there must be a note on culture: simply because the focus in Qatar is primarily on sport and education, two broad categories, does not mean that these areas are inclusive of culture. Rather, they are a part of what culture, as a concept, entails, where influence or development can occur in different societal spheres. T.S. Eliot once wrote that there are three associations or "senses" with the term culture: "the development of a individual, of a group or class, or of a whole society."<sup>101</sup> Eliot continues: "It is a part of my thesis that the culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of a group or class, and that the culture of the group or class is dependent upon the culture of the whole society to which that group or class belongs. Therefore it is the culture of the society that is fundamental..."<sup>102</sup> The manner in which culture will be described in this thesis most closely resembles the third "sense" Eliot expresses. By the formulation of the culture of the society, much insight can be gained into the beliefs and values of groups and then individuals. Through these insights we can ascertain Qatar's desires about what

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<sup>101</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1948), 21.

<sup>102</sup> Eliot, *Notes*, 21.



characteristics it wishes to project to the region and globe and what characteristics it most values in itself.

In sport, Qatar has been deliberate in fashioning an image as a place hospitable to big sporting events, and they have become a leader in that area for Arab countries. Most notably, they will host the World Cup in 2022, the biggest single-event sporting competition in the world, and the first time it will come to the Arab world. Qatar has had experience hosting sporting events of this magnitude. In 2006, they hosted the 15<sup>th</sup> Asian Games which is Asia's Olympic-style sporting event. It was only the second time, after Tehran in 1974, for a West Asian country to host the games. In 2010, the games went to Guangzhou, China, and in leading up the Games, Guangzhou was said to be "using Qatar and the Games as a benchmark for its own ambitions."<sup>103</sup>

Additionally, Qatar has involved itself in other, smaller but still marquee events. In 2010, it hosted the IAAF World Indoor Track & Field Championships. In 2011 and 2012, Qatar hosted a Diamond League Championship event and has become a part of the Diamond League's annual schedule. The Diamond League is an annual series of track & field meetings in fourteen, international cities widely considered to be the most prestigious track & field meetings in the world. These successes in track enabled Qatar to put forth a credible bid for 2017 World Track Championships, a bid which it narrowly lost to London. In tennis, Qatar is a part of the ATP world tour, and in January 2012 they hosted a high-profile match between Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, the number one and number three all-time winners in Grand Slam singles titles, respectively. After the

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<sup>103</sup> Paul Rhys, "Asian Games' steep road to success," *Al-Jazeera*, November 11, 2010, accessed June 16, 2012. <http://blogs.aljazeera.net/blog/asia/asian-games-steep-road-success>.

match, Nadal remarked, “Every year we have done something special in Doha and this is a very, very beautiful place.”<sup>104</sup> In 2011, the pair had volleyed on a specially-made, floating court.<sup>105</sup> Recently, Qatar joined the International Ice Hockey Federation.<sup>106</sup> And in August 2012 Al-Jazeera will launch two sports channels in the U.S. after having obtained the rights to top European soccer leagues, Spain’s La Liga, Italy’s Serie A and France’s Ligue 1.<sup>107</sup> In 2010, Qatar’s Qatar Foundation agreed to a deal with FC Barcelona, one of the most valuable sports franchises in the world, to be featured on the team’s main shirt.<sup>108</sup> In return, “the club will be paid a record 30 million euros per season through 2016.”<sup>109</sup> Also, in January 2012, Qatar hosted the Asian Football Confederation’s soccer tournament.

Beyond simply sport, Qatar has even shown a penchant for combining sports and diplomacy. In November 2011, Qatar hosted a one-day tournament with players from America, Russia, North Korea and South Korea. The Americans and Russians teamed up

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<sup>104</sup> “Nadal and Federer Light Up 2012 Season,” *ATP World Tour*, January 1, 2012, accessed June 16, 2012. <http://www.atpworldtour.com/News/Tennis/2012/01/1/Doha-Federer-Nadal-Sunset-Tennis-Candles.aspx>.

<sup>105</sup> “Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer really are walking on water in Qatar,” *Daily Mail Online*, January 3, 2011, accessed June 16, 2012. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/tennis/article-1343739/Rafael-Nadal-Roger-Federer-really-walking-water-Qatar.html>.

<sup>106</sup> “Qatar, Jamaica join world hockey,” *ESPN*, May 19, 2012, accessed June 16, 2012. [http://espn.go.com/olympics/hockey/story/\\_/id/7949109/qatar-jamaica-join-international-ice-hockey-federation](http://espn.go.com/olympics/hockey/story/_/id/7949109/qatar-jamaica-join-international-ice-hockey-federation).

<sup>107</sup> “Al-Jazeera to launch U.S. sports networks that will broadcast Spanish, Italian, French league soccer games,” *NJ.com*, May 21, 2012, accessed June 16, 2012. [http://www.nj.com/soccer-news/index.ssf/2012/05/al-jazeera\\_to\\_launch\\_us\\_sports.html](http://www.nj.com/soccer-news/index.ssf/2012/05/al-jazeera_to_launch_us_sports.html).

<sup>108</sup> Mike Ozanian, “Manchester United Again The World’s Most Valuable Soccer Team,” *Forbes*, April 18, 2012, accessed June 16, 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mikeozanian/2012/04/18/manchester-united-again-the-worlds-most-valuable-soccer-team/>.

<sup>109</sup> “Barcelona announces agreement with Qatar Foundation as sponsor,” *Total Barca*, December 10, 2010, accessed June 16, 2012. <http://www.totalbarca.com/2010/news/barcelona-announce-agreement-with-qatar-foundation-as-sponsor/>.

for pair doubles while the North Koreans and South Koreans did the same. After the event, Sheik Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, a member of the ruling family and Qatar Olympic Committee Secretary General, remarked, “This was a very unique tournament, one which we were pleased to get associated with. The players showed that peace was possible through ping-pong.”<sup>110</sup> Such an example demonstrates Qatar’s cognition of not only the aesthetics and substance of international politics but the blended potency of the both.

These sports ventures have elevated Qatar to the de-facto sports leader in the Arab world and enhanced its soft power credentials. Although Qatar’s direct forays into politics, mediation and military intervention, and its media stature, Al-Jazeera, are potent demonstrations of their soft power, sports reaches a section of society in which those two areas cannot. It touches something deeper than politics and information and is often viewed as apolitical or perhaps above politics. Whereas Qatar’s intervention in Libya and Al-Jazeera’s coverage of the Arab Spring have been controversial, it is much more difficult for the World Cup to be.<sup>111</sup> Certainly, Qatar’s cultural soft power is aided by this external perception. Through this perception there is part of Qatar’s culture at large: by projecting and valuing events of great magnitude often viewed as apolitical, Qatar seeks to cast itself as a leader above the pettiness of political disputes. This grandiosity is a part of their communal, cultural character.

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<sup>110</sup> “Peace through ping-pong,” *Dohastadiumplusqatar.com*, November 22, 2011, accessed June 18, 2012. <http://www.dohastadiumplusqatar.com/peace-ping-pong/>.

<sup>111</sup> However, there has been considerable controversy over whether Qatar offered bribes in exchange for votes, particularly to African nations. See, for example, this article: Matt Scott, “Millions paid in bribes for Qatar’s 2022 World Cup votes, report claims,” *The Guardian*, May 10, 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2011/may/10/millions-bribes-qatar-2022-world-cup-claims>.

Nevertheless, though Qatar's efforts at soft power in sports have, at times, been contentious, they have consistently been ambitious; some argue that "over the past decade, Qatar has been targeting sports as a vehicle to showcase its global aspirations."<sup>112</sup> The country is now bidding for the 2020 Olympic Games after a failed attempt for the 2016 games. Saoud stated, "We've learnt from the previous bid. We wanted to show the world that we are a strong, reliable partner. We are in love with sports and we want to work together to bring the Olympics to Doha and share our passion with the region."<sup>113</sup> This statement encapsulates both Qatar's energy and ambition, two qualities with the capacity to perpetually generate soft power opportunities in sports.

### **Education**

Outside of sports, Qatar has engaged in numerous cultural soft power endeavors, particularly in education through cultivating an image as an intellectual hub. The aforementioned Qatar Foundation has been very active in education, striving to achieve its 2030 vision by transforming its workforce for "a modern knowledge-based economy."<sup>114</sup> The foundation has helped fund the creation of eight international universities at Education City (the education campus of the Qatar Foundation) including the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and Northwestern University. These universities bring thousands of bright students each year to Qatar and project a positive image of the country. Success is compounding rapidly at Education City. Beyond

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<sup>112</sup> "Qatar aims for the Olympics after World Cup victory," *Al Arabiya News*, December 16, 2011, accessed June 18, 2012. <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/12/16/182828.html>.

<sup>113</sup> "Qatar aims for the Olympics."

<sup>114</sup> "About Qatar Foundation," *Qatar Foundation*, accessed June 18, 2012. <http://www.qf.org.qa/discover-qf/about-qf>.

students, Qatar is attracting top scholars, engineers, doctors, and other professionals to make it a critical, education hub. Specifically writing about the attraction for professors, Eugene P. Trani and Robert D. Holsworth declare, “Certainly, Qatar’s deep pockets are part of what appeals....but part of the allure undoubtedly is the opportunity to teach top-caliber students. And, professors get to do that using unparalleled educational resources.”<sup>115</sup> As this example indicates, Qatar’s leadership in education, paired with the bounty of its financial wealth, are proving a potent combination to allure and attract the best and brightest intellectual minds to Doha.

Further emphasizing the importance of education, the Qatar Foundation launched the W.I.S.E. (World Innovation Summit for Education) Summit in 2009, which brings together education leaders to talk about what works in improving schools. As a part of the summit, Qatar created the W.I.S.E. prize, worth \$500,000, because there is no Nobel Prize for Education. This prize provides tangible benefits for those who demonstrate excellence in education. Dr. Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani, president of Education City and Chairman of W.I.S.E., stated, “We talk about the importance of education, but there was nothing prestigious globally that really reflected that.”<sup>116</sup> Qatar also hosts the Doha Debates, “a public forum for dialogue and freedom of speech” which addresses “burning contemporary Arab and Islamic issues” such as the implications of the American presence in Iraq or the intra-Palestinian feud.<sup>117</sup> The Doha Round is another important

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<sup>115</sup> Eugene P. Trani and Robert D. Holsworth, *The Indispensable University: Higher Education, Economic Development, and the Knowledge Economy*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 162.

<sup>116</sup> Sean Coughlan, “Why is Qatar investing so much in education?” *BBC*, June, 8, 2012, accessed June 18, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-18151511>.

<sup>117</sup> Uzi Rabi, “Qatar’s Relations with Israel: Challenging Arab and Gulf Norms,” *Middle East Journal* 63 (2009): 458.

achievement of Qatar, even though the round is still ongoing and some have termed it “a stalled conversation” regarding tariffs on commodities.<sup>118</sup> Since the Uruguay Round, smaller, developing countries have gained concessions from larger, developed countries, and the Doha Round represents another step in that development.

Qatar has also been a home to numerous academic conferences. The U.S.-Islamic World Forum, which rotates between Washington and Doha, the conference on interfaith dialogue, the Doha Forum, the Enriching the Middle East’s Economic Future Conference and the International Conference on Jerusalem are just a few of Qatar’s annual or biannual engagements. The country has also played host to other conferences on a one time basis from organizations like the UN, NATO and others. Along with education, Qatar has invested heavily in the arts. Current and future museums include the Museum of Islamic Art, the National Library and Natural History Museum, the Museum of Photography, the Museum of Traditional Clothes and Textiles and the Arab Museum of Modern Art. Qatar’s intellectual endeavors, paired with the country’s artistic pursuits, have fortified the country’s soft power and helped make it a regional leader in ideas and innovation.

### **State Branding**

These involvements, which have manifested themselves in mediation, media and culture, have cultivated an image of attraction and co-option regionally and internationally, and they have built an attractive image, or as the political science literature terms it, “state branding.” J.E. Peterson states, “A simple definition of brand is

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<sup>118</sup> Aaditya Mattoo and Arvind Subramanian, “From Doha to the Next Bretton Woods: A New Multilateral Trade Agenda,” *Foreign Affairs* 88 (2009): 16.

a product or service distinguished by some distinctive characteristic.”<sup>119</sup> Peter van Ham asserts that “branding acquires its power because the right brand can surpass the actual product as a company’s central asset,” and “for a state seeking to remain competitive in the international arena....image and reputation are....becoming essential parts of the state’s strategic equity.”<sup>120</sup>

If Van Ham diagnoses the changing trajectory of small state relations, then Peterson notes the quality necessary for harnessing those relations into lasting power. He says “a brand requires distinctiveness but the trick lies in how to make it distinctive, and to make it stand out in the consumer’s mind.”<sup>121</sup> Of Qatar, he argues, “Few countries seem to have taken the lessons and importance of branding to heart more thoroughly than Qatar has in recent years.”<sup>122</sup> The aforementioned manifestations of political soft power and cultural soft power in this chapter are the central areas where Qatar has successfully branded itself, and these endeavors have had a two-pronged effect: raising Qatar’s exposure and elevating their profile. Ultimately, if van Ham is right, that creating a brand not only has financial but also “considerable political and strategic implications,” then Qatar has well-positioned itself to take advantage of the strategic shift in power relations, both at the regional and international levels.<sup>123</sup>

## **Conclusion**

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<sup>119</sup> J.E. Peterson, “Qatar and the World: Branding for a Micro-State,” *Middle East Journal* 60 (2006): 743.

<sup>120</sup> Peter van Ham, “The Rise of the Brand State: The Postmodern Politics of Image and Reputation,” *Foreign Affairs* 80 (2001): 2, 3.

<sup>121</sup> Peterson, “Qatar and the World,” 743.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 746.

<sup>123</sup> Van Ham, “The Rise of the Brand State,” 4.

This chapter has shown the methodical nature of Qatar's soft power rise, examining the key areas of mediation, media and culture. Qatar has taken systematic steps in these areas to maximize its influence and create a heightened level of attraction that Nye indicates soft power entails. After defining soft power, the chapter briefly examined some of the literature critical of it, and Nye himself acknowledges many of its faults. However, within the settings of modern-day international relations, the spheres of domestic, regional and international are not as clear as they once were, and the strength of soft power has increased. Qatar has employed its soft power in regional crises and disputes, such as with the Sudan and Lebanon; in the media with its successful TV station Al-Jazeera; and in culture with its emphasis on education and as host of popular sporting events. These three soft power manifestations demonstrate how soft power has been operationalized in Qatar, minus financial soft power, which as stated will be dealt with in Chapter III. They show how Qatar's credibility has compounded with each passing success. This credibility lends itself to leadership, and Qatar's regional and international leadership, which is currently filling a gap on the global stage, will be contextually situated and discussed in Chapter III.



## CHAPTER III

### THE GAP OF LEADERSHIP AND QATAR'S FINANCIAL SOFT POWER

“Most small countries find it wise to keep their heads down in world affairs. Qatar is small, a pancake-flat peninsula less than half the size of Belgium. Barely a quarter of its 750,000 people are citizens, the rest being foreign workers and their families.

But the bantam-sized emirate has a habit of punching above its weight, and in several directions at once.”<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

Qatar's soft power forays should be viewed through their contextual lens, and that lens shows that the current world, economic crisis has created a political leadership vacuum. Due to many states' inability to sufficiently recover, they have chosen to cater to domestic, rather than international, interests. Consequently, there has been leadership abdication on important issues crucial to the international economy such as trade, energy, and political leadership in response to the Arab Spring. On these issues, the small-power of Qatar is taking a leadership role and in doing so, defying the traditional model for small countries. Contextually, “the economic and political tide has turned against small nations” like Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Ireland due to the global, financial crisis, yet Qatar has remained immune.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “A Bouncy Bantam,” *The Economist*, September 7, 2006, accessed May 12, 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/7887812>.

<sup>2</sup> Gideon Rachman, “How small nations were cut adrift,” *Financial Times*, October 19, 2009, accessed May 12, 2012, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e2da4314-bcda-11de-a7ec-00144feab49a.html#axzz1umqSZXXV>.

Qatar has the financial resources to weather the economic storm, and those resources are central to it making a regional and international influence. But also, the power of Qatar's political will to act has heightened that influence. With a small country like Qatar, there are two variables which must be met in order to have influence: capacity and opportunity. Importantly though, these variables exist with the systemic conditions aforementioned, domestic, regional and international. As the concept of intermestics makes clear, these spheres are not as defined as they once were. Qatar's capacity, both financial and political, and opportunity, the dearth of leadership in international politics, has created the propitious conditions for Qatar to rise in influence as a small country. This chapter will show how Qatar is seizing this opportune moment to have greater influence, and to borrow the term from *The Economist*, how the small emirate is "punching above its weight" in international relations. This chapter also builds on the assertion found in "Middle Power Leadership and Coalition Building: Australia, the Cairns Group, and the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations" that middle powers can provide leadership when large countries abdicate their leadership responsibility. It claims that small powers can do that too, when the aforementioned variables of capacity and opportunity are met.<sup>3</sup>

### **Qatar's Leadership: Akin to the Cairns Group in the Uruguay Round**

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<sup>3</sup> At the outset, it must be mentioned that this chapter does not mean to negate the role of regional politics and regional conditions. While it does focus primarily on the international conditions which have, in part, created the opportunity for Qatar's rise, the regional deficit of capacity and opportunity is also crucial to understanding Qatar's growing status. For example, it is highly unlikely that Qatar would have such a prominent place in regional and international politics if Egypt's economy were thriving. But because this chapter stresses Qatar's financial capacity and because of the international nature of the modern financial world, due to the global supply chain, the author believes that an emphasis on the international sphere is more appropriate.

Analytically, Qatar's leadership is similar to the kind of leadership the Cairns Group, led by Australia, provided during the Uruguay Round. In "Middle Power Leadership and Coalition Building: Australia, the Cairns Group, and the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations," Richard A. Higgott and Andrew Fenton Cooper demonstrate the unique and influential leadership of the Group, in particular Australia and Canada, in the issue-specific area of agriculture. They formulate their argument in the shadows of not only the historical context surrounding agricultural trade but also through the larger discussion on the role of non-hegemonic actors in international relations. They begin the article by presenting two broad questions in international politics "not extensively explored," saying, "A central debate in international political economy turns on the question of the manner in which cooperation can be secured in the global political economy 'after hegemony' ....A second broad question....is the manner in which weaker states (be they so-called small or middle powers) attempt to influence stronger ones."<sup>4</sup> Their self-described task is to find insight about "how to build cooperation in the global economic order on the one hand and the potential role of what we might, for effect, call 'non-hegemonic' actors in that process on the other."<sup>5</sup>

At the outset, there are some crucial differences between the case studies of Qatar and the Cairns Group. The article deals with "middlepowermanship" within a group framework dealing with a specific issue-area while this paper deals with one

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<sup>4</sup> Richard A. Higgott and Andrew Fenton Cooper, "Middle Power Leadership and Coalition Building: Australia, the Cairns Group, and the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations," *International Organization* 44 (1990): 589, 589-632. Accessed April 28, 2012. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2706854>.

<sup>5</sup> Higgott and Cooper, "Middle Power Leadership," 590.

small country working primarily outside of a group framework with a variety of agendas. Despite these differences, the article's explication of powers "punching above their weight" is akin to Qatar's influence in the ongoing, fiscal and political crisis.

### **Qatar as a Small State**

Before delving into the areas where Qatar, as a small country, is making an impact, it is useful to note acknowledged characteristics which classify small countries. Maurice A. East asserts that small states can be characterized by one of the following: small land area, small total population, small total GNP (or other measure of productive capacity), and low level of military capabilities. Upon considering these characteristics, he naturally concludes that "large states initiate considerably more events than do small states."<sup>6</sup>

Qatar fulfills every one of these small country characteristics. Their land area is 4,416 square miles, and they also have a short coastline of 345 miles.<sup>7</sup> As a comparison, the land area of the U.S. state of Connecticut, one of the smallest of the fifty U.S. states, is 5,544 square miles.<sup>8</sup> Their population is approximately 1,800,000 people, but the number of citizens is less than 300,000.<sup>9 10</sup> Although Qatar is the

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<sup>6</sup> Maurice A. East, "Size and Foreign Policy Behavior: A Test of Two Models," *World Politics* 25 (1973): 557, 556-576, accessed April 29, 2012. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2009952>.

<sup>7</sup> "Qatar, Country Overview: Location and Size," *Encyclopedia of the Nations*, accessed May 4, 2012, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Asia-and-the-Pacific/Qatar.html>.

<sup>8</sup> "The Geography of Connecticut," *Netstate*, accessed May 6, 2012, [http://www.netstate.com/states/geography/ct\\_geography.htm](http://www.netstate.com/states/geography/ct_geography.htm).

<sup>9</sup> "Qatar's population put at 1.79mn," *Emirates 24/7*, May 3, 2012, accessed May 4, 2012, <http://www.emirates247.com/business/qatar-s-population-put-at-1-79mn-2012-05-03-1.457042>.

richest country per capita in the world, at \$88,000, their total GDP is very low when compared to other economies.<sup>11</sup> In 2011, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ranked Qatar 55<sup>th</sup> in the world in total GDP, right between Hungary and Ireland.<sup>12</sup> For Qatar's army, they maintain a modest force of just over 11,000 men, although the Special Forces are trained by French and other Western countries.<sup>13</sup> Finding Qatari citizens for the army is an ongoing problem. Because of the small population, the pool for recruits is smaller. Consequently, the army is comprised of approximately twenty nationalities, mostly Pakistanis.<sup>14</sup> Lastly, Qatar's arms are significantly lower than other, larger nations in the world, such as Russia and China, and their amount of arms when compared to other, regional countries is by no means hegemonic.<sup>15</sup>

### **Financial Capacity**

Despite these characteristics which affirm Qatar's status as a small power, its' economic assets have allowed it to have the capacity for regional and international influence, and as the graph in Chapter II illustrated, economic soft power has funded

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<sup>10</sup> "Qatar Population 2011," *Exploredia*, May 27, 2011, accessed May 5, 2012, <http://exploredia.com/qatar-population-2011/>.

<sup>11</sup> "Qatar: World Wealthiest Country," *English Nuqudy*, February 26, 2012, accessed May 3, 2012, [http://english.nuqudy.com/Gulf/Qatar\\_Worlds\\_Wealth-1036](http://english.nuqudy.com/Gulf/Qatar_Worlds_Wealth-1036).

<sup>12</sup> "World Economic Outlook, April 2012: Growth Resuming, Dangers Remain," *International Monetary Fund*, April 2012, accessed May 7, 2012, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/01/pdf/text.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Hugh Eakin, "The Strange Power of Qatar," *The New York Review of Books*, September 27, 2011, accessed May 6, 2012, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/oct/27/strange-power-qatar/?pagination=false>.

<sup>14</sup> "Qatar-Army," *GlobalSecurity.org*, accessed May 7, 2012, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/gulf/qatar-army.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Kareem Shaheen, "UAE becomes fourth-biggest arms buyer," *The National*, March 21, 2010, accessed May 9, 2012, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/uae-becomes-fourth-biggest-arms-buyer>.

Qatari soft power in mediation, media and culture. Chiefly among those assets are its natural gas reserves, which are the third highest in the world after Russia and Iran, but Qatar is the largest supplier in the world of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).<sup>16</sup> As the introduction to the thesis noted, Qatar is also “a significant net exporter of oil” and “an important supplier for world oil markets.”<sup>17</sup> Yet, in addition to their natural resources, economic analysts assert that there are other key factors in Qatar’s economic rise: economic diversification efforts, investment in foreign countries, and its small population.<sup>18</sup> Despite the fact that LNG is its greatest asset, Qatar has chosen to withhold much of it from its neighboring GCC countries even though these countries have acute needs for consumption.<sup>19</sup> Such action demonstrates Qatar’s desire to become a major regional player even if that ascent comes with the detriment of its neighbors. This ambition is a key component of the “capacity” variable indicated in the introduction and works in accordance with the concept of regional competition, which will be discussed in Chapter IV.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “Qatar,” *U.S. Energy Information Administration*, accessed May 3, 2012, <http://205.254.135.7/countries/country-data.cfm?fips=QA>.

<sup>17</sup> “Qatar.”

<sup>18</sup> “Qatar Economic Growth to Continue,” *English Nuqudy*, April 23, 2012, accessed May 2, 2012, [http://english.nuqudy.com/Gulf/Qatar\\_Economic\\_Grow-1669](http://english.nuqudy.com/Gulf/Qatar_Economic_Grow-1669).

<sup>19</sup> “Qatar: The World’s Biggest LNG Producer Holding Onto Its Gas,” *Oilprice.com*, June 2, 2010, accessed May 5, 2012, <http://oilprice.com/Energy/Natural-Gas/Qatar-The-Worlds-Biggest-LNG-Producer-Holding-Onto-Its-Gas.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Even though this aspect of Qatari competition and ambition enhances Qatar’s capacity for regional and international influence, it works to undermine the perception of an honest broker discussed in Chapter II. This dissidence buttresses the point made in Chapter V that Qatar cannot forever hold the positions of regional mediator and regional leader simultaneously.

Qatar has done an excellent job of protecting and investing in this resource, in order to take advantage of it long-term. The recently established Pearl GTL, built at \$19bn, is the biggest plant of its kind in the world. As the *Gulf Times* wrote, "Pearl GTL has the largest capacity in the world to produce high-quality lubricating base oil in addition to being the world's biggest producer of normal paraffin that depends on GTL."<sup>21</sup> This investment assures Qatar that it will continue to be the leader in LNG production, and this leadership, as a small country, will enable it to make a larger impact in the international sphere.

### **Financial Leadership**

Qatar's financial leadership has manifested itself in various ways as the richness of its natural gas reserves has allowed it to make an impact in other sectors. The country has been committed to forming partnerships which are mutually beneficial for both parties, as the following examples illustrate. Qatar's strategy is evident: invest in other countries and companies and have the remittances of those investments return in both the short and long-term. Recently, Barwa Real Estate, the Middle East's biggest property company by assets, sold the Barwa Financial District in downtown Doha to Qatar Petroleum (QP) for \$3bn. Demonstrating Qatar's hunger for investment, "the transaction" came "amid a slump in the Gulf state's property market."<sup>22</sup> More recently, QP and Qatar

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<sup>21</sup> "Looking Back at Qatar's Economic Success Story," *Gulf Times*, December 31, 2011, accessed May 5, 2012, [http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu\\_no=2&item\\_no=478459&version=1&template\\_id=46](http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=478459&version=1&template_id=46).

<sup>22</sup> Andy Sambidge, "Qatar's Barwa sells Financial District for \$3bn," *Arabianbusiness.com*, December 21, 2011, accessed May 5, 2012, <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/qatar-s-barwa-sells-financial-district-for-3bn-436403.html>.

Petrochemical Company (QAPCO) signed \$5bn deal to build a petrochemical complex within the country. The country's energy minister, Mohammed Al-Sada, stated that the petrochemical products will be sold "mainly to high growth markets in Asia, Africa, and Latin America."<sup>23</sup> This deal comes on the heels of another in December 2011 with Royal Dutch Shell to develop a \$6.4bn petrochemicals complex.<sup>24</sup> There has also been investment in the French petroleum giant, Total, and the takeover of a luxury hotel company in Italy.<sup>25 26</sup>

With such a diverse investment portfolio, Qatar's reach seems to be endless. As was recently reported, "The country's sovereign wealth fund, estimated to have assets worth around \$70 billion, has poured more than \$20 billion in recent years into stakes in German carmakers Porsche and Volkswagen, Agricultural Bank of China, Santander Brasil, Spain's Iberdrola and German builder Hochtief."<sup>27</sup> Clearly, the government has employed this fund liberally when advantageous business ventures become available.

### **Political Opportunity**

Qatar's natural resources, business partnerships, and corporate investments have been and are central to its success, but the gap of economic leadership

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<sup>23</sup> "QP, Qapco to build \$5 bln petchem complex," *Reuters*, February 13, 2012, accessed May 5, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/13/petchem-qatar-idUSL5E8DC2L220120213>.

<sup>24</sup> "QP, Qapco to build \$5 bln petchem complex."

<sup>25</sup> "Qatar buys 3% of Total," *English Nuqudy*, April 23, 2012, accessed May 1, 2012, [http://english.nuqudy.com/Gulf/Qatar\\_Buys\\_3\\_of\\_Tot-1665](http://english.nuqudy.com/Gulf/Qatar_Buys_3_of_Tot-1665).

<sup>26</sup> "Qatar Holding Purchases Luxury Resorts," *English Nuqudy*, April 22, 2012, accessed May 1, 2012, [http://english.nuqudy.com/Gulf/Qatar\\_Holding\\_Purch-1657](http://english.nuqudy.com/Gulf/Qatar_Holding_Purch-1657).

<sup>27</sup> "PHL, Qatar to increase bilateral trade and investments," *GMA News Online*, April 9, 2012, accessed May 5, 2012, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/254350/economy/business/phl-qatar-to-increase-bilateral-trade-and-investments>.



regionally and internationally has created the “perfect storm” for Qatar to take on a prominent role. If the global climate was fair, Qatar would have little to no chance for influence. Countries and organizations with significantly larger GDPs, like the United States and the European Union, would be the undisputed leaders in economic matters. And, to be sure, countries like the U.S., Germany, and the United Kingdom still have a much greater ability to shape global economic policy and forge consensus than Qatar does. But undoubtedly, the economic crisis of 2008 has crippled those states’, and others’, abilities to act with as much force and sway as they did before the crash. In short, the conditions have changed and Qatar has propitiously seized upon these changes.

The situation is similar to the rising influence of the Cairns group during the Uruguay Round. When one examines the history and politics of agriculture well before the round, he finds much different circumstances. Significantly, Higgott and Cooper acknowledge that “in the immediate post-World War II period, the United States was the dominant actor in the international agricultural trading system. By virtue of its willingness to take on the burdens of stockholder of last resort in grains, both in respect to commercial transactions and in respect to concessional transactions, the United States may be said to have performed the role of manager of the international agricultural trading system.”<sup>28</sup> Many countries benefitted from this system; hence, there was no desire to change the status quo. Clearly, Higgott and Cooper elucidate this fact: “A U.S. directed regime had a number of benefits for its allies among the advanced industrialized countries. Above all, the liberal flow of

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<sup>28</sup> Higgott and Cooper, “Middle Power Leadership,” 594.

foodstuffs allowed Western Europe and Japan to secure cheap and plentiful supplies of agricultural goods and thereby enabled them to concentrate on restructuring their industrial plants and infrastructures.”<sup>29</sup> But this status quo could not and did not remain in place indefinitely. A number of “exogenous shocks in the early 1970s” forecasted the need for reform.<sup>30</sup>

These shocks, collectively and over time, had the effect of eroding the foundations of the old, economic order, and precipitated the need for different, more inclusive economic leadership. One of those shocks was the United States’ new emphasis “on national self-interest, as opposed to international obligations” which demonstrated the country’s “declining will and capacity to maintain and defend the system.”<sup>31</sup> Another was the ad hoc decision of the Nixon administration to place an embargo on the export of soybeans and soybean products. As Higgott and Cooper note, even though the embargo was short-lived, “the economic as well as psychological impact of the embargo on the EC countries and Japan was profound.”<sup>32</sup> The credibility of the United States as the primary exporter of foodstuffs was severely damaged, and their action caused EC countries and Japan to reorient their economic strategy, placing “food security” at the top of its political agenda. Also the actions of the Organization of Petroleum Producing Countries (OPEC) in the early

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 595.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 595.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 595.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 596.

70s put autonomy and self-sufficiency above the old ideals of international cooperation within a globalized framework.

Although this crisis deals with one specific international issue, agriculture, the example has far-reaching implications and is akin to the development of Qatar as a rising international player. Certain shocks caused countries to rethink their economic strategies and adaptation ensued as policies changed, and the global situation today is strikingly similar. The economic crisis has caused states to look inward, with the mindset: “Let’s deal with our problems first.” Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair candidly encapsulates this mindset in his recent memoir, *A Journey*:

As these uprisings change the face of the Middle East and North Africa—and as I write, this revolution is nowhere near being over—a leader seeking counsel will get two opposing views....The first view is, in effect: stay out; this is their struggle and they have to do it; learn from Iraq and Afghanistan and realise that to interfere is to make things worse. Besides, we have plenty back here to think about. Let’s look after ourselves first, for a change.<sup>33</sup>

Blair’s summation is prophetic. For instance, the U.S. has chosen not financially aid Europe, even though the economies of the EU and America are deeply intertwined, particularly in trade. The U.S. administration couched their argument in following way: “U.S. taxpayers should not bear the burden of stabilizing Europe’s economy.” And U.S. Press Secretary Jay Carney asserted, “We do not in any way believe that additional resources are required from the United States or from American

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<sup>33</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (London: The Random House, 2011), xxxviii.

taxpayers.”<sup>34</sup> Britain’s Prime Minister David Cameron has signaled his unwillingness to accept the Financial Transactions Tax, designed to help prop up European financial markets, “but he seems relatively relaxed about the inner, eurozone caucus adopting it alone.”<sup>35</sup>

This way of thinking is not only affecting the U.S. and European countries, however; it is a global phenomenon. African countries are following a similar path to try and expand their own economies in the midst of still anemic, global economic growth.<sup>36</sup> Even though the example of Africa may seem irrelevant considering its financial incapacity to aid troubled Eurozone countries, the point remains that these African nations are looking inward despite the unremitting progression of globalization. Significantly, China, the world’s second largest economy, has been both coy and reticent about aiding the Eurozone. In November 2011, they said no, but in February 2012, they “vowed” to help.<sup>37</sup> <sup>38</sup> Some, like Ian Bremmer, are calling this the “new math” of global politics. His new book, *Every Nation for Itself: Winners and Losers in a G-Zero World*, contends that “we are at a moment of ineffective global

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<sup>34</sup> Susan Crabtree, “White House: No U.S. bailout for Europe,” *The Washington Times*, November 28, 2011, accessed May 5, 2012, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/nov/28/no-us-bailout-europe/>.

<sup>35</sup> Jeremy Warner, “Britain still too inward looking to succeed,” *The Telegraph*, November 7, 2011, accessed May 3, 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/comment/jeremy-warner/8875271/Britain-is-still-too-inward-looking-to-succeed.html>.

<sup>36</sup> Nana-Oye Afoom, “Africa: Looking inward for policy planning and capacity building,” *Read-online.org*, January 7, 2012, accessed May 4, 2012, <http://read-online.org/archives/1567>.

<sup>37</sup> “U.S., China reluctant to help Europe bail out of debt crisis,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 2011, accessed May 8, 2012, [http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world\\_now/2011/11/obama-pledges-support-for-europe-in-cannes.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2011/11/obama-pledges-support-for-europe-in-cannes.html).

<sup>38</sup> “China Premier Wen Jiabao vows to help on eurozone debt,” *BBC News*, February 14, 2012, accessed May 8, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-17022756>.

institutions, inward-looking major powers, and weakened international leadership.”<sup>39</sup> Thomas Friedman characterizes what Bremmer describes, simply, as a “global leadership vacuum.”<sup>40</sup> Generally, this type of thinking has undermined the global governance needed and the understanding of intermestics sought. Specifically, all of these factors, or “shocks” to the old system, have created a favorable climate for Qatar to acquire heightened influence.

### **Political Leadership**

This dearth of economic leadership has made it possible for Qatar to have high level, political involvement. The opportunity to employ its’ economic capacity has presented itself. Qatar’s involvement has oscillated between both economic and political spheres, demonstrating its dual soft power strengths. In the wake of the current Arab Spring, Qatar has positioned itself as the regional leader. The government granted Tunisia a \$500 million loan in the wake of last year’s tumultuous revolution.<sup>41</sup> This amount demonstrates the depth of Qatar’s commitment and activism, even when compared to other, much larger countries. For example, the U.S. gave only one-fifth of Qatar’s total.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> David Rothkopf, “The New Math of Geopolitics: Does it all add up to G-Zero?: A Conversation between Ian Bremmer and David Rothkopf,” *Foreign Policy*, April 30, 2012, accessed May 5, 2012, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/30/the\\_new\\_math\\_of\\_geopolitics\\_does\\_it\\_all\\_add\\_up\\_to\\_g\\_zero](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/30/the_new_math_of_geopolitics_does_it_all_add_up_to_g_zero).

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Friedman, “Lead, Follow or Get Out of the Way,” *The New York Times*, May 5, 2012, accessed May 5, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/06/opinion/sunday/friedman-lead-follow-or-get-out-of-the-way.html?\\_r=3](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/06/opinion/sunday/friedman-lead-follow-or-get-out-of-the-way.html?_r=3).

<sup>41</sup> “Qatar Grants Tunisia \$500 Million,” *English Nuqudy*, April 22, 2012, accessed May 2, 2012, [http://english.nuqudy.com/North\\_Africa/Qatar\\_Grants\\_Tunisi-1660](http://english.nuqudy.com/North_Africa/Qatar_Grants_Tunisi-1660).

<sup>42</sup> “U.S. to provide \$100 million debt aid to Tunisia,” *Al Arabiya News*, March 29, 2012, accessed September 7, 2012. <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/03/29/204055.html>.

The government has also been active in trade. They recently midwived a bilateral trade agreement with the Philippines.<sup>43</sup> Also, in Jeddah at the 13<sup>th</sup> quadrennial session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the executive director of Qatar Export Development Agency took a leading role advocating greater inter-Arab trade involving Qatari exports. His argument buttressed that of WTO director Pascal Lamy's as Lamy stressed the need for private sector driven policies to shape trade policy.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, there is Qatar's role in the Libya intervention, which, as Chapter II shows, has been well-documented. They "provided anti-Gadhafi rebels with what Libyan officials now estimate are tens of millions of dollars in aid, military training and more than 20,000 tons of weapons."<sup>45</sup> Their partnership with NATO was critical to having a strong, Arab ally in the intervention. Even though Qatar's military capacity is relatively small, their capacity to use what they have is unparalleled. Kristian Coates-Ulrichsen of the London School of Economics contends, "Qatar can do an awful lot. It can fund and equip an opposition movement in a month, in ways the West cannot do."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> "PHL, Qatar to increase bilateral trade and investments."

<sup>44</sup> "WTO chief calls for greater inter-Arab trade," *Arabnews.com*, April 27, 2012, accessed May 1, 2012, <http://arabnews.com/economy/article617504.ece>.

<sup>45</sup> Sam Dagher, Charles Levinson, and Margaret Coker, "Tiny Kingdom's Huge Role in Libya Draws Concern," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 17, 2011, accessed May 5, 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204002304576627000922764650.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Dickinson, "Tiny Qatar played outsized role as Arab League President. Will it last?," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 28, 2012, accessed May 11, 2012, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2012/0328/Tiny-Qatar-played-outsized-role-as-Arab-League-president.-Will-it-last>.

As noted in Chapter II, some scholars have suggested that Qatar is the “Switzerland of the Middle East,” able to broker agreements with a variety of different actors, and Qatar has had success in that role.<sup>47</sup> Coates-Ulrichsen notes:

Qatar has mediated conflicts in Yemen, Darfur and, most successfully Lebanon. There, the 2008 Doha Accord ended eighteen months of political paralysis that came close to re-igniting civil conflict on several occasions. Qatar’s role as a ‘non-stop mediatory’ has earned it widespread international recognition and a reputation as a (relatively) honest broker, although its critics allege there is little follow-through to ensure sustainable implementation of initial agreements.<sup>48</sup>

This last criticism is the reality of being a small-state lacking proper organizational capacity. Despite this flaw, Qatar’s position and success as an international mediator is readily admitted, which again testifies to Qatar’s unique attractive ability to influence.

All of Qatar’s involvements have one, common element: they are within the bounds of internal and external constraints. Although the opportunity to have influence has presented itself due to lack of international leadership, Qatar’s ability to lead is not limitless. It must be responsive to its citizens’ concerns and mindful of the makeup of international organizations, which favor larger, more developed countries. The principle of intermestics is at work whether a country admits it or not, and Qatar has calculatingly chosen spheres in which to act.

Qatar’s position is similar to Australia and Canada’s within the Cairns Group during the Uruguay Round even though Qatar is not in direct confrontation with any

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<sup>47</sup> Dickinson, “Tiny Qatar.”

<sup>48</sup> Kristian Coates-Ulrichsen, “Qatar: Emergence of a Regional Power with International Reach,” *e-International Relations*, January 23, 2012, accessed May 12, 2012, <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/01/23/qatar-emergence-of-a-regional-power-with-international-reach/>.

particular group over any specific policy.<sup>49</sup> Despite the positive press coverage the group received to “secure the agenda” in negotiations, Higgott and Cooper write that they “faced serious constraints in translating this procedural victory into substantive success in securing major reform as the MTNs proceeded. Most crucially, the incremental and flexible approach of the Group remained at odds with the rigid U.S. proposal for agricultural negotiations....”<sup>50</sup> Within the group, Australia and Canada had different negotiating goals and different relationships to finesse. Concerns abounded that Canada was a “free rider within the coalition,” and disputes surfaced over the nature of the U.S.-Canadian negotiations on a free trade agreement, “a bilateral agreement at odds with the spirit of MTNs.”<sup>51</sup> Australia, meanwhile, was “not only the driving force behind the Cairns Group’s negotiating demands but also the mediator and stabilizer of the coalition.”<sup>52</sup> The intra-group dynamics were constant variables to be dissected and dealt with. In efforts to preserve unity, “Australia had to continue to find compromise solutions acceptable to the more assertive LDCs and to the cautious and recalcitrant Canadians.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Style of Leadership**

This flexible and attentive style of leadership characterized Australia during the Uruguay Round, but it also characterizes Qatar now, as seen by how it is dealing with its

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<sup>49</sup> However, as shown in Chapter II, certain Qatari policies have rankled some regional countries, notably Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

<sup>50</sup> Higgott and Cooper, “Middle Power Leadership,” 617.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 618.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 619.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 619.



diverse group of allies. Qatar has allowed the United States Central Command air operation center (CENTCOM) to be placed at Al Udeid Air base.<sup>54</sup> But they also have strong diplomatic ties with other countries, some of whom are adversaries, and are keen to maintain a delicate balance among their relationships. For instance, they have strong ties to Hamas and Iran.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, in the past they have had close relations with Israel and maintain a working relationship, despite entrenched disagreement over Palestine.<sup>56 57</sup> These paradoxical relationships prompt questions as to Qatar's motives. Some simply characterize Qatar as a "maverick" who can behave as a hybrid "diplomatic actor," "helpful mediator, "broker," and a "risk-taker."<sup>58</sup> With Australia and the Cairns Group during the Uruguay Round, there was a clear, articulated goal: put agriculture on the international trade agenda and get the U.S. and EC to accept agriculture concessions. Although Qatar's intent may seem more difficult to decipher, it is in fact strikingly simple: to maximize influence and differentiate itself from its Gulf neighbors.

This insight reveals more than simply Qatar's clear intentions; it tells us that Qatar is a small power punching above its weight and having significant influence in

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<sup>54</sup> Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmitt, "Aftereffects: Bases, U.S. will move air operations to Qatar base," *The New York Times*, April 28, 2003, accessed May 6, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/28/world/aftereffects-bases-us-will-move-air-operations-to-qatar-base.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>.

<sup>55</sup> D. Parvaz, "Files show Qatar's delicate balance," *Al-Jazeera*, December 2, 2010, accessed May 7, 2012, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/12/20101229138889331.html>.

<sup>56</sup> Annie Robbins, "Israel severs ties with Qatar over...Palestinian Statehood," *Mondoweiss*, August 27, 2011, accessed May 7, 2012, <http://mondoweiss.net/2011/08/israel-severs-ties-with-qatar-over-palestinian-statehood.html>.

<sup>57</sup> Andrew F. Cooper and Bessma Momani, "Qatar and expanded contours of Small State Diplomacy" (paper presented at the ISA, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 2010).

<sup>58</sup> Cooper and Momani, "Qatar and expanded contours."

international relations. One way to tell if a country matters, and this is counterintuitive, is to see how many countries, corporations, etc. the country angers/pleases. When a country engenders a variety of emotions and reactions with differing degrees of polarity, it is a telling sign that the country is having influence. Qatar is, at this stage, becoming a polarizing country as some countries have begun to bristle at its newfound roles and elevated status. Some Middle Eastern countries are envious of their resources while others are grateful for their benevolence.<sup>59</sup> Some international countries appreciate specific cases of Qatar's activism, such as the United States, while others despise Qatar's heightened influence, such as Russia. The exchange between the foreign ministers of Qatar and Russia in February 2012 mentioned in Chapter II illustrates the kind of sentiments a power struggle can evoke.<sup>60</sup> These emotive responses to Qatar's increasing role demonstrate power greater than Qatar's status as a small country would indicate.

### **The Small State Model and Qatar**

All of these factors, Qatar's natural resources, political leadership, and ability to evoke emotions from other countries, seriously question the traditional small-state model. East posits that in "virtually" all circumstances, "small states exhibit a low-profile course of action, minimizing their perceived risks and their expenditure of scarce resources such as manpower, military capabilities, and hard currency."<sup>61</sup> He goes to say, "Because of the relative lack of resources available for foreign affairs, the small state must seek methods

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<sup>59</sup> Ulrike Putz, "Qatar's Reconstruction Aid in Lebanon: Envy, Conspiracy and a Lebanese Motor City," *Spiegel Online International*, March 13, 2007, accessed May 7, 2012, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,471382,00.html>.

<sup>60</sup> "Russian Threat: Russia threatens Qatar to wipe this country off the map," *Kavkaz Center*, February 7, 2012, accessed May 7, 2012, <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2012/02/07/15790.shtml>.

<sup>61</sup> East, "Size and Foreign Policy Behavior," 558.

of interaction that are less costly and more economical.”<sup>62</sup> Finally, he concludes that “small states act as they do precisely because of limitations on their organizational capacity and ability to monitor international affairs adequately. This leads to a lack of information, an inability to perceive situations at an early stage, and a tendency to employ high-commitment, high-risk types of behavior.”<sup>63</sup> While it is certainly true that Qatar’s “organizational capacity” pales in comparison to that of other, larger countries, as Coates Ulrichsen made clear in his aforementioned quotation, Qatar’s capacity has been sufficient to make a sizeable and significant impact when concentrated. The intervention in Libya is the most documented example, but Qatar’s regional activism, which it has parlayed into a type of de facto spokesman’s role for the Middle East at international organizations and events, has diffused the organizational deficit. Increased activity has compensated for organization.

This regional activism cannot be overlooked because the “new regionalism” that has characterized the global economy since the mid-1980s. This term, first used by Columbia Professor Jagdish Bhagwati, is significant because, as Robert Gilpin writes, “The revived movement toward regional integration has been universal, generally successful, and has increased considerably the integration of economic activities within particular regional arrangements.”<sup>64</sup> Gilpin goes on to say that “the major powers have incorporated economic regionalism in the strategies they employ to increase their own relative gains....In order to survive and prosper in an uncertain and rapidly changing

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 560.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 576.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2000), 40-41.

world, individual states and groups of states are adapting to the evolving economic, technological, and political environment as they have many times in the past.”<sup>65</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This analysis could be a current description of Qatar as they are trying to forge regional partnerships in addition to international ones, in other words “a regional power with international reach.”<sup>66</sup> Qatar is working within the framework of the new system and evolving to meet its demands, as the era globalization requires. For these reasons, Qatar’s regional leadership in Libya and during the Arab Spring is critical. Even though East’s small state characteristics predict to some degree the level of state involvement in global politics, these characteristics are not destiny. And Qatar has lessened the efficacy of East’s assessment by enhancing its strengths. The country has the economic capacity to build relationships and is using the opportunity of the Arab Spring to build political ones. Robert Gilpin argues that although “economic factors will play an important role in determining the characteristics of the global economy, the most important factors will be political.”<sup>67</sup> Qatar comprehends this relationship and is deftly using its economic resources to garner political goodwill. That dichotomy between economics and politics, and Qatar’s ability to navigate “a new world economic order” to bridge it, is another indicator of its’ ability to make an influence above its’ presumed status.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism*, 43.

<sup>66</sup> Coates Ulrichsen, “Qatar: Emergence of a Regional Power.”

<sup>67</sup> Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism*, 50.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 50.

This adaptive ability that Qatar has demonstrated confirms that Qatar can influence, to use Robert O. Keohane's phrase, "after hegemony." In his book, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Keohane states that the book focuses "on coordination achieved through bargaining."<sup>69</sup> Elaborating further, he contends, "Such bargaining typically occurs not only in one bargaining episode but in several, over a period of time. Negotiations on international monetary arrangements, trade, and energy take place continuously and are expected to continue indefinitely into the future."<sup>70</sup> This analysis builds on the Nye's conception of soft power and the liberal idea of interdependence. Qatar's negotiating power has given itself more credibility by instilling "confidence-building" in other countries.<sup>71</sup> This confidence provides Qatar with a greater chance of turning its short-term involvement into sustained influence and prestige.

The influence and reach of Qatar, however, should be put in perspective. To conclude their article, Higgott and Cooper situate their analysis in the proper context: "Although clearly unable to substitute for the role of a hegemon that is no longer willing or able to make the preponderant contribution to maintaining cooperation in what is now popularly called the posthegemonic era, a purposive issue-oriented coalition such as the Cairns group can play an important secondary role in the process of securing cooperation between the waning hegemon and the other major actors."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1984), 76.

<sup>70</sup> Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 76.

<sup>71</sup> Higgott and Cooper, "Middle Power Leadership," 607.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 630, 631.

Qatar's impact is similar, influential but concentrated, powerful but not overtly so. The country has been able to carve out a niche of influence, and by doing so, have demonstrated that a small nation can "punch above its weight" in international relations. Despite their successes, it remains to be seen how long their influence will last. Indicators such as energy prices and prudent foreign investments will go a long way to determining that success. Chapter V will discuss this prospect while Chapter IV will situate Qatar's success among its closest regional competitors, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. At this point, what is clear is that Qatar has seized on the favorable conditions which have come as a result of leadership abdication from larger countries. These conditions, and their capacity to act on them, have allowed for their increased clout and influence.

## CHAPTER IV

### TWO REGIONAL COMPETITORS: QATAR ALONGSIDE SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UAE

“The foreign policy of the Gulf States....are shaped and constrained by a number of common factors as well as individual specificities.”-Ginny Hill and Gerd Nonneman<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

Qatar’s soft power strategy and newfound leadership role within the region is not entirely unique; Saudi Arabia and the UAE have also carved niches of leadership and influence. The state branding strategy discussed in Chapter II is crucial for Qatari influence because of the similarity of its neighbors economically and politically, of which Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the two most prominent members. Saudi Arabia has also tried to be a regional leader in mediation and bests Qatar by far in terms of GDP, area and population. The UAE, in particular Dubai, is a more attractive destination for tourism and also serves as a haven of cultural soft power. As prominent examples of its cultural soft power, it boasts the tallest building in the world, the Burj Khalifa, and the world’s largest shopping mall in terms of area, the Dubai Mall.

All three countries boast financial soft power, but the distinctive characteristic for Qatar has been their ability to bridge both political and cultural soft power without becoming polarizing, even if their involvement in the Arab Spring has now challenged their perceived neutrality. This chapter is not meant to be an exhaustive look at the foreign policies of Saudi Arabia and the UAE alongside Qatar, but rather a sketch of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ginny Hill and Gerd Nonneman, “Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States: Elite Politics, Street Protests and Regional Diplomacy,” *Chatham House*, MENAP BP 2011/01, 7.

broad contours of the first two countries in order to discern distinguishing characteristics. Despite their immense wealth, Saudi Arabia's soft power stems primarily from religion and political clout. As Bahgat Korany and Moataz A. Fattah put it, because Saudi Arabia is "somewhat limited in the effective use of hard military power," it "counts on soft power to attain foreign policy objectives, whether it is Islam or oil revenue; Saudi Arabia uses both *moralpolitik* and *riyalpolitik*."<sup>2</sup> The UAE, on the other hand, has largely ignored politics and favored an approach which focuses primarily on cultural soft power. According to Abdul-Monem al-Mashat, the country has exercised "cautious management" and "constructive engagement" to achieve its foreign policy agenda, and this caution stands in contrast to the brazenness of Qatar, particularly since the Arab Spring.<sup>3</sup> All three countries hold financial soft power, but as aforementioned, Qatar has been able to blend both political and cultural soft power into a coherent and attractive strategy. It is important to note that part of the distinction between the three countries lies in perception and ambition. With gusto, Anthony Shadid makes this point:

In the growing debate here, drawing in everyone from the emir's wife to Qatar's lone comedian, the question most often asked is whether a sense of the cosmopolitan can reflect the skyline and transcend the rootless globalism and commercialism that have so long stood as the Persian Gulf's grasp at modernity. Dubai, shimmering like a mirage, never had the money. Saudi Arabia, with a conservatism born of a Bedouin sense of life's caprice, never had the ambition. Doha now has both, and a determination to will a world capital into existence.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bahgat Korany and Moataz A. Fattah, "Irreconcilable Role-Partners? Saudi Foreign Policy between the Ulama and the US," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Globalization*, eds. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Cairo: The AUC Press, 2008), 366.

<sup>3</sup> Abdul-Monem Al-Mashat, "Politics of Constructive Engagement: The Foreign Policy of the United Arab Emirates," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Globalization*, eds. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Cairo: The AUC Press, 2008), 457.

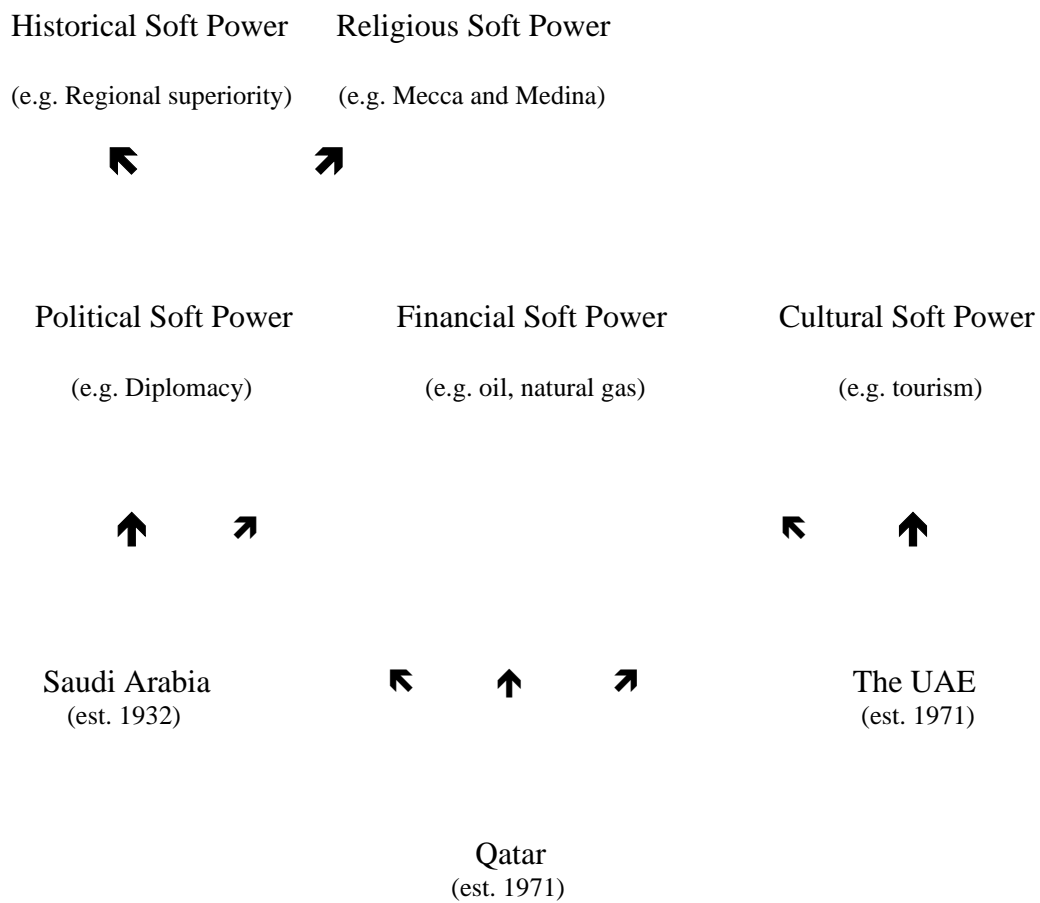
<sup>4</sup> Anthony Shadid, "Qatar's Capital Glitters like a World City, but Few Feel at Home," *The New York Times*, November 29, 2011, accessed May 25, 2012,



Shadid's point will be substantiated as the chapter elucidates the benefits and drawbacks of Saudi Arabia and the Emirates. The chart on the following page illustrates the relationships of all three countries to each form of soft power.

Uniquely, Saudi Arabia holds levels of religious soft power and historical soft power that the UAE and Qatar do not. As in Chart 2.1, the larger arrows in bold denotes leadership or perceived leadership when compared to other regional competitors.

In sum, Qatar's advancement is not entirely unique, as this chapter will demonstrate, yet their strategy has firmly grasped both strands of politics and culture to weave a distinctive image of attraction in the region.



**Chart 4.1: Recognized Soft Power**

## **Regional Competitiveness and Regional Competition**

In order to frame the discussion regarding Qatar's recent soft power rise it is imperative to note the concepts of regional competitiveness and regional competition. Regional competitiveness is defined as "a strategic advantage of one particular region over another within a competitive industry or a product line."<sup>5</sup> This concept recognizes how regional countries, working collectively, can gain structural advantages and sustained success in targeted economic areas. Examples involving countries in the Middle East are the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

While important, this concept recognizes only half the narrative; though countries often realize that working together can make them all stronger, they always are in competition with one another to create distinctiveness within their respective regional, industrial spheres. This truth is particularly evident in the Gulf where the economies and political structures are similar. Therefore, countries like Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have sought to distinguish themselves from one another through various means, such as specific policies and enhancement of their states' brand (as discussed in Chapter II). Moreover, with the rise of Qatar, a lesser regional player seventeen years ago before Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani rose to power, the competition has become more fierce because more actors are vying with each another. Understanding and distinguishing between these two concepts is crucial when looking comparatively at the region. As much as internal politics shapes leadership decisions, so external competition,

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<sup>5</sup> "Regional Competitiveness," APAC, accessed July 12, 2012.  
[http://www.apacss.com/our\\_believes/regional\\_competitiveness.php](http://www.apacss.com/our_believes/regional_competitiveness.php).

even among regional allies, dictates how countries thrive or wither. Providing examples from both Saudi Arabia and the UAE while in relation to Qatar, this chapter will elucidate the distinguishing advantages of each country which have shaped and will continue to shape Gulf politics.

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **Historical Soft Power**

Saudi Arabia, the largest country in the Arab world in terms of GDP, has cultivated political soft power since the very inception of their state. Before the end of World War II in 1945, Al-Saud, also known as Ibn Saud, met with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Great Bitter Lake, a waypoint along the Suez Canal in Egypt.<sup>6</sup> The two leaders discussed a variety of issues, ranging from agriculture to the Palestinian question, but most importantly initiated a mutually-beneficial bond of a “special relationship” between their countries which exists to this day. James Akins, a former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, characterized the relationship as fundamental to both countries: “As long as the Gulf States remain secure the United States can reap great rewards....It seems unlikely that [Saudi Arabia] could take action to push up the price of oil or to depress it without American concurrence....Washington has no real choice, having shown no real intention of exerting enough self-discipline to free itself from dependence on oil.”<sup>7</sup> In many ways both countries’ fates and successes are linked.

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<sup>6</sup> Rachel Bronson, “President Roosevelt and King Abdulaziz-The Meeting at Great Bitter Lake: A Conversation with Rachel Bronson,” *SUSRIS*, February 14, 2007, accessed July 12, 2012. <http://www.susris.com/articles/2007/loi/070214-bronson-meeting1.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Kate Gillespie and Clement M. Henry, “Introduction,” in *Oil in the New World Order*, eds. Kate Gillespie and Clement M. Henry (Gainesville, FL: UP of Florida, 1995), 12.

While Akins' statements seem to apply solely to the American-Saudi relationship, they in reality are emblematic of numerous, deep relationships, regional and international.

The event of active, international engagement from Ibn Saud and the deep relationships with other countries, such as the United States, epitomize the first of Saudi's political soft power strengths: historical superiority in the region. The country has a richer and more developed history with other nations, and this history translates to deeper relationships and alliances. While Saudi Arabia became a state in 1932, Qatar and the UAE did not until 1971. The second factor is financial power, mainly from its oil reserves "which account for about 75% of the budget revenues, a third of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 90% of export earnings."<sup>8</sup> The country is home to the second largest oil reserves in the world and is "the largest oil producer and exporter of total petroleum liquids in the world."<sup>9</sup> The reason why this stranglehold on petroleum is so important for Saudi soft power stems from the importance of it in the world economy. Appropriately, Clement M. Henry says, "Few industries apart from petroleum are truly global."<sup>10</sup> Much of Saudi Arabia's political soft power emanates from these two factors, and the relationship between both factors is inextricably linked. Many countries need the Saudis oil largess, and their oil reserves serve as the foundation to fund their political power.

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<sup>8</sup> Gillian Rice, "Doing Business in Saudi Arabia," *Thunderbird International Business Review* 46.1 (2004): 63.

<sup>9</sup> "Saudi Arabia: Country Analysis Brief," *U.S. Energy Information Administration*, accessed July 11, 2012. <http://205.254.135.7/countries/country-data.cfm?fips=SA>.

<sup>10</sup> Clement M. Henry, "The Clash of Globalizations in the Middle East," in *International Relations of the Middle East*, ed. Louise Fawcett (New York: Oxford UP, 2008), 105.

For these reasons, historically Saudi Arabia has always been seen as one of the key power players in the region, and the country has strived to protect this position of influence and prestige. The events of the 1973 Arab-Israeli are perhaps the most powerful example of the country projecting its strength. At that time the world was more dependent on Arab oil than today, and Arabs knew that by raising the price of oil, they would be able “to inflict immediate punishment on those industrial countries that supported Israel.”<sup>11</sup> Though other OPEC countries helped deploy oil as a weapon during the war, Saudi Arabia was the undisputed leader of the effort. In August 1973, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt made an unannounced visit to King Faysal in Riyadh “to ask for Saudi support and cooperation” on the use of oil as a weapon against Israel.<sup>12</sup> Eugene Rogan writes that “Sadat needed to be persuasive, for the Saudis has consistently refused Arab requests to deploy the oil weapon since the disastrous experience of 1967.”<sup>13</sup> That strength was demonstrated on October 16, after the war was underway, when Arab oil ministers “imposed a 17 percent price hike without so much as a phone call to the now powerless Western oil companies.”<sup>14</sup> In wake of the change, Saudi oil minister Shaykh Ahmad Zaki declared, “This is a moment for which I have been waiting for a long time....The moment has come. We are masters of our own commodity.”<sup>15</sup> This event is significant because it is emblematic of the strength and leadership that Saudi Arabia has

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<sup>11</sup> Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 464.

<sup>12</sup> Rogan, *The Arabs*, 461, 462.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 462.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 464.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 601-606.

shown throughout its history. Though Saudi oil dominance is not as powerful today as it once was, it is still a force to which other countries must respect.

Another way in which Saudi Arabia has cultivated political soft power is through its hospitable climate for business. The country has not relied solely on its oil reserves but diversified its goals. Gillian Rice writes, “The desire to reduce the dependence on oil is one key factor driving economic policy. Others are the need to be a full member of the global business community and to adapt to the changing global environment.”<sup>16</sup> The government is trying to build a robust private sector and have taken numerous steps to that end, such as privatizing the Saudi Telecommunications Company (STC) or improving the efficacy of the Saudi stock market for small and medium-sized enterprises. Consequently, a “new business class” has flourished in part as a result of the Kingdom’s welcoming, business environment.<sup>17</sup> Korany and Fattah note:

Even though it is generally accepted that Saudi Arabia is a Bedouin state par excellence, there is an important role played by commercial interests in sustaining the state. Put succinctly, this thesis holds that business interests provide revenue to the Saud and link the whole area to the world economic system, thus making the major powers of the period (Britain, then the US) concerned for the survival of the Saud.<sup>18</sup>

This analysis makes clear the growing economic strength of Saudi Arabia, even in sectors outside oil.

But more than with the strengths of Saudi entrepreneurs, businessmen and citizens, the government has taken an international approach to greater expand its political soft power. In 2009, the country broke into the top ten in the world for Foreign

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<sup>16</sup> Rice, “Doing Business in Saudi Arabia,” 64.

<sup>17</sup> Korany and Fattah, “Irreconcilable Role-Partners,” 351.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 351.

Direct Investment (FDI), ranking the country at number 8. Demonstrating the advantage Saudi Arabia has over other countries in the region, Taffere Tesfachew, Chief of the Office of the Secretary-General, Strategy and Policy Coordination Unit of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), said, “None of the countries in the Middle East came near to Saudi Arabia in terms of FDI inflows.”<sup>19</sup> This favorable climate for business helps Saudi Arabia’s political soft power, particularly in relation to other competitor countries like Qatar and the UAE. Both of these countries cannot match Saudi Arabia’s prestige and stature, and this position is the result of the aforementioned two factors: historical position as a regional hegemon and economic prowess, first in oil and second in developing economic sectors.

### **Religious Soft Power**

The second area where Saudi Arabia has a soft power edge over its regional competitors is in the area of religious soft power. The country is home to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and religious pilgrims who journey to the country are “at least 2.5 million” annually.<sup>20</sup> Much has been written about Islam and politics in Saudi Arabia, particularly concerning the role of religion in legitimizing the Saudi regime, and this thesis does not try to add to that scholarship. Rather it wishes to point out that the presence of holy Muslim sites in Saudi lands, which serve as pilgrimage sites for millions of Muslims, give Saudi Arabia unmatched religious soft power, and this soft power makes it more difficult for other countries to compete. In fact, it has even been said that

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<sup>19</sup> S.H. Moulana, “Saudi Arabia breaks into top ten for FDI,” *Asian Tribune*, July 24, 2010, accessed July 11, 2012. <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/07/24/saudi-arabia-breaks-top-10-fdi>.

<sup>20</sup> “Pilgrims stream into Saudi Arabia as hajj pilgrimage begins,” *The Guardian*, November 14, 2010, accessed July 12, 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/14/hajj-pilgrimage-muslims-mecca>.



“Islam defines the role of Saudi Arabia in the world.”<sup>21</sup> The chief reason why Saudi Arabia has this edge is because religion is central to the make-up of Arab identity.<sup>22</sup> Joseph Nevo writes, “The collective identity of most Muslim Arabs of the Middle East incorporates three elements: the Islamic, the Arab and in the narrow, local sense, the national (which still consists of traditional factors such as tribe, extended family or geographical region).”<sup>23</sup> While Nevo does note that “those components do not necessarily complement each other and are not always in harmony,” the fact that one of those elements, the Islamic, is most prominently manifested in Saudi Arabia gives the country tremendous religious soft power.<sup>24</sup>

### **Saudi Arabia: Assessment**

Saudi Arabia’s soft power strategy has been shrewd because it has recognized the necessity of both business and politics, but because of their stance towards women, religious extremism and clear political agenda, much of their efforts have been and are seen as polarizing. Saudi Arabia has cultivated both business and political relationships because each one protects the other. When there is a deep political relationship between two countries, an ally is not likely to look the other way when their ally’s business status is threatened, and vice versa. The financial soft power Saudi Arabia holds protects the political soft power. With the richness of the Saudi oil reserves, the country’s financial

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<sup>21</sup> F. Gregory Gause III, “The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia,” in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, eds. Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 202.

<sup>22</sup> While the concept of Arab identity is not the focus of this thesis, it must be mentioned to at least acknowledge its crucial impact. For an article which uncovers many of the aspects of Arab identity, see, for example, this one: Raymond Hinnebusch, “The Politics of Identity in Middle Eastern International Relations,” in *International Relations of the Middle East*, ed. Louise Fawcett (New York: Oxford UP, 2008), 148-169.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Nevo, “Religion and National Identity in Saudi Arabia,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 34 (1998): 34.

<sup>24</sup> Nevo, “Religion and National Identity,” 34.

soft power will not likely subside, particularly in the near future. However, it must be noted that even “though Saudi Arabia has benefitted enormously from being the world’s largest exporter of crude oil and its products, it remains captive to the market value of this primary resource.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, further oil exploration in the future by other countries could negate the Kingdom’s relative advantage in this area. This fact illustrates one of the primary deficiencies of financial soft power. Because the economic infrastructure does not follow the same pattern as developed countries, the country has less flexibility should its primary resource deteriorate in value or decrease in quantity.

Moreover, the country’s constant negative publicity regarding its treatment towards women and the fertility of its lands for Islamic extremism undermine its credibility to take leadership on international issues. The country has long been repressive concerning the rights of women and is “probably the most gender-segregated country in the world.”<sup>26</sup> Neil MacFarquhar details some of the restrictions on women:

As soon as they’re considered adults, Saudi women must wear abayas, black head-to-toe cloaks, in public at all times. They attend girls-only schools and university classes, and they eat in special ‘family sections’ of restaurants, which are partitioned from the areas used by single men. Riyadh, the capital, has women-only gyms, boutiques, and even a shopping mall. While many Saudi women go to college, very few get jobs afterward--largely because of the logistical difficulty of maintaining gender segregation in the workplace.<sup>27</sup>

With these restrictions, among others, placed on women, it is nearly impossible to have the credibility for leadership in the international sphere. In fact, it is a near-devastating

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<sup>25</sup> Korany and Fattah, “Irreconcilable Role-Partners,” 350.

<sup>26</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, “Saudi Arabia’s Freedom Riders: in a country where women’s rights are severely limited, some Saudi women are demanding the right to drive,” *New York Times Upfront* 144, November 24, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> MacFarquhar, “Saudi Arabia’s Freedom Riders.”

blow to one's soft power to which even economics and political and historical clout cannot fully repair. The recent headlines regarding Saudi Arabia's decision to allow two women to compete in the London Olympics tell the story: "Saudi Arabia finally allows women to compete at London Olympics" from the *Toronto Star*; "First women to compete for Saudi Arabia" from *Deseret News*; and "Saudi's Olympic opening to women 'small step'" from *The Associated Press*.<sup>28</sup> These headlines are not reminders aimed at highlighting Saudi Arabia's progressive stance women's rights but rather an indictment of the pernicious, systemic freedom deficit for women. Though there has been progress on women's rights in recent years, such as the right to stand and vote in future local elections and to join the advisory Shura council as full members, the country's policies toward women remain a blot on their reputation and severely hamper their political soft power.<sup>29</sup> In sum, the Kingdom's severe restrictions concerning women, of which this recent example of the two Olympians has again revealed, weaken the country's capacity for leadership and undermine their soft power ability.

The country's strands of religious extremism also undermine its soft power strengths. Of the Islamists in Saudi Arabia, Daniel L. Bryan writes, "Through a network of mosques, schools, and religious associations, many supported by the state, Islamists have a means to organize and propagate their message...The Islamists' primary agenda is internal: they seek to resist Westernization and secularization, and otherwise preserve

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<sup>28</sup> Headlines are a sampling from July 13-July 14, 2012, approximately two weeks before the start of the Olympic games in London.

<sup>29</sup> "Saudi Arabia gives women the right to vote," *The Guardian*, September 25, 2011, accessed May 12, 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/25/saudi-arabia-women-vote-elections>.

Saudi Arabia's traditional order.”<sup>30</sup> Providing insights into the thoughts of Saudi citizenry, Mamoun Fandy asserts that perhaps 20 percent of Saudis see themselves as extreme conservatives on matters of religion, with many more sharing many of the objectives of Islamists.<sup>31</sup> Though these are beliefs, the events of September 11 were actions which exposed the extremism within Saudi Arabia. On 9/11, 15 of the 19 terrorist hijackers were Saudi.<sup>32</sup> The conversation regarding Saudi extremism has continued since then. Recently two former U.S. Senators, Bob Graham of Florida and Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, have given sworn statements saying that they believe that “the Saudi government might have played a direct role in the terrorist attacks.”<sup>33</sup> Although the country's religious holy sites serve as a destination and inspiration for millions of Muslims, the extremism which has taken root severely undermines the country's religious soft power.

Lastly, the country's explicit political agenda on a variety of issues, from mediation to the Arab Spring, undermines their soft power credibility. Of Qatari mediation, Mehran Kamrava writes, “As a relative latecomer to regional and international diplomacy, Qatar has yet to accumulate the kinds of baggage that Egypt or Saudi Arabia have accumulated over decades of regional activism.”<sup>34</sup> He goes on to say: “In the

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel L. Bryan, “The Implications of Leadership Change in the Arab World,” *Political Science Quarterly* 120 (2005): 68.

<sup>31</sup> Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 33.

<sup>32</sup> “Official: 15 of 19 Sept. 11 hijackers were Saudi,” *USA Today*, February 6, 2002, accessed July 12, 2012. <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2002/02/06/saudi.htm>.

<sup>33</sup> Eric Lichtblau, “Saudi Arabia May Be Tied to 9/11, 2 Ex-Senators Say,” *The New York Times*, February 29, 2012, accessed July 13, 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/01/us/graham-and-kerrey-see-possible-saudi-9-11-link.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/01/us/graham-and-kerrey-see-possible-saudi-9-11-link.html?_r=1).

<sup>34</sup> Mehran Kamrava, “Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy,” *Middle East Journal* 65 (2011): 542.

Middle East, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are perceived to have manifold agendas and interests across the region....Their mediation efforts are therefore frequently seen as means of furthering their own specific interests.”<sup>35</sup> Through seeing Qatar’s primary strength for mediation, perception as honest broker, we can see Saudi Arabia’s primary weakness, perception as a biased political actor. The country’s political soft power, cultivated through long-standing alliances and favorable business relationship, can be a weakness in some areas, such as mediation. In this way, Saudi Arabia is burdened by its history, not aided by it. A relevant example is Qatar’s successful mediation in Lebanon (detailed in Chapter II). Kamrava notes that Saudi Arabia was too close to “the supporters of Sa’d al-Hariri, son of the late Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri....to be seen by the different factions as an honest broker. For a country long victimized by foreign meddling in its internal politics, the very fact that Qatar had been a relative non-player in Lebanon was a major advantage.”<sup>36</sup> In light of the events of Arab Spring, Saudi Arabia has not been viewed as neutral actor with respect to many countries in the region. Yemen is an apropos example. Concerning the country, Ginny Hill and Gerd Nooneman assert:

Many think that Saudi Arabia, with its historical proprietary stance towards their country, will try to manipulate any change in their political settlement. There is much speculation about the kind of trade-offs that Riyadh will be looking for in return for supporting a new leader and bankrolling the collapsing economy, and a lingering conviction that Saudi Arabia wants a weak, unstable Yemen that is easy to control.<sup>37</sup>

Beyond Yemen, there is much angst and anger over Saudi meddling, and the unrest in Bahrain is a case in point. After protests erupted in capital of Manama, 4,000

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<sup>35</sup> Kamrava, “Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy,” 543.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 548, 549.

<sup>37</sup> Hill and Nooneman, “Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States,” 5.

GCC troops, mostly from Saudi Arabia, entered the country “to suppress its protest movement,” and “some 1,600 Saudi soldiers will remain in the country indefinitely to safeguard the regime there from further ‘disturbances,’ i.e. pro-democracy protests.”<sup>38</sup> This stance towards Bahrain has spread to Iran. There has been heightened tension between the Saudi Arabia and Iran because “Iran has been angered by Saudi participation in quelling a Shia-led uprising in Bahrain and Saudi sympathies for Sunni protesters in Syria.”<sup>39</sup> In a recent meeting of GCC members, chaired by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, the group called on Iran to refrain from meddling in the affairs of Gulf states. Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal said firmly: “Iran should keep out of the Kingdom’s relations with Bahrain, even if the two states decide to form a union. Iran has nothing to do with what happens between the two countries, even if it develops into a unity.”<sup>40</sup> These examples are merely a few concerning Saudi political activity, and they demonstrate how Saudi political soft power has been undercut by a lack of neutrality. Power is alluring but also dangerous because it can sway and alienate, and Saudi Arabia’s unveiled overtures and coercive tactics throughout the Arab Spring have greatly damaged their capacity for soft power.

## **The UAE**

### **Cultural Soft Power**

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<sup>38</sup> Paul Mutter, “Saudi Arabia: Rolling Back the Arab Spring,” *Foreign Policy in Focus* 06 (2011): need page numbers insert here.

<sup>39</sup> Toni Johnson, “The Transitioning Saudi Leadership,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, November 3, 2011, accessed May 8, 2012. <http://www.cfr.org/saudi-arabia/transitioning-saudi-leadership/p26410>.

<sup>40</sup> Ghazanfar Ali Khan, “GCC Warns Iran Against Meddling,” *Eurasia Review*, May 15, 2012, accessed May 15, 2012. <http://www.eurasiareview.com/15052012-gcc-warns-iran-against-meddling/>.

The UAE, unlike Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have until recently avoided politics as a soft power tool and pursued specialization in targeted areas: business and tourism.<sup>41</sup> According to Mahjoob Zweiri, this policy was a mistake because politics protects business and business protects politics. You need the “two wings.”<sup>42</sup> Part of this gap in policy is a result of the country’s political structure where seven “emirates” form a federation. The fact that each ruler within each emirate retains absolute power, coupled with a presence of a president, illustrates why there is not a coherent federal foreign policy. Another factor is the aforementioned caution which, may at times be prudent, but within the ever-changing Gulf, is more oftentimes timid. Additionally, the fact that the country avoided a political soft power approach for so long hurts their ability to influence and attract: it is not part of their “brand.” What the Emirates has done well, particularly Dubai and Abu Dhabi, is nurture a cultural soft power approach, and in that area they have been more successful than Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Dubai is a haven for business, but what it does best is specialize in epicurean pursuits. It is home to some of the most luxurious and visually-impressive hotels in the world, including the Burj al-Arab and Atlantis. And in May 2012 it was revealed that Dubai will soon begin construction on Water Discus Hotel, a luxury underwater hotel.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the Dubai Mall and the Mall of the Emirates are two of the largest shopping

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<sup>41</sup> Stephen J. Ramos has a persuasive working paper arguing that Dubai’s financial success is an outgrowth from its former status as a Gulf outpost and British protectorate. The title is “*The Blueprint: A History of Dubai’s Spatial Development Through Oil Discovery*,” *The Dubai Initiative*, Harvard Kennedy School, June 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Mahjoob Zweiri, Interview by Joseph F. Hawkins, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Doha, Qatar, May 28, 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Venessa Wong, “Underwater Hotel to Be Dubai’s Latest Extravagance,” *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, May 14, 2012, accessed July 12, 2012. <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-05-14/underwater-hotel-to-be-dubais-latest-extravagance/>.

malls in the world with the Dubai Mall being the world's most visited mall and leisure destination. In 2011 with 54.2 million visitors, it beat out New York City's Times Square and Niagara Falls.<sup>44</sup> For its part though, the Mall of the Emirates contains Ski Dubai, an indoor ski slope. As mentioned in the introduction, Dubai is home to the Burj Khalifa, the tallest building and free-standing structure in the world at 829 meters. At its base is the Dubai Fountain, the world's largest dancing fountain that, among other things, is visible from space.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, Dubai has a small but thriving film industry and was recently featured prominently in the popular foreign-made film, *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol*. These factors all help contribute to Dubai's attractive image and bolster the Emirates' soft power credentials.

While Dubai provides the Emirates with the majority of tourists, Abu Dhabi serves as the commercial and financial hub. A recent report showed that Abu Dhabi has “fully recovered from the impacts of the global economic crisis” and called it “the most dynamic economy in the region.”<sup>46</sup> The Emirate has pursued an aggressive strategy of diversification in recent years with non-oil activities and sectors contributing 41.5% of the Emirate's GDP in 2011.<sup>47</sup> Medical tourism, clean energy and aluminum are a few of those sectors where they are making progress. Abdul-Monem Al-Mashat, writing of the UAE's GDP excluding oil, makes clear some of the Emirates chief achievements: “The

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<sup>44</sup> Kevin Brass, “Dubai Mall claims world visitors record,” *The National*, January 6, 2012, accessed July 14, 2012. <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/industry-insights/retail/dubai-mall-claims-world-visitors-record>.

<sup>45</sup> “The Dubai Fountain,” *The Dubai Mall*, accessed July 14, 2012. <http://www.thedubaimall.com/en/entertainment/entertainment-section/the-dubai-fountain.html>.

<sup>46</sup> “Abu Dhabi GDP Grows by Record 30% in 2011,” *SCAD*, July 11, 2012, accessed July 14, 2012. [http://www.abudhabi.ae/egovPoolPortal\\_WAR/appmanager/ADeGP/Citizen?\\_nfpb=true&\\_pageLabel=p\\_citizen\\_homepage\\_hiddenav&lang=en&did=340078](http://www.abudhabi.ae/egovPoolPortal_WAR/appmanager/ADeGP/Citizen?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=p_citizen_homepage_hiddenav&lang=en&did=340078).

<sup>47</sup> “Abu Dhabi GDP Grows by Record 30% in 2011.”



unique economic performance of the UAE....has led international organizations to rank it positively in the Middle East....The UAE has topped other countries Arab countries in attracting foreign direct investment.”<sup>48</sup> These non-oil, economic sectors do not tell the whole story but rather help conceptualize the narrative of the Emirates’ economic prowess. Because of the diversity of the Emirates’ investments, not just in Abu Dhabi or Dubai, the country has preferred a cautious approach to international relations, “in order to achieve its goals of security and stability in the Gulf as well as close political affinity with Arab countries.”<sup>49</sup>

Even though Abu Dhabi has been active in their ancillary areas, they have also tended to be protective of their chief investment: energy. As David B. Roberts notes, they shrewdly beat Qatar and Saudi Arabia to build an oil pipeline avoiding the Straits of Hormuz. He explains the implications: “Were some kind of conflagration to occur and Iran to attempt to close down the Straits as they promised to do, the Emirates unlike Qatar and Kuwait, would still be able to sell their oil to the world market (as well as reaping the benefits of the astronomical, were Iran to close the Straits).”<sup>50</sup> Also, the Emirate is investing heavily in developing its central business district, Sowwah Square, in order to transform its urban landscape. And in terms of aesthetics, the downtown area is crowded with dozens of skyscrapers to make the city a more attractive place for doing business. These developments increase Abu Dhabi’s financial soft power which, like Qatar, drives their cultural soft power.

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<sup>48</sup> Al-Mashat, “Politics of Constructive Engagement,” 461.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 461.

<sup>50</sup> David B. Roberts, “Abu Dhabi building pipe to avoid Hormuz,” *The Gulf Blog*, June 3, 2010. <http://thegulfblog.com/category/soft-power/>.

## The UAE: Assessment

The country has unparalleled cultural soft power in the region, but its neglect of the necessity of politics for so long has hampered its ability to take leadership. To be fair, the political system in the UAE can hinder effective and decisive political action before it has even begun. Al-Mashat elucidates why Emirati politics can be, at times, timid: Due to the lack of essential elements of power, the supremacy of international politics, and a genuine commitment to the success of the federal system, the UAE's foreign policy is geared toward the peaceful settlement of disputes, open dialogue with strategic partners, and the priority of joint economic interests over political divisions and differences." These goals, while certainly noble and worthwhile, are not as expansive as Qatar's recent soft power forays reveal or Saudi Arabia's historical, regional supremacy suggest. The country has contentedly confined itself to the old rules of a bipolar world, instead of an evolving multipolar one, and have not been forward thinking enough to comprehend that intermestics fundamentally alters the political equations, calculations and dogmas. However, recognizing the importance of politics to a small state's success, the country has been engaged in more issues in recent years. They sent some planes to the intervention in Libya and have donated money for rebuilding efforts in Arab countries; economic generosity is a plank central to its foreign policy platform.

But the UAE, like Saudi Arabia, may be falling victim to its own success. Each small state must find its niche for influence, and the country has accomplished that by being a tourist destination and business hub. But while branding can project a positive image of a country, that image can become definitive and inflexible. When one says to others: "We are this," there is the danger of the response: "Yes, you are that and *only*

that.” Recent political soft power forays help aid the country’s soft power and give it a wider platform with which to influence. But as aforementioned, regional competition is fierce. The UAE has carved a niche of strong cultural soft power, but this influence, while powerful, is limited. They can have a political influence, regionally and globally, if they have the appetite for it, but political efforts take dedicated time and resources, as Qatar showed in their efforts at mediation in Sudan. At this juncture, the Emirates have shown no such appetite.

### **Conclusion**

All three countries possess soft power in different manifestations and different degrees, and these differences are crucial in regional jockeying for power and influence. While all three have economic soft power, Qatar is the only country to possess *both* political and cultural soft power while, to this point, largely avoiding polarization. Although their activism throughout the Arab Spring and the controversy surrounding Al-Jazeera has challenged this neutrality. Saudi Arabia has unparalleled political clout in the region and tremendous religious soft power. In these two areas, they are unmatched by regional competitors. However, their long-standing alliances have colored their vision, making other countries view them as biased, and their controversial stances towards women and religious extremism undermine much of the soft power accrued from political history and religious sacredness. The Emirates, on the other hand, have pursued a soft power route of cultural soft power, focusing on branding itself as business and financial hub and a haven for tourists. On these two issues they are unmatched by regional competitors. However, their success risks limited capacity for influence. Qatar is the only country in the region to blend all three of these manifestations of soft power

systematically and with such evenhandedness. Their outlook is not unconditionally positive, however, and Chapter V will discuss the potential pitfalls for Qatar in light of their increasing polarization.

## CHAPTER V

### QATAR'S FUTURE: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

“Our power grows through its prudent use; our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.”- Barack H. Obama<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

While Qatar's present role is defined and expanding, regional mediator and regional leader, its future role is much less clear. As Chapter III argues, Qatar's success is due in part to the contextual circumstances surrounding its rise. But is that success sustainable? Steven Wright asserts that it is not: one can only “have moments of glory from the soft-power approach” but nothing more.<sup>2</sup> As he puts it, Qatar faces “a divide in the road” where it can act as a mediator for regional disputes or act as a regional leader. A leader is forced to take sides, and this is the real “dilemma” that Qatar faces.<sup>3</sup> Wright is correct; Qatar cannot be both a mediator and a leader. As Chapter IV shows concerning Saudi Arabia, leadership by its very nature undermines neutrality because a leader is forced to make decisions which both attract and alienate. As the regional and global power fault lines continue to shift, Qatar will have to exercise dexterity and flexibility to shift with them, demonstrating “the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.”

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<sup>1</sup> Barack H. Obama, “Inaugural Address,” *The Miller Center: University of Virginia* (January 20, 2009): <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/4453>.

<sup>2</sup> Steven Wright, interview by Joseph F. Hawkins, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar, May 28, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Wright, interview.

With such uncertainty concerning the next few years, much less the next twenty, it is difficult to predict where Qatar will be and what path they will choose. Nevertheless by 2030, the date Qatar has set for its national vision, it is almost certain that Qatar will return to a largely secondary role within the region because of the inherent structural impediments for a small state discussed in Chapter III. However, their influence will be greater than pre-1995 when the country largely followed Saudi Arabia's lead. This final chapter will examine the challenges for Qatari political and economic soft power going forward and provide a forecast for their status by the conclusion of the 2030 national vision.

### **Political Soft Power**

#### **Mediation**

As shown in Chapter II, Qatar has used its soft power of mediation in two ways: as a regional mediator and a regional leader. It is true that Qatar has performed both of these roles fairly well, but it is also true, as Wright asserts, that these two roles are incompatible long term. In the most fundamental way Qatar's success as both a mediator and leader poses the greatest challenge for its continued future success. The position of the former is complementary while the position of the latter is declaratory.

While it is difficult for any state, no matter its size, to fulfill both roles, it is even more difficult for Qatar. As a small state, they do not have the capacity to absorb criticism from many directions at once whereas a larger state can ward it off for some time. If a small state ruffles feathers, the injured party may look elsewhere for support quicker than they would have if the state were larger. In other words, Qatar has to have a

more delicate balance than most countries. But delicacy is much harder as a state becomes more powerful because one's actions affect a greater radius. Saudi Arabia is a case in point. As its political relationships have grown, their decisions have affected more countries and companies, pleasing to some, appeasing to others and alienating to more. To clarify the distinction being made: the question is not whether a country will please others completely or alienate others absolutely. It is rather a matter of degrees. As Qatar progresses in its power, regionally and internationally, it will find deeper relationship more difficult to attain, for fear of superficiality or insincerity, and it will find every action more closely examined. With increased attention comes increased scrutiny. And even mediation efforts, such as Lebanon, which may prima facie seem less complicated, will become more difficult. The Qatari leadership surely knows this truth abstractly but to have it come to pass as a reality is the more immediate problem. The mediation efforts concerned with dispute settlement and the mediation efforts involving military coercion are the central examples where long-term policy dissidence cannot be successfully sustained. This delicate balancing act will be the great challenge of the next twenty years, and Qatar will eventually revert to a secondary role. Reasons for this view will be given later in the chapter.

### **Media**

Qatar's soft power of media is another asset it can continue to wield effectively as they progress towards their national vision. As stated in Chapter II, the effectiveness of Al-Jazeera stems primarily from "its longevity and ability to reach citizens regionally and globally on a daily basis." The first factor will not change and the second one most likely will not either due to ample funding. But there could be a variable to alter the equation:

another media organization which negates the significance of the first factor and beats Qatar on the second. Is this outcome likely? In a situation of sustained regional competition and fierce efforts of state branding, such an outcome is indeed likely. Other news organizations have already formed and are competing with Al-Jazeera, such as Al-Arabiya in Saudi Arabia, but the institutional capacity to respond to regional and global events is what is needed to provide a sustained challenge to Al-Jazeera's dominance. Qatar challenge to remain a regional leader in this area is to be ahead of its competition. In order words, they must be proscriptive instead of reactive.

### **Culture**

This area is one where Qatar has a tremendous advantage going forward but also some challenges. Events involving sport, such as the World Cup, and involving education, such as Education City, provide Qatar with structural soft power advantages over regional competitors. Even though Saudi Arabia has upped its higher education spending in order to, like Qatar, participate in the knowledge-based economy, Qatar's small size allows it to target each one of its young people more effectively.<sup>4</sup> Because they do not have the burden of catering to a bigger population, like a larger state like Saudi Arabia does, they are more likely to receive a healthier return on their investment in education. Other education events, such as academic conferences, also help encourage ideas and debate among the general public, and this activity is healthy for citizen maturation, civic discussion and public engagement.

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<sup>4</sup> Sahar Ghoussoub, "KSA Budget for 2012 Devotes Billions to Education, Healthcare and Economic Growth," *Al-Monitor*, January 17, 2012, accessed July 16, 2012. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2012/01/the-largest-budget-in-the-histor.html>.



Regarding sport, even though prominent sports events bring publicity and attention, there is a dark side of that attention which Qatar will have to be wary of. As aforementioned, increased attention comes with increased scrutiny. The relationship is reciprocal, the rise, unquestionably mutual. An example is that Qatar will have challenges regarding its laws on alcohol when the World Cup is staged. How will Qatar accommodate their guests while also not compromising their values? How will they please Western nations, who see themselves as the custodians of the game's integrity, and Islamic nations, who may view the event as a more prominent opportunity to project religious values? Reverting back to Eliot's distinction of culture articulated in Chapter II, the degree to which Qatar's societal values dictate individual behavior will be crucial to understanding if Qatar's cultural soft power is enhanced.

Beyond the problem of alcohol and Western social norms, there is the question of workers' rights. In June 2012, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report warning that foreign workers "risk serious abuse in the run-up to 2022 World Cup" due to "late or unpaid wages and very poor working and living conditions."<sup>5</sup> More recently, individuals working in Qatar have come forward to testify to the unsafe working conditions, threats of unpaid wages, and the withholding of passports to leave the country.<sup>6</sup> Stories like these undermine Qatar's soft power ability and are harmful to the country in intangible ways, such as foreign perception. But in addition to the problem of abuse of workers' rights, migrant workers, which comprise over 90% of Qatar's

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<sup>5</sup> "The plight of Qatar's migrant workers." *Al-Jazeera*, June 14, 2012, accessed July 16, 2012. <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2012/06/201261472812737158.html>.

<sup>6</sup> "Tales of woe from workers in Qatar," September 8, 2012, video clip, accessed September 8, 2012, *BBC*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19528454>.

workforce, complicates Qatari efforts for soft power.<sup>7</sup> Though writing of Saudi Arabia concerning this issue, Bahgat Korany's analysis also applies to Qatar: "Saudi Arabia is thus dependent on the outside world not only for revenue but also for manpower, and with the influx of foreigners come foreign values and social practices. One dilemma of the Saudi policy-maker is how to maintain the development drive while keeping the society 'untarnished.'"<sup>8</sup> Both of these dilemmas are omnipresent for Qatar as well and are heightened by the fact that they will host the World Cup and potentially, the Olympics.

Also, Qatar must follow-through on its promises or risk being seen as inept and incapable. For example, the World Cup bid was partially built on the concept of "hi-tech, carbon neutral cooling systems for the tournament stadiums" which would help negate Qatar's intense heat and still be environmentally sound.<sup>9</sup> This facet of Qatar's bid proposal was a crucial cog to its ultimate success because bid voters were concerned about the country's oppressive heat. However, these air-conditioning systems have now been scrapped in favor of an "old-fashioned solution" which "would be cheaper and better" and not be "notoriously unsustainable" for the environment.<sup>10</sup> When speaking of what the temperature in the stadiums will be, director John Barrow said, "Fan expectation needs to be a little more relaxed."<sup>11</sup> Changes like this one may seem insignificant, but a

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<sup>7</sup> "Tales of woe from workers in Qatar."

<sup>8</sup> Bahgat Korany, "Defending the Faith: The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, eds. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 245.

<sup>9</sup> Harold Mayne-Nicholls, "2022 FIFA World Cup, Bid Evaluation Report: Qatar," *FIFA*, 1-33, 9. <http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/tournament/competition/01/33/74/56/b9qate.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> "Qatar World Cup stadium designer tells 2022 air conditioned stadiums must be scrapped." *Daily Mail Online*, November 8, 2011, accessed July 16, 2012. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-2059031/World-Cup-2022-Qatar-air-conditioned-stadium.html>.

<sup>11</sup> "Qatar World Cup stadium designer."

wave of unfulfilled expectations can dampen enthusiasm, lower turnout and decrease chances for more big events. Unkept promises can compound and cause other countries to view Qatar as an amateur nation on the world stage. Such a perception would be fatal to Qatar's soft power and signal a regression in regional and international status. Therefore, Qatar will have to try and balance these issues as they progress and become more prosperous and more exposed to scrutiny.

Lastly, there is the problem of a skilled, agile and large enough workforce to engage the modern knowledge economy, a goal the country has outlined in its 2030 vision. Qatar's education initiatives and emphasis on public dialogue are important but ultimately insufficient. There must be a culture which fosters not only knowledge but also critical thinking, and this challenge is an acute one for a rentier economy. Allen J. Fromherz argues, "Part of the challenge of labour in Qatar today is that there is little incentive in a distributive rentier economy, an economy where revenue comes from natural resources, not from taxes, for an individual Qatari to choose or be compelled to choose the full, frightening package of modernity with all of its anomic risks."<sup>12</sup> He compliments the investments Qatar has made in education, but cautions, "The billions invested in educational initiatives....may not work unless critical thinking, not memorization, not even simply the acquisition of foreign language ability or sundry facts about the world, permeates and is nourished throughout all of Qatar."<sup>13</sup> With Qatari citizens lacking the impetus for work due to government largess, there is a long-term concern for those citizens to acquire the necessary skills for the ever-evolving economy.

### **Financial Soft Power**

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<sup>12</sup> Allen J. Fromherz, *Qatar: A Modern History* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown UP, 2012), 12.

<sup>13</sup> Fromherz, *Qatar: A Modern History*, 12.

As illustrated in the chart in Chapter II, Qatar's financial soft power serves as the foundation for its political soft power, and as shown in Chapter III, Qatar's financial power is significant, particularly befitting its size. Most of that power stems from holding the third highest natural gas reserves in the world and being the largest supplier in the world of LNG. These natural resources have given Qatar the capacity to fund expensive projects, like the World Cup, and more benefits for its citizens, such as free health care. As Chapter III also notes, Qatar has invested much of its financial resources in foreign companies and enterprises.

This strategy has both benefits and drawbacks. One of the chief benefits is that Qatar is able to invest its money in areas it chooses, and if the investments are prudent, have a return on the investment without exerting much work. Additionally, there is the viewpoint that money makes little sense without purpose; if money is not invested or used, then must it remain dormant, to go to no use at all? Such a perspective holds sway for those inclined to a consumer-based economy. By comparison to, for instance, building up a sound infrastructure, this option of investment is easier, less costly and potentially more lucrative. But there are costs to this type of economic stewardship. The primary cost is to the social fabric of the state because the policy encourages a rentier mentality. The mindset is that if the money from oil and natural gas eventually runs out, there will be returns from investments with which to sustain domestic demand. The secondary cost is financial, potentially financial loss. If the investments fail, then the country's leadership must search elsewhere, but without a base of manufacturing and other industrialized sectors to return to, uncertainty clogs the economic health of the citizenry. In short, this mindset assumes that those investments will be successful, which

is not certain, but it also assumes that those investments will not discourage work ethic and individual initiative.

Shedding the image of Gulf countries' and a lack of work ethic is not likely to happen, but perpetuating the image of a rentier mentality will not aid Qatari soft power. It is possible that Qatar will skip the industrial stage of development and move on as post-industrial state in a "post-industrial economy." This concept was coined in the 1970s and despite become fashionable, is still elusive and difficult to prove. Nevertheless, this jump is highly unlikely to occur, even in the new knowledge-based economy. To be clear, Qatar should engage in investments. After all, money is best used when it is put to use in prudent ways. And they have engaged in several, thoughtful investments thinking for the long-term; the Qatar National Food Security Programme (QNFSP), which aims to reduce Qatar's dependence on food imports, is a good example. But the country must couple sound investments with traditional economic thinking that has been proven to work for modernization. Qatar cannot avoid industrialization, and if they reach 2030 without having industrialized, they will not have the proper foundation to compete regionally and globally. Simply put, too many of its citizens are foreign workers lacking the educational background to enter and thrive in the knowledge-based economy.

### **Qatar: A Forecast**

These issues will be central to keeping Qatar a success through their vision in 2030. It is highly unlikely that Qatar will return to its pre-1995 status, before Hamad bin Al-Khalifa Al-Thani overthrew his father in a coup. However, two important variables will mark Qatar's future progress. In order for Qatar to keep its place of influence and soft power, the Sheikh's second son and next in line to the throne, Tamin, will be

required to sustain his father's vivacity and hunger for success. Writing generally, Raymond Hinnebusch asserts:

The capacity of Middle Eastern states to cope with the pressures from their multilevel environment depends on a degree of internal cohesion...If they are to conduct foreign policies that rationally cope with external exigencies, state elites must command the legitimacy and institutions to establish a certain autonomy of domestic demands while sustaining some minimum level of public support.<sup>14</sup>

Without the continued success that his father has engendered, Tamin will struggle to gain the respect and admiration of the people, and ultimately domestic support is the determiner for the extent of regional and international endeavors. Domestic support will largely hinge on continued financial success. As Candace Ren notes of Dubai: "Once the economy bottomed out, the international media started to report more on the difficulties faced by Dubai's non-Emirati community."<sup>15</sup> If this scenario befalls Qatar, increased scrutiny will engulf Qatar and potentially unite the masses against the regime. The second, more consequential variable is the contextual situation, where factors constrain Qatar regionally and internationally. Relating to Korany's concept of intermestics mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, Qatar will be forced to balance domestic, regional and international politics. For instance, as Chapter III discussed, the opportunity has arisen for Qatar to take influence and leadership, and they have seized the moment. Using Mahjoob Zweiri's words, a "lack of international will" has allowed them to

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<sup>14</sup> Raymond Hinnebusch, "Introduction: The Analytical Framework," in *The Foreign Policies of the Middle East*, eds. Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 10.

<sup>15</sup> Candace Ren, "Summary of 'Singapore and the Soft Power Experience,'" *Ren's Micro Diplomacy-Public Diplomacy and Soft Power*, October 23, 2010. <http://rensmicrodiplomacy.com/tag/singapore/>.

achieve their current status in soft power terms.<sup>16</sup> These circumstances represent an external opportunity, but that opportunity will not be endless.

The philosopher and social scientist Karl Popper believed anomalies help us test vital principles for sound inquiry, avoid narrow specialization and maintain a highly critical approach to what is supposedly known. He also argued “that paradigm mentalities prove detrimental to healthy inquiry by limiting scholarly vision, curiosity, and creativity.”<sup>17</sup> This Popperian concept of the value of anomalies can help us understand Qatar and grasp its rise. Crucially, the contextual factors surrounding it, which will inevitably change, tell us much about its success. Concerning this idea of change, Bahgat Korany postulates that “in this organic internal/external interconnectedness,” the Middle East “could be a learning laboratory—a global experiment in how to cope with some of the nagging questions of our times, notably how to harmonize twenty-first century modernity and religious identity.”<sup>18</sup> Qatar could be an example of Popperian thought, an anomaly which will rise or fade but will reveal little concerning the era of globalization we are still trying to comprehend. Or it could be more along the lines of Koranian intermestics, where other, similarly-situated countries use it as a benchmark as they try to reconcile the overlapping of the domestic, regional and international spheres. The latter scenario is more likely considering the ceaseless evolution of modernity and the inevitably of ideas crisscrossing countries and cultures. Whatever the outcome, it is clear that if Qatar wishes to translate its current success in a

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<sup>16</sup> Mahjoob Zweiri, interview by Joseph F. Hawkins, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar, May 28, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas C. Walker, “The Perils of Paradigm Mentalities: Revisiting Kuhn, Lakatos, and Popper,” in *International Relations Theory*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., ed. Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi (Glenview, IL: Longman, 2012), 29.

<sup>18</sup> Bahgat Korany, “The Middle East Since the Cold War: Still Insecure,” in *International Relations of the Middle East*, ed. Louise Fawcett (New York: Oxford UP, 2008), 76.

sustained position of influence and leadership by harnessing a soft power strategy, regionally and internationally, they must continue to be forward-thinking, active and methodical in their leadership decisions while recognizing the challenges elucidated here.

### **Conclusion**

Qatar will be forced to evaluate and re-evaluate its strategy for increased influence if it wishes to continue to climb the rungs of power. As articulated in Chapter III, Qatar does not have the many blessings of a large state. Although oil and natural gas are potent allies, Qatar cannot rely on these assets alone. Their regional competitors, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, share many of the same advantages and in some cases, more advantage, as Chapter III demonstrates. In order to compete in the modern, knowledge-based economy and reach its 2030 vision, Qatar must continue to invest in education for a skilled and agile workforce, while at the same time addressing the pitfalls that a rentier-state mentality can have on their citizenry. Numerous other challenges exist. Qatar must deliver on its promises; the World Cup will be the largest test it has faced to date. Furthermore, it must be able to reconcile the Islamic values it cherishes with the influx and inflow of Westerners who may not share those same values.

But most importantly, Qatar must address the choice Wright articulates. There truly is “a divide in the road” where Qatar must choose the role of regional mediator or strive for the status of regional leader; fulfilling both roles simultaneously is not possible. Leadership by its very nature alienates some, and Qatar is dealing with this consequence of leadership now following their intervention in Libya and focus on Syria. While Qatar will not be able to lead with their current effectiveness when the regional and global leadership vacuum closes, they will not return to their pre-1995 status. Increased



credibility, illustrated in Chapter II with mediation, media and culture, along with active leadership, embodied in the form of the Emir, will help to prevent such a regression from occurring. The question is: can Qatar cope with the impending and inevitable relegation? When the regional powers re-emerge, like Egypt, or when the international power chain is reordered, with the potential emergence of a robust *and* active China, Qatar will find itself with precious little room to maneuver. In their national anthem, adopted in 1996 after the coup of the Sheikh, Qatar paints a vivid portrait of itself and its role in the world.

Titled “Al-Salam Al-Amiri,” or “Peace be to the Emir,” it says:

Swearing by God who erected the sky  
 Swearing by God who spread the light  
 Qatar will always be free  
 Sublimed by the souls of the sincerest

Procede thou on the manners of the ascendants  
 And advance on Prophet's guidance  
 In my heart,  
Qatar is an epic of glory and dignity  
 Qatar is land of the early men  
Who protect us at times of distress,  
 Doves they can be at times of peace,  
 Warriors they are at times of sacrifice (emphasis added).<sup>19</sup>

The vision is grand. Whether the future continues to be will hinge on Qatar’s continued political acumen and the changing, sweeping sands of modernity.

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<sup>19</sup> “Qatar, ‘Al-Salam Al-Amiri,’ *National Anthems*, accessed August 5, 2012.  
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