

DOHA'S DANGEROUS DALLIANCE

— Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Luke Lischin —

Qatari support for Islamist non-state actors has been an escalating source of tension for the monarchy in some of its vital relationships. Qatar's relationship with other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries saw a variety of escalations during the course of 2014, including in March, when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain withdrew their ambassadors due to the emirate's sponsorship of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups. In addition to Qatar's support for the Brotherhood, a growing body of evidence also suggests that Qatari institutions may be supporting *jihadi* violent non-state actors (VNSAs). The sum total of Qatar's policies provides reason for concern—as well as reason to question the currently dominant Western academic work on Qatar, which tends to explain the country's policy decisions without reference to ideological affinity with the non-state actors the emirate has chosen to support.

Qatar's support for Islamist groups has damaged the country diplomatically, even apart from the aforementioned rupture with Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain. Many of the emirate's policies that appeared to put the country in an advantageous position at the start of 2013—including sponsoring Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, becoming deeply involved in Libya, and backing rebels seeking to overthrow Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria—now look like losing bets. There is a stark contrast, for example, between the gratitude Libyans felt for Qatar when rebels first captured Muammar Qadhafi's Tripoli palace, and hoisted Qatar's flag before any other, and the hostility Qatar engendered

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a mere two years later, when protesters burnt its flag in Benghazi.

Doha's logic

If suspicions about Qatar's support for *jihadi* VNSAs prove to be generally accurate, this would not be the first time that its state institutions have been used to bolster these actors. In the 1990s, both the Qatar Charitable Society and Sheikh Abdallah bin Khalid bin Hamad Al-Thani, the country's minister of religious endowments and Islamic affairs, are known to have supported al-Qaeda. But after the 9/11 attacks, due in no small part to U.S. pressure, Qatar instituted financial controls over the country's charitable institutions that reduced support for Salafi *jihadi* groups (although open Qatari support for Hamas continued). But, once the Arab Uprisings began, Qatar strongly supported both Islamist political parties and VNSAs affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood—and there is growing evidence that it supported *jihadi* VNSAs as well.

Why has Qatar supported Islamists during the Arab Uprisings? The majority of Western analysts of Gulf affairs describe Qatar's foreign policy decisions as pragmatic. Analysts have provided several reasons that Qatar may have chosen to support Islamists. First, the emirate may be trying to side with eventual winners in order to magnify its influence and reach. According to this hypothesis, Qatar's support of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, or of Tunisia's *Ennahda* party, or of various Libyan and Syrian Islamist factions, is based on the probability that these factions will eventually triumph electorally or militarily.¹

A second, related explanation is that Qatar is eager to build its brand. Mehran Kamrava, a political scientist at Georgetown University who directs its Center for International and Regional Studies in Doha, writes that the emirate's

broader branding campaign is “meant to give international recognition to the small country as an international educational, sporting, and cultural hub and a good global citizen.”² Shadi Hamid, a researcher at the Brookings Institution who directed its Doha Center until January 2014, explains that having a distinctive foreign policy can also be seen as a means of building Qatar's brand.³ This tendency seems to be particularly true of the country's larger-than-life former foreign minister, Hamad bin Jassim (popularly known as “HBJ”), who was primarily responsible for Qatar's hyper-activist policies under the country's then-*emir*, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani.

A third possible reason for Qatar's support of Islamists is that the state is more familiar with these actors. As Hamid notes, Doha has long hosted exiled Islamists, and thus when the Arab Spring hit, those were the actors whom Qatar already knew. “You can't build something from scratch,” Hamid said of Qatar positioning itself politically in the post-Arab Spring environment, “and say, ‘Well, who are the Egyptian liberals? How do we establish a relationship with them?’”⁴

There is clear merit to all three of these explanations. However, a fourth possibility also deserves consideration: that Qatar's support for Islamists is in part ideologically driven. The argument for ideology's relevance relates to the specific personalities that may shape state policy. Qatar's small size—only about 250,000 citizens—means the country's foreign policy bureaucracy is vanishingly small, and hence its foreign policy is highly centralized, with the *emir* and foreign minister having extraordinary leeway to shape or change the country's policies. Hence, a key question about the role that ideological affinity with Islamist groups may play is that of who influences the paradigms and decisions of the *emir* and foreign minister.

Qatar's historical support for jihadism

The most prominent case of Qatari support for al-Qaeda prior to the 9/11 attacks involved Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), the mastermind of those attacks. KSM and his family moved to Qatar in 1992 at the invitation of the country's then-minister of Islamic affairs, Sheikh Abdallah bin Khalid bin Hamad Al-Thani.⁵

From 1992 to 1996, KSM served as a project engineer for Qatar's ministry of electricity and water, and used this position to facilitate his travels worldwide. While working for the government, KSM became involved in several international terrorist plots. His first known connection to a major plot during this period was his relatively minor involvement in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. KSM wired \$660 to Mohammed Salameh, a co-conspirator of attack mastermind Ramzi Yousef (KSM's cousin), from a Qatari bank account. After that, KSM assisted Yousef's operations in the Philippines, including the bombing of a movie theater and a transpacific flight from Manila, as well as the Bojinka plot that aspired to blow up a dozen commercial airliners over the Pacific using liquid explosives. (The attack template from Bojinka would resurface in 2006, in al-Qaeda's foiled transatlantic air plot that sought to simultaneously blow up a number of Britain-U.S. flights.) After the Bojinka plot failed, Philippines authorities began to close in on KSM and Yousef's Manila cell, but not before KSM retreated back to the safety of his government post in Qatar.⁶

From 1994 to 1996, KSM traveled from Qatar to such countries as Brazil, Malaysia, Sudan, and Yemen, though the details of his visits are unknown. He also cultivated a network of wealthy patrons who supported al-Qaeda operations.⁷ By

1996, KSM's terrorist activities caught the attention of U.S. authorities—first the CIA and later the FBI. A CIA case officer in Doha sought to keep KSM under surveillance. Though several U.S. government officials reportedly advocated for a scheme to abduct him, the case officer and National Security Council officials believed that any such plans could run into trouble because “if the United States officially asked for the assistance of the Qatar government, Mr. Mohammed would be tipped off, since it appeared that he was living in Doha under the government's protection.”⁸

KSM's major government patron was the aforementioned Sheikh Abdallah, who “allowed Arab extremists who had fought in Afghanistan to live on his farm.”⁹ Given Sheikh Abdallah's apparent *jihadist* sympathies, as well as suspicions that he was not the only one with such leanings in the Qatari government, the CIA and Department of Defense devised an operation that could capture KSM without alerting Qatari authorities. Ultimately, though, the CIA determined that it lacked the required assets in Qatar to conduct an extraordinary rendition.¹⁰

With the prospect of a covert mission dashed, the task of apprehending KSM fell to the FBI and U.S. ambassador to Qatar Patrick Theros.¹¹ FBI director Louis J. Freeh filed a request with Qatari officials asking for permission to apprehend KSM. The request was met with delaying tactics. In January 1996, the monarchy finally agreed that the U.S. could carry out the operation, but the CIA's fears that KSM might be warned about an operation proved well-founded: a Qatari official tipped KSM off about his impending arrest. The terrorist mastermind fled the country in a government-owned executive jet just hours before the U.S. was set to apprehend him.¹² Though it is widely believed that the tip came from Sheikh Abdallah, a former CIA official later told ABC News that “there

were others in the Qatari royal family who were sympathetic and provided safe havens for al-Qaeda.”¹³ Though he was briefly placed under house arrest after aiding KSM’s escape, Sheikh Abdallah retained his position as minister of Islamic affairs; and later, in 2001, he was promoted to become Qatar’s interior minister, a post he retained until 2013.¹⁴

KSM’s time in Qatar was not the only instance of the emirate’s support for al-Qaeda prior to the September 11 attacks. As evidence submitted by the U.S. government in a criminal trial noted, in 1993 Osama bin Laden named the Qatar Charitable Society (currently Qatar Charity) as one of several organizations that financed al-Qaeda’s overseas operations. In 1995, the charity’s funds were used to support an assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.¹⁵ Jamal Ahmed al-Fadl, an al-Qaeda operative who defected to the United States, implicated the Qatar Charitable Society’s then-director in these activities, describing him as “a fellow member of al-Qaeda.”¹⁶

Following the 9/11 attacks, Qatar came under U.S. pressure, and implemented terrorist financing reforms. Though these reforms contain steps that could be viewed as important if Qatar intended to truly provide oversight of the country’s charities, observers are concerned that Qatari charitable funds are still reaching militant organizations, and that the emirate may not be interested in stopping this flow. The new anti-money laundering regime governing the oversight of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) in Qatar is founded primarily upon Law No. 13 of 2004, dealing with private institutions and associations. Law 13 created several categories of civil society associations, of which “licensed charitable associations” is a subcategory. To become licensed, charitable associations must submit an application to the ministry of civil service and housing affairs

with a clear statement of purpose. After a charitable association is licensed by the ministry, all aspects of its activities, from the holding of meetings to the execution of financial transactions, are subject to oversight. Further, Law 13 requires that charitable associations maintain records for all financial transactions for a period of fifteen years, and institutions are required to report suspicious activities observed in such transactions to the Qatar Financial Intelligence Unit (QFIU).¹⁷

Once the Arab Uprisings began, Qatar strongly supported both Islamist political parties and violent non-state actors affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood—and there is growing evidence that it supported jihadist ones as well.

This legal regime is positive in the abstract, although flaws in Laws 13 and 14 prevented the inter-governmental Financial Action Task Force (FATF) from giving Qatar a rating of “fully compliant.”¹⁸ These flaws concerned the established ability of Qatar’s emir to exempt any NPO from oversight (an authority that is not known to have been invoked since its inception), and the possible lack of an oversight mechanism for charitable trusts.

But the most important critique is that observers believe some of Qatar’s charities continue to support *jihadist* VNSAs. On several occasions in recent years, the U.S. has identified and sanctioned suspected Qatari terrorist financiers, only to have requests for detainment or further investigation rebuffed by the Qatari government. Indeed, in March 2014 U.S. Department of the Treasury Undersecretary David Cohen described Qatar as a “permissive jurisdiction” for terrorist financing.¹⁹

Qatari support for both Islamist and *jihadi* VNSAs became a particular area of concern as the Arab Uprisings brought rapid and chaotic change.

Libya

Qatar's first set of policies designed to back VNSAs during the Arab Uprisings was aimed at toppling Muammar Qadhafi's regime in Libya. The Libyan rebels' first state backer, Qatar is said to have spent approximately \$400 million on the rebellion, and shipped 20,000 tons of weapons, ranging from small arms to anti-tank missiles.²⁰ Qatar also played an operational role, taking the lead among Arab countries who joined NATO's mission and deploying special forces to train rebels in the use of heavy weaponry. And Qatari special forces were seemingly even more involved than that: as the *Guardian* has reported, "In the final assault on Qaddafi's Bab al-Aziziya compound in Tripoli in late August, Qatari special forces were seen on the frontline."²¹

In its support of anti-Qadhafi rebels, Qatar favored Islamists at the expense of more secular factions. Regardless, the monarchy's Libya gamble initially seemed to pay off. As previously noted, the rebels felt so much gratitude that the first flag they hoisted after capturing Qadhafi's Tripoli palace was Qatar's. The leaders of militia groups backed by Qatar went on to prominent roles in Libyan politics and society after Qadhafi's ouster. One such group is *Hizb al-Watan*, or the "Homeland Party." *Al-Watan* is led by Ali al-Sallabi, a Salafist cleric who lived in Qatar prior to the Libyan revolution, and who reportedly played a pivotal role in coordinating the distribution of arms from Qatar to Islamist militias.

One fighter who received Qatari support was Abdelhakim Belhadj, a former commander in the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). Though Belhadj had a number of connections to al-Qaeda,

he was part of the jailed LIFG faction that released a series of "revisions" while incarcerated that rejected any allegiance to al-Qaeda.²² However, there is reason to question the sincerity of these pledges made under the duress of the Qadhafi regime by LIFG's jailed leaders, as those same leaders quickly abandoned another pledge they had made as part of the revisions, that they would end their fight against Qadhafi's regime. According to regional press reports, Belhadj now has a very close relationship with the Salafi *jihadi* group *Ansar al-Sharia* in Tunisia, which has been named a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity by the U.S. Treasury Department, with regional sources claiming that Belhadj shelters its exiled leadership and provides training to its members.²³

After the fight against Qadhafi's government ended, Qatar continued to "arm and fund various militia groups," specifically favoring Islamist militias.²⁴ Many Libyans began to resent what they saw as Qatar's meddling in the country's domestic affairs. General officer Khalifa Hiftar, who would later lead a push against Libya's powerful Islamist militias, said in early 2012, "If aid comes through the front door, we like Qatar, but if it comes through the window to certain people [and] bypassing official channels, we don't want Qatar."²⁵

There were also other visible signs of discontent with Qatar's role. Three legislators were sued for libel after accusing members of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Justice and Construction Party of taking money from Qatar, illustrating how politicians are hesitant to be seen as associated with the emirate.²⁶ Residents of Benghazi burned Qatari flags in the summer of 2013. Discontent with Qatar also apparently prompted an armed group to seize control of an air traffic control tower at Tripoli International Airport in August 2013 to prevent a Qatar Airways flight from landing.²⁷

Against the backdrop of massively growing violence in Libya, much of it perpetrated by Islamist groups, Gen. Hiftar launched Operation Dignity in May 2014 with the express purpose of “cleansing” Benghazi of its Islamist militias.²⁸ Since then, the country has been locked in a conflict that places Hiftar’s coalition aligned with Libya’s elected parliament against an Islamist coalition that includes such powerful VNSAs as *Ansar al-Sharia*. (There are several dimensions to this conflict other than Islamist vs. anti-Islamist—but that is one of the important fault lines and Qatar has, predictably, ended up backing the Islamist side.) Several outside states have become involved in this competition: Operation Dignity has received support from both Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, while there are credible reports of Qatar supporting the Islamist factions. After Islamist militias pushed the democratically-elected government out of the capital of Tripoli in the fall of 2014, the *Telegraph* noted the role played by Qatari arms:

Western officials have tracked the Qatari arms flights as they land in the city of Misrata, about 100 miles east of Tripoli, where the Islamist militias have their stronghold. Even after the fall of the capital and the removal of Libya’s government, Qatar is “still flying in weapons straight to Misrata airport,” said a senior Western official.²⁹

Syria

Before civil unrest hit Syria, the Assad regime’s relationship with Qatar was cordial. One factor contributing to this warmth was the fact that Qatar had a less hostile relationship with Syria’s close ally Iran than any other Gulf Cooperation Council state, save for Oman (although the Qatar-Iran relationship was still fraught with tension). As violence escalated in Syria, Qatar initially

approached the situation with trepidation, imploring Assad to reach a peaceful resolution with demonstrators while simultaneously decrying the regime’s slaughter of civilians. Qatari entreaties did little good, and in July 2011 Qatar shut its embassy in Damascus.

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From that point on, Qatar stood at the forefront of the Arab League’s growing challenge to Assad’s regime. In August 2011, Saudi Arabia announced its open support for the Syrian rebels, and in January 2012 Sheikh Hamad urged that Arab troops should intervene in Syria. Though this proposal was quixotic, it signaled Qatar’s deepening focus on the conflict in Syria.

It’s difficult to pinpoint precisely when Qatar began to arm the Syrian rebels. Syria’s state media claims that Qatar had been arming rebels even before the *emir’s* bold pronouncement favoring an Arab intervention, arguing that Qatar had armed rebels “since the start of this crisis.”³⁰ HBJ denied these allegations.³¹ But regardless of when Qatari arms began to flow to rebels, it is clear that Qatar has heavily backed them in recent years. Hugh Griffiths, an arms researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, observed that 90 Qatari military air cargo flights left the joint U.S.-Qatar owned Al-Udeid airfield for Turkey from January 2012 through April 2013.³² These shipments contained assault rifles (primarily AK-47s) and RPGs. In total, Qatar has shipped somewhere between \$1 billion and \$3 billion in assistance to elements of the Syrian opposition.³³

The big question with respect to Qatar’s Syria policy is whether its support deliberately reached the worst of the

worst, such as al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate *Jabhat al-Nusra*. Hard evidence had long been sparse in open-source reporting, although many suspicions existed about which factions Qatar had chosen to support. The *Telegraph's* investigation into Qatar's support for militant groups found that the emirate had deliberately sent arms and money to *Ahrar al-Sham*—a group that Qatar's foreign minister openly praised. Yet *Ahrar al-Sham* was anything but a moderating force in Syria. The *Telegraph* notes that *Ahrar al-Sham's* fighters worked with *Jabhat al-Nusra*, and that *Ahrar al-Sham* helped the Islamic state to run the city of Raqqa before the two groups had a falling out.³⁴ There are other signs as well. Abu Khalid al-Suri, al-Qaeda's top operative in Syria, had been one of *Ahrar al-Sham's* founders and served as one of its senior leaders until his death in February 2014.³⁵ And following the death of *Ahrar al-Sham's* political chief Hassan Abboud in September 2014, a well-connected *jihadist* claimed on social media that Abboud had been in contact with al-Qaeda *emir* Ayman al-Zawahiri.³⁶

Qatar's engagement in the Horn of Africa, through its relationship with Eritrea, is problematic.

Thus, newer information about the Syrian factions whom Qatar has aided supports the fears expressed by many analysts. However, during field research for this article performed in the late summer of 2013, in-country analysts still emphasized limitations to what was known about Qatar's policies toward Syria, yet had some concerns about what Doha was doing. One analyst, speaking on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, said he was concerned that Qatar had "started to lose its marbles," countenancing the idea of supporting even *Nusra*, particularly as

Assad appeared more likely to survive. This analyst believed Qatar had contacts with *Nusra*, and considered supporting the group, but that the emirate's actual support for *Nusra* was somewhat limited and deniable in its execution. "Did Qatar turn a blind eye to groups which defected to *Jabhat al-Nusra* or to ISIS? Sort of," the analyst said. "Did they know that some handoffs they made might make their way to these groups? Yes. Was it plausibly deniable? Yes."³⁷

Another Doha-based researcher said he believes Qatar does support *jihadist* groups—but, rather than doing so for ideological reasons, it likely backs *jihadist* factions because of their effectiveness as fighters.³⁸ And Mehran Kamrava, speaking from his Doha office, argued that due to its lack of a foreign-policy bureaucracy, Qatar's support to Syrian rebel factions could be reaching hard-line groups as an unintended consequence.³⁹

The Horn of Africa

Qatar's engagement in the Horn of Africa, through its relationship with Eritrea, is problematic. Relations between countries of the Horn—namely Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea—have long been volatile, even escalating into border skirmishes between national militaries and proxy fights through VNSAs. One of the core conflicts is between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

After decades of bloody insurgency, Eritrea achieved independence from Ethiopia in 1993. By 1998, border disputes between the two countries escalated into a two-year conventional war that claimed 70,000 to 100,000 lives. Though a cease-fire was attained in 2000, tensions remained high. Both countries financed separatist and dissident groups within each other's borders. But proxy wars spilled out beyond the borders of the two states and into other parts of the Horn of Africa, most notably Somalia.

Somalia's UN-recognized govern-

ment has been battling an Islamist insurgency for the better part of a decade, receiving support from Ethiopia and the African Union. Ethiopia has supported this government out of concern that successful Islamist groups would violently push to make Somali-majority areas of Ethiopia independent. This in fact happened to Ethiopia when an Islamic Group called *Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya* (AIAI)—a predecessor to al-Shabaab—came to control the town of Luuq near the border with Ethiopia and Kenya in the mid-1990s.⁴⁰ In response, Ethiopian forces intervened in Luuq.

When another Islamist group called the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) captured Mogadishu in June 2006, Ethiopia was extremely concerned because the ICU was a successor to AIAI. In December 2006, Ethiopia intervened militarily to push back the ICU's countrywide advances. The Eritrean government sponsored the insurgency against Ethiopia in a variety of ways, even openly hosting an opposition conference in September 2007. Illustrating the depth of international concern about Eritrean support for insurgents in Somalia, in December 2009 the UN Security Council "imposed sanctions on Eritrea for supporting insurgents trying to topple the government in nearby Somalia."⁴¹ The Security Council imposed additional sanctions in 2011.

Due to concerns about Eritrean support for VNSAs in Somalia and beyond, Qatar's close ties with Eritrea trouble other Horn of Africa countries. Ethiopia severed diplomatic ties with Qatar in 2008, citing Qatar's relationship with Eritrea and its alleged support for Ogaden separatists.⁴² Somali president Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed expressed similar umbrage over Qatar's relationship with Eritrea to U.S. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson at a July 2009 African Union summit in Sirte, Libya. Sheikh Sharif also alleged that Doha was directly supporting al-Sha-

baab. Similarly, a 2011 report by the UN monitoring group on Somalia and Eritrea observed that "Qatar is perhaps Eritrea's most important economic partner at the moment," providing "significant, direct financial support" to the government, much of it "in the form of cash."⁴³

It is premature to declare a genuine transformation in Qatari policy. Qatar's support for Islamist and jihadist violent non-state actors has been forged by years of practice.

The fact that Qatari aid came in the form of bulk cash transfers raises obvious issues pertaining to oversight of aid. Of the many forms that support for violent actors can take, cash transactions are among the most difficult to trace. Unless a transaction is physically witnessed, there might be no way for observers to keep track of where currency is delivered, and in what quantity.⁴⁴ While Qatar's dealings with Eritrea raise clear concerns, the UN's report concluded that the emirate did not violate the sanctions regime through its provision of aid.⁴⁵

Although Qatar continues to maintain close relations with Eritrea, it managed to restore its relationship with Ethiopia in 2012, and recently pledged \$18 million in support to Somalia.⁴⁶ There is obviously much to criticize about Qatar's policies toward Eritrea and the Horn of Africa, but Qatar's engagement has also yielded some positive results. Most notably, Qatar's offer to mediate the Eritrea-Djibouti border conflict resulted in a cease-fire between the states, and negotiations that continue to this day.⁴⁷

A complicated affair

What conclusions can be drawn about Qatari support for Islamist and *jihadist* VNSAs? Relative to other states, Qatari officials and charities rather heavily backed such actors in the 1990s,

when an ideologically-driven Sheikh Abdallah sponsored KSM and al-Qaeda took advantage of the Qatar Charitable Society's largesse. The emirate's support for violent Islamists declined following the 9/11 attacks, although it's unclear to what extent Qatar simply passed laws that were never really enforced—for example, in its terrorist-financing regime.⁴⁸ However, Qatari support for Islamist and *jihadist* VNSAs then rose markedly with the advent of the Arab Uprisings. There remains ambiguity about both the level and intent of Qatari support for *jihadists* during this latter period, but the fact that the emirate's support has reached Islamist and *jihadist* VNSAs is established.

The shadowy nature of much of the evidence about Qatar's policies toward these VNSAs makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about the parameters, level, and intentions of this support. But it is worth asking: why has Qatar shown a preference for supporting Islamist non-state actors, including violent ones? The various pragmatic explanations for Qatar's foreign policy beg the question of why, if Doha's aid to militant factions is based solely on picking likely winners, it seems to conclude that Islamists will be the winners every single time. It also does not answer the question why terrorist financiers not only continue to operate freely in the country, but also seem to possess significant political influence. The bottom line is that ideology should not be written off *a priori* as an influence, as is now the case in major Western scholarly works about Qatar. Indeed, the marginalization of religious ideology as a causal force is rather consistent in both political science and international relations.

Most recently, following its ostracism by other GCC states, Qatar announced its support for Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's regime in Egypt. Qatar's announcement in this regard appears to

fit well with Doha's efforts to normalize its relations with GCC members through much of 2014.⁴⁹ But it is premature to declare this to be a genuine transformation in Qatari policy. Qatar's support for Islamist and *jihadist* VNSAs has been forged by years of practice. And while Qatar and Egypt may succeed in developing somewhat warmer relations, the fact remains that both countries support rival factions in the ongoing Libyan civil war. It is worth watching for genuinely significant shifts in Qatar's policies, but it's not clear this is it.



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