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THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL: DEEPENING RIFTS AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

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BEFORE THE

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THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

OF THE

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THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL: DEEPENING RIFTS AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2014

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The subcommittee will come to order. After recognizing myself and Ranking Member Deutch as soon as he comes in for 5 minutes each for our opening statements I will then recognize other members—thank you so much, gentlemen, for being here—seeking recognition for 1 minute.

We will then hear from our witnesses and without objection, gentlemen, the witnesses' prepared statements will be made a part of the record.

Members may have 5 days to insert statements and questions for the record subject to the length limitation in the rules. The Chair now recognizes herself for 5 minutes.

Since the start of the Arab Spring, the dynamics of the political landscape in the Middle East and North Africa have undergone dramatic changes. Uprisings in many countries have led to a change in leadership, shifting the nature of what was already a fragile political insecurity balance in the region.

Despite similar cultures, political systems and security concerns, the only real points of concurrence amongst the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) were on the need to maintain strong security ties with the United States and on the threat posed by Iran.

This shift in dynamics has also added a strain on the relationship within the GCC, particularly as the nation's hotly disputed policy approaches to the conflict in Syria, the stability of Egypt and the Iranian nuclear issue.

Some of these rifts were made very public earlier this year as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain all recalled their ambassadors to Qatar over the Qatari support for the Muslim Brotherhood.

And while the GCC has reportedly smoothed over this feud, the fundamental differences are, clearly, too great to overcome and will

certainly boil over in the near future. But the differences between the GCC member states regarding these issues haven't just strained relations within the council.

They have greatly impacted our bilateral relations with each country. The administration's indecision in Syria and its misguided approach to the Iran nuclear issue have driven a deep wedge between us and some of our traditional regional allies and could potentially permanently damage those relationships which would then pose challenges to our national security interests.

While some of these nations leave much to be desired in many aspects, ranging from their human rights records to their efforts in fighting local terrorist financing and the United States must continue to press those countries in addressing those issues, the members of the GCC are for now still key U.S. allies to many national and mutual security threats.

It would be in the best security interest for the United States as well as the GCC members to develop and advance an integrated defense capability so that we can counter any threats in the region including an Iran that continues to advance its ballistic missile capabilities and still has the potential to create a nuclear weapon.

But it is not just the idea of a nuclear-armed Iran that threatens us and our partners in the region but it is also Iran's role as the largest state sponsor of terror that must be defended against.

Iran actively seeks to wage proxy wars and attacks against the United States, against our ally, the democratic Jewish state of Israel, and our U.S. national security interest in the region as well as attacks against several Middle East countries themselves.

That is why I believe that the GCC countries must refrain from reaching closer ties with Iran, hold the line against this terrorist regime and abandon any ambition to deepen economic alliances with Tehran.

Just this week it was announced that the emir of Kuwait would be visiting Iran at the end of the month and Saudi Arabia extended an invitation to the Iranian foreign minister to visit.

None of us here need to be reminded of the foiled plot by the Iranians to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. right here in Washington, DC, to understand the lengths to which Tehran will go to try to shift the balance of power in the region in its favor.

If we abandon our partners in the Gulf by continuing to pursue a bad nuclear deal with Iran that will leave intact its entire nuclear infrastructure and allow it to continue to enrich uranium, we will not only lose what little trust we have with the GCC states but we may open the door to an all-out arms race in the Middle East.

After all, it was the United States who put pressure on all of these governments to support our efforts in sanctioning the Iranian regime and now they perceive the administration's zeal to reach a deal with Tehran as the U.S. selling them out to the Iranians, which will force their hands to cut their own deal with the regime in Iran.

This could up the scales in the region and cause irreparable harm to U.S. national security interest and may even make the extremist problem worse if our partners lose faith in us and stop cooperating with us to counter this threat.

The administration must do more to work with these partners to earn their trust back and it must abandon its current nuclear policy with Iran or run the risk of turning the entire region against us.

With that, I am so pleased to yield to the ranking member, my good friend, Mr. Deutch, of Florida.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am pleased that we are holding today's hearing to examine a region that plays such a critical role in the United States policy and security more broadly throughout the Middle East.

In recent months, much has been made over the perceived rift between the GCC states and the United States, notably over the P5+1 negotiations with Iran, our policy in Syria and events in Egypt.

I believe the U.S. and the Gulf share the same goals—a nuclear-free Iran, an end to Syrian conflict that does not leave Assad or dangerous terrorists in power and a stable prosperous Egypt.

It should be clear to our Gulf partners that this Congress and this administration value the strong relationship. Secretary Kerry and other senior State Department officials have continued to brief the Gulf States on Iran negotiations.

Secretary Hagel recently convened a meeting of defense ministers, the first time all six defense ministers have been together with the Secretary since 2008, and President Obama himself traveled to Saudi Arabia in March to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to the region.

But just as our Gulf friends seek assurances from us, so do we from them. It is understandable that Gulf countries would have concerns over a potential nuclear deal with Iran. I have concerns over a potential nuclear deal with Iran and they are the ones living in Iran's neighborhood.

Iran's penchant for meddling in Gulf States by stirring unrest in Shi'ite communities by supporting Hezbollah's activities in the region have exacerbated thousands of years of religious tensions and regional power struggles.

This has only been compounded in recent years by the Iranian regime's unwavering support for Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Now, I recognize that there are those allies who were perhaps caught off guard by Western engagement with Iran.

But it is just as concerning to the United States that Tehran and the Gulf seem to be warming relations despite this perceived anger at the P5+1 for pursuing nuclear negotiations.

The emir of Kuwait will visit Iran May 31st. Reports last week indicated the Saudi foreign minister has invited his Iranian counterpart to visit Riyadh. All of this creates the unfortunate perception that despite our very real and serious mutual concern over a nuclear-armed Iran, our Gulf friends simply wish to see the United States solve the problem for them.

And while we appreciate the tremendous economic support the Gulf has provided Egypt to help restore economic stability, the U.S. will still continue to ensure that we support an Egyptian Government that respects human rights and puts the country on a path toward real democracy.

Over the past decade, we have increased security cooperation to unprecedented levels and the United States continues to balance these individual bilateral relationships and security needs with our cooperation and engagement with the GCC as a whole.

We continue to cooperate on vital counter terrorism issues including preventing Hezbollah from acting in the region. Bold actions from our Gulf partners like declaring Hezbollah as a terrorist organization sends an important message to Iran and to its proxies but we need to see the same cooperation when it comes to countering all violent extremism, Sunni or Shi'ite.

GCC countries rely heavily on the United States for their defense needs and we have strategic assets and defense agreements in every GCC country whether it is the Fifth Fleet stationed in Bahrain, Al Dhafra Joint Air Base in UAE, the Al Udeid based in Qatar, the over 13,000 troops in Kuwait.

These strategic relationships are critical to the ability of the United States—to U.S. security interests and the ability to safeguard those interests in the region. But as with any friendship, there will be times when we disagree.

This certainly doesn't mean that the U.S. has abandoned our interests in the Gulf and any suggestions to that end are simply false. But the United States must and will continue to speak out against human rights abuses of all kinds.

We cannot turn a blind eye to the unequal treatment of women, discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities or foreign workers or violent suppression of dissent no matter where in the world it occurs and we will continue to speak out against those elements in or out of government that support any form of terrorism or extremist elements.

Disagreements among GCC countries have also posed a challenge to addressing regional crises. It is no secret that the Gulf has been split over its approach to Syria and to the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Concerned over their own stability, Saudi Arabia and the UAE didn't appreciate Qatari support for the Muslim Brotherhood. With respect to Syria, our Gulf friends must use their resources to collectively strengthen and support vetted moderate opposition groups.

Continuing to fracture the opposition will never result in a political solution that forces Assad out. I appreciate Kuwait fulfilling its humanitarian funding pledges and the UAE-built refugee camp in Jordan.

But I would also urge all of our friends to use all of their great resources to fund the desperately lacking humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria. For the time being, things appear to be on the mend following the agreement reached in Riyadh last month with Qatar.

However, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE have yet to return their ambassadors to DOHA. I hope our panelists will address whether this band-aid can hold. As I stated earlier, just as our Gulf allies seek assurances from us, we seek assurances from them.

Our partners should be assured that if an acceptable deal is ever reached with Iran it won't be a free pass to Iran to continue its dangerous and destabilizing behavior throughout the Middle East and throughout the world. And we should be assured that our

friends will not continue to support dangerous actors throughout the region.

To our witnesses, thank you for being here. I hope your testimonies will shed light on a couple of key issues. How deep is the mistrust between the U.S. and GCC over Iran?

Can the GCC overcome its own internal disagreements to act in a manner that preserves regional security and perhaps, most broadly and most importantly, does the GCC view its long-term relationship with the United States as critical to regional stability as we do?

And I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and yield back.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Deutch. Good comments. At this time, the Chair recognizes Mr. Cicilline.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Deutch, for holding today's hearing about this very important issue and I would like to extend my gratitude to the witnesses for being with us today and for the testimony they are about to provide.

For decades the United States has maintained important strategic relationships with member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. These relationships are more vital today than ever and ensuring peace and stability are very worthy goals in any part of the world.

But I remind the committee that nearly 20 percent of oil traded on any given day must pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

GCC leaders have correctly identified Iran as a threat to stability and peace in the Gulf but a lack of a unified approach to address this threat is particularly disturbing.

GCC leaders watch the events unfolding in Syria and Egypt but have all decided on different policies. This is an important region and it cannot be overstated how vital it is that we understand the intentions, goals and aspirations of GCC member states.

So I look forward to hearing our panelists today providing clarification on how GCC member states work collectively, how they pursue their individual national interests and how United States strategic interests are affected by those decisions.

And I thank you and I yield back.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, sir.

First, I am pleased to welcome Dr. David Weinberg, who is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies where he focuses on the Gulf countries as well as energy, counter terrorism and human rights issues.

Dr. Weinberg previously served as a professional staff member on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and has done research for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and the State Department's policy planning staff under the Bush administration.

Perhaps I should note here that one of our colleagues—he is not here this morning, Mr. Connolly—was also a staffer and so apparently you got smart and left and he stayed.

So, second, we want to welcome Mr. Simon Henderson, who is the Baker Fellow and director on the Gulf and Energy Policy program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, former journalist at the BBC and the Financial Times.

Mr. Henderson has also worked as a consultant advising corporations and governments in the Arabian Gulf. And last but certainly not least, we welcome Ambassador Stephen Seche—am I saying that correctly? Seche—okay, thank you—who is a senior analyst at Dentons, an international law firm with extensive ties to the Middle East.

Ambassador Seche spent 35 years as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer serving as the United States representative to Yemen from 2007 to 2010. Prior to his current position, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State.

He has also served as Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Damascus, Syria and as director of the Office for Egypt and Levant Affairs in Washington, DC.

Gentlemen, welcome, and Dr. Weinberg, we will start with you.

STATEMENT OF DAVID ANDREW WEINBERG, PH.D., SENIOR FELLOW, FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES

Mr. WEINBERG. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you on behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies for the opportunity to discuss tensions in America's security relationship with members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

There is a pervasive sense among the GCC that America has abandoned its regional allies. This concern is primarily vis-à-vis Iran, their main regional enemy, but it has been exacerbated by several of the following factors.

In the last few years, the Gulf States have seen America becoming less dependent upon foreign oil and they wonder if this might reduce Washington's commitment to their security.

In 2011, the Gulf States witnessed America supporting popular revolutions in places like Egypt and they wonder if we might abandon them like we did Mubarak or support the Muslim Brotherhood against established regimes.

GCC states also blame Washington for letting Syria's Assad regime slaughter tens of thousands of Sunni civilians. They read America's decision not to enforce its red line on chemical weapons as an indication that our resolve may be lacking across the board.

Although our military maintains approximately 35,000 personnel in this region, these factors have caused the Gulf States to question the value of U.S. security guarantees against such threats as Iran.

There is real truth to the claims by regional officials that they face ongoing acts of terrorism and subversion by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Officials have intercepted shiploads of sophisticated weapons evidently headed from the IRGC to radical Shi'ite militias that threaten Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Bahrain.

The Saudis in particular have been targeted in terrorist attacks by Iran's global network including the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing and, as Chairman Ros-Lehtinen noted, a 2011 plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador here in Washington.

Alleged Iranian espionage rings have recently been disrupted in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and terrorist cells in Bahrain

receiving IRGC training have reportedly built hundreds of improvised explosive devices.

Like Israel, the GCC will never trust the terms of an accord over Iran's nuclear program until they see Tehran stopping its interventions in their neighborhood. In short, such activities are the prism through which they view Iran's broader intentions and relatedly America's commitment to come to their defense.

Thus, if Washington is truly serious about reassuring its GCC allies, the government should insist on opening a new negotiation forum alongside the nuclear file for pressuring Iran to stop its radical regional activities and we should bring our Gulf allies to this table.

Because there is a significant trust deficit on both sides of this alliance, the time has also come to appoint a special envoy who can regain the trust of the GCC's rulers. Meanwhile, the State Department should release the recent report it commissioned with taxpayer money documenting incitement in official Saudi textbooks and revoke the kingdom's indefinite waiver under the International Religious Freedom Act.

On terrorism finance, U.S. officials should continue to press Kuwait and Qatar to stop providing a permissive jurisdiction for al-Qaeda fundraising. If DOHA and Kuwait City keep turning a blind eye, U.S. designations should possibly be broadened to include responsible foreign officials.

Washington should encourage Bahrain's dialogue process and praise the crown prince and king for restarting that process in January. However, we should condemn abuses and violence when they take place, insist on security sector accountability and impose consequences for one or both sides, depending on their conduct, if negotiations fail to produce a deal before elections later this year.

The United States should speak out at the highest levels for women's rights in the region, advocating for them to be permitted to drive in Saudi Arabia but also raising concerns about that country's oppressive and infantilising male guardianship system.

Similarly, Washington should stand up more consistently for rights defenders under siege who often face long prison sentences for arbitrary charges such as offending the ruler or disrupting public order.

Finally, the United States should help our Gulf allies address their skyrocketing energy consumption while ensuring our own lasting energy security. This requires the use of hydraulic fracturing at home when it is economically and environmentally viable, a national strategy for fuel choice in the transportation sector and increases in renewable energy to move away from fossil fuels in the longer term.

Esteemed Members of Congress, I thank you for this opportunity to address you on the Gulf today and I eagerly look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Weinberg follows:]

Congressional Testimony

The Gulf Cooperation Council:
Deepening Rifts and Emerging Challenges

David Andrew Weinberg, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

Hearing before the
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa

Washington, DC
May 22, 2014

1726 M Street NW • Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20036

David Andrew Weinberg May 22, 2014

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you on behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies for the opportunity to discuss tensions in America's security relationship with members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). As a former Professional Staff Member at the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, I feel particularly appreciative for the opportunity to testify before you today.

The GCC covers a region that is extremely important for American interests. The group is comprised of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman.

Half of the world's proven oil reserves are located in the broader Persian Gulf, and several members of the GCC, particularly Saudi Arabia, are noted for having spare production capacity, which gives them added influence over the global oil market.[1] America has crucial military bases in the region, including an air base in Qatar, a naval facility in Bahrain, and a drone facility in Saudi Arabia, and all of which help sustain military operations outside of the Gulf.[2] America exports more goods to the United Arab Emirates than any other country in the Middle East, Africa, or South Asia, and current exports to Saudi Arabia are nearly as high.[3] Finally, U.S. officials often turn to our allies in the Gulf for actionable intelligence to avert specific al Qaeda attacks against the American homeland.[4]

I will now proceed by explaining why U.S. alliances in the Gulf are coming under increasing strain. In particular, I will discuss the GCC's sense of abandonment vis-à-vis Iran and how this concern has been exacerbated by other factors such as the shale boom, the Arab Spring, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the conflict in Syria.

I will also note areas where we should expect more from our Gulf allies, such as countering violent extremism and encouraging the pursuit of reform. I will acknowledge several challenges for our country's energy security as it pertains to

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[1] "Persian Gulf Region," *Rand Corporation*, accessed May 21, 2014. (http://www.rand.org/topics/persian-gulf-region.html)

[2] Tom Shanker, "Hagel Lifts Veil on Major Military Center in Qatar." *The New York Times*, December 11, 2013. (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/12/world/middleeast/hagel-lifts-veil-on-major-military-center-in-qatar.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=1&) & "Commander's Guiding Principles." *U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Website*, accessed May 21, 2014. (http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/about.html) & "CIA Operating Drone Base in Saudi Arabia. US Media Reveal." *BBC News*, February 6, 2013. (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-21350437)

[3] "Trade in Goods with United Arab Emirates," *United States Census Bureau Website*, accessed May 21, 2014. (http://www.ccnsus.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5200.html) & "Trade in Goods with Saudi Arabia," *United States Census Bureau Website*, accessed May 21, 2014. (http://www.ccnsus.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5170.html)

[4] Robert F. Worth, "Saudi Help in Package Plot Is Part of Security Shift," *The New York Times*, October 30, 2010. (http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/31/world/middleeast/31saudi.html?ref=world) & Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Sources: Saudi Counterterrorism Work Broke Up New AQAP Plane Plot," *CNN*, May 9, 2012. (http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/09/world/meast/al-qaeda-plot/)

the Gulf and then conclude by offering a list of policy recommendations for improving U.S. relations in the region.

Sense of Abandonment

There is a pervasive sense among the GCC states that America has abandoned its allies in the region and has ceded its longtime leadership position. In order to understand the sources of this concern, it is important to consider five key factors as they pertain to U.S. policy: (1) the shale boom, (2) the Arab Spring, (3) the Muslim Brotherhood, (4) Syria, and (5) Iran.

The Shale boom. In the last few years, the Gulf states see America becoming less dependent upon foreign oil thanks to horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing (also known as "fracking"), which allow America to extract large, new amounts of oil and natural gas from underground shale deposits. These countries publicly claim not to be concerned about America's energy revolution.[5] Yet they see us decreasing our dependence on foreign crude – and, in Qatar's case, threatening its hold on markets for liquefied natural gas – and they are forced to wonder if this might ultimately reduce Washington's commitment to their national security.

The Arab Spring. In 2011 the Gulf states watched America support a popular revolution in Egypt, calling on the country's longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak to step down. Fearing a similar outcome in their own neighborhood, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates orchestrated a military intervention to shore up the minority Sunni monarchy under the Khalifa family in Bahrain. Judging from a recent visit by the UAE's interior minister to his country's troops in the area, it would seem at least some of these forces are still there.[6] Leaders in the region continue to wonder if America might abandon them like it did Mubarak.

The Muslim Brotherhood. Over the period that followed, these Gulf states watched America engage with ascendant Muslim Brotherhood forces in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Libya, and Yemen. Saudi Arabia and the UAE in particular fear that the Brotherhood offers a potent threat to their rule, as a disciplined network of adherents to a clandestine Islamist movement that uses religion to challenge traditional rule. Thus, these Gulf states saw American engagement with the Morsi government in Cairo through a skeptical, perhaps conspiratorial, lens. The fact that Qatar, a neighboring GCC state, has actually sought to bolster the Muslim Brotherhood as a powerful regional proxy has only added to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi's imminent sense of threat.[7]

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[5] Hugh Tomlinson, "Kingdom on Alert as Army of Saudis Rush to Join Jihad in Syria," *The Times*, February 24, 2014. (http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/article4013953.ece)
[6] The National Staff, "Sheikh Saif Tells Troops UAE is Proud of Their Work in Bahrain," *The National*, April 6, 2014. (http://www.thenational.ae/uae/sheikh-saif-tells-troops-uae-is-proud-of-their-work-in-bahrain)
[7] David Andrew Weinberg, "Frustration with Qatar Adds to GCC Security Dispute," *Al-Arabiya*, March 6, 2014. (http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/frustration-with-qatar-adds-to-gcc-security-dispute/)

Syria. The GCC states blames Washington for letting Syria's Assad regime cling to power and slaughter tens of thousands of Sunni civilians.[8] They watched the U.S. decline to enforce its red line on weapons of mass destruction, unfortunately seeing this as a sign that the Obama doctrine means no use of force rather than the doctrine of selective force on which the President campaigned in 2008 and 2012.

Iran. Last but certainly not least, there is the matter of Iran. Tehran has been locked in a confrontational relationship with the GCC states ever since the Islamic Revolution and the subsequent Iran-Iraq War. The Islamic Republic of Iran has sponsored terrorism throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant, seeking to use Shi'ite communities in many of these countries as a sectarian wedge for power promotion.

Thus, when the Gulf states see Washington engaging with their number one enemy, it is only reasonable to conclude that it is going to set off alarm bells in the region.

Iranian Intervention in the GCC

Saudi Arabia's Deputy Crown Prince, Muqrin bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, is on record articulating why the GCC cares so much about Iranian power projection. He reportedly told U.S. officials that claims about a "Shi'ite crescent" stretching from Iran all the way to Lebanon through Iraq and Syria are only part of the picture. Instead, he insisted that his country is encircled by a hostile Shi'ite "full moon" that also includes Iranian networks in Yemen, Bahrain, Kuwait, and parts of Saudi Arabia.[9]

It is true that regimes in the region often point to an Iranian bogeyman to keep their citizens divided and focused on foreign conflicts instead of the domestic battle over reform.[10] However, there is also real truth to the claims by Gulf states that Iran has used its Shi'ite proxy relationships to threaten their national authority and to promote terrorism, something that continues up until this very day.

In both Bahrain and Yemen, officials have intercepted shiploads of sophisticated weapons evidently from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) headed toward radical Shi'ite militias.[11] In the Yemeni case, the weapons were apparently

[8] Jay Solomon, "Arabs Ask U.S. to Lead on Syria," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 9, 2013. (http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324244304578473212174423122)
[9] Angus McDowall, "Saudi Prince Muqrin Named Second-in-Line to Succeed King," *Reuters*, March 27, 2014. (http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/27/us-saudi-crownprince-idUSBREA2Q1O420140327)
[10] Toby Matthiesen, Sectarian Gulf Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring That Wasn't, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).
[11] Thom Shanker and Robert F. Worth, "Yemen Seizes Sailboat Filled With Weapons, and U.S. Points to Iran," *The New York Times*, January 28, 2013; (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/29/world/middleeast/29military.html?_r=0) & Samantha Stainburn, "Bahrain Finds Iranian and Syrian Weapons in Security Raids," *Global Post*, December 31, 2013. (http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/131230/bahrain-finds-iranian-and-syrian-weapons-security-raids)

headed to a Shi'ite insurgent group along Saudi Arabia's border that has engaged in frequent battles with Saudi armed forces. Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates claims three valuable islands near the Strait of Hormuz that Iran has been occupying for decades.

Saudi Arabia has been targeted in attacks linked to Iran's global terrorist network, including the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing that killed 19 U.S. service members and a 2011 plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador here in Washington.[12] Kuwait was the site of several high-profile Iranian terrorist attacks in the 1980s, and Kuwaiti authorities have recently arrested or expelled several individuals on charges of espionage on behalf of Iran.[13] Similar Iranian terrorism or espionage rings have allegedly been broken up in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain as well.[14]

Iranian subversion in the Gulf is especially important to consider today because it colors how many of the Gulf states view America's security commitment as well as the prospects for a nuclear deal with Iran. Like Israel, the GCC will never trust the terms of an international accord over Iran's nuclear program until they see Tehran stopping its support for terrorism and other mischief-making in the Gulf, Yemen, and the Levant. In short, such activities are quite justifiably the prism through which our Gulf allies view Iran's broader intentions, including on the nuclear file.

Further, the American decision to conduct secret, high-level talks with Iran through Oman starting in March of last year contributed to the other Gulf states' sense of betrayal.[15] President Obama's phone conversation with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in September apparently helped convince King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia to give up his nation's right to address the UN General Assembly in protest.[16] Citing

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[12] http://www Carol D. Leonnig, "Iran Held Liable In Khobar Attack," *The Washington Post*, December 23, 2006; (http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/22/AR2006122200455.html) & Chris Boyette, "Iranian-American Gets 25 Years in Plot to Kill Saudi Ambassador," *CNN*, June 2, 2013. (http://www.cnn.com/2013/05/30/justice/new-york-saudi-assassination-plot/)

[13] "Iran Cell Planned Attacks in Kuwait, Minister Says," *Reuters*, April 21, 2011; (http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/21/us-kuwait-iran-spying-idUSTRE73K3NO20110421) "Obituary: Sheikh Jaber, Emir of Kuwait," *BBC News*, January 15, 2006. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1556774.stm)

[14] "Bahrain Convicts Six of Plotting with Iran," *Reuters*, May 27, 2012; (http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-05-27/news/sns-rt-us-bahrain-plot-trialbre84q08p-20120527_1_bahrain-hassan-mushaima-manama) & "Bahrain Expels Iran Diplomat Over 'Spy Link'," *Al-Jazeera*, April 26, 2011; (http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/04/2011426921169779.html) & "Saudi Arabia Says Arrests 18 in Spying Investigation," *Reuters*, March 19, 2013; (http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/19/us-saudi-espionage-idUSBRE92I17F20130319) & "Saudi Arabia Arrests More 'Iran Spy Ring' Suspects," *BBC News*, May 21, 2013. (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-22615566)

[15] Bradley Klapper, Matthew Lee and Julie Pace, "Secret US-Iran Talks Set Stage for Nuke Deal," *AP*, November 24, 2013. (http://news.yahoo.com/secret-us-iran-talks-set-stage-nuke-deal-045356533--politics.html)

[16] David Andrew Weinberg, "Saudis Stung by Obama Iran Initiative," *The National Interest*, October 3, 2013. (http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/saudis-stung-by-obama-iran-initiative-9170)

similar concerns, Saudi Arabia soon afterwards gave up its seat on the Security Council.[17]

Thus, although recent U.S. promises not to surprise the GCC again on the nuclear file and frequent visits by officials involved in the nuclear talks (such as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman) are positive gestures, they only address part of the current problem.[18] A comprehensive reassurance strategy for the Gulf has to also find new ways to address the threat posed by Iran's IRGC.

This will continue to be the case even as individual members of the GCC move to engage Iran directly, such as an expected upcoming visit to Tehran by the Kuwaiti Amir Sabah al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.[19] Leaving aside Oman, which has reached a lucrative natural gas deal with Tehran and is not a Sunni-majority country, such engagement by the Gulf is less a sign that they trust Iran's intentions than that they fear being left behind as others cut separate deals with Tehran. The GCC countries will continue to doubt the value of America's 35,000 military personnel in the region if Washington appears unwilling to use its diplomatic might to push back against aggressive activity by their most threatening state adversary.

Countering Violent Extremism

Saudi Textbooks:

The United States works with its Gulf allies on a continuous basis to fight violent extremism in the region. However, there are certain areas where our Gulf allies are falling short, and it is important to identify those areas and hold a frank dialogue with our allies, both in private and in public, to make clear why America has these concerns.

For example, Saudi Arabia continues to teach its children horrendous forms of hatred and incitement to violence in official, government-sponsored textbooks. Saudi textbooks from the current academic school year indoctrinate children to believe that there is no point in letting anybody who converts away from Islam live and that the only worthwhile debate about the role of LGBT individuals in society is how best to kill them.[20] The books suggest that Christians and Jews are incapable of

[17] David Andrew Weinberg, "Saudi Arabia Turns Down UN Security Council Seat," *FDD Policy Brief*, October 19, 2013. (http://defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/saudi-arabia-turns-down-un-security-council-seat/)
[18] Remarks with Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal," *U.S. Department of State Website*, November 4, 2013; (http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/11/216236.htm) & U.S. Department of State, Press Release, "Under Secretary for Political Affairs Wendy R. Sherman Travels to Jerusalem, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Dubai." February 20, 2014. (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/02/221819.htm)
[19] "Iran Says Kuwait's Emir to Visit, Turn 'New Page' in Ties," *Reuters*, May 20, 2014. (http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/20/us-iran-kuwait-idUSBREA4J0FB20140520)
[20] Oren Adaki, "Highlighting Hatred in Saudi Textbooks," *FDD Policy Brief*, March 27, 2014. (http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/oren-adaki-highlighting-hatred-in-saudi-textbooks/)

coexistence with Muslims and that women are inherently prone to adultery except under the watchful eye of a male relative.[21]

Saudi Arabia gave Washington assurances in 2006 that its Education Ministry would completely remove incitement against other religious groups from school textbooks within two years,[22] but the Bush and Obama administrations did not hold Riyadh accountable when this deadline lapsed.[23] In part due to the textbooks issue, Saudi Arabia has been designated as a "country of particular concern" according to the International Religious Freedom Act for an entire decade, but the executive branch continues to waive any and all penalties under the Act.[24]

Perhaps even more disappointingly, the State Department chose to withhold from publication the results of a taxpayer-funded study that documented hate in Saudi textbooks more comprehensively than ever before. In response to a question in March about this study, State Department Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf claimed that "both State Department officials and the president of the nonprofit who wrote the study said it was never meant to be released to the public. So there's no one keeping a public report quiet. It was always supposed to be internal".[25]

However, I was personally informed by the president of this nonprofit that they began the study "with the intent of publishing its results."[26] Similarly, the former assistant secretary at the State Department whose bureau commissioned the study said it was originally authorized "with the option, depending upon the findings, of making it public if the problems persisted," which they clearly do.[27]

Further, given that last year the State Department released a study it had commissioned posing unprecedented criticisms of Israeli textbooks, the U.S. government has been tougher on Israel for its education materials than on Saudi Arabia, even though Saudi textbooks are undeniably the worse of the two. In light of

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[21] Oren Adaki, "Highlighting Hatred in Saudi Textbooks," *FDD Policy Brief*, March 27, 2014. (http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/oren-adaki-highlighting-hatred-in-saudi-textbooks/)

[22] U.S. Department of State, Press Release, "Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Briefs Congress on U.S.-Saudi Discussions on Religious Practice and Tolerance," July 19, 2006; (http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/69197.htm) & "Ten Years On: Saudi Arabia's Textbooks Still Promote Religious Violence," *The Hudson Institute*, September 16, 2011, pages 47-49. (http://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/931/sauditextbooks2011final.pdf)

[23] David Andrew Weinberg, "Textbook Diplomacy: Why the State Department Shelved a Study on Incitement," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, March 2014, pages 9-10. (http://www.defenddemocracy.org/stuff/uploads/documents/Textbook_Diplomacy.pdf)

[24] U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Annual Report 2014: Saudi Arabia," 2014. (http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/Saudi%20Arabia%202014.pdf)

[25] Marie Harf, "Daily Press Briefing," *U.S. Department of State Website*, March 25, 2014. (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2014/03/223927.htm#SAUDIARABIA)

[26] David Andrew Weinberg, "Textbook Diplomacy: Why the State Department Shelved a Study on Incitement," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, March 2014, page 4. (http://www.defenddemocracy.org/stuff/uploads/documents/Textbook_Diplomacy.pdf)

[27] Eli Lake, "U.S. Keeps Saudi Arabia's Worst Secret," *The Daily Beast*, March 25, 2014. (http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/03/25/u-s-keeps-saudi-arabia-s-worst-secret.html)

the horrendous anti-Semitism in the Saudi books, this is a serious shortcoming in the administration's strategy for countering anti-Semitism worldwide. I believe this is why the American Jewish Committee recently stated that continuing to withhold this taxpayer-funded report on Saudi textbooks is inexplicable.[28]

The American people have a right to know what their tax dollars have supported, as well as the horrendous invective being perpetuated by the Saudi education system. Releasing this report is about more than just combatting state-sponsored intolerance overseas, it is about addressing a festering counterterrorism problem.

Terrorist Finance:

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, the GCC is the biggest source of private donations to core al Qaeda, with Kuwait and Qatar serving as the two most permissive jurisdictions through which this illicit finance flows.[29] Kuwait allegedly is the number one source of funding for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).[30]

Such dynamics are currently having a major effect on chaotic battlefields in the Levant. Experts describe Kuwait as "a virtual Western union" and "the Arab world's main clearinghouse" for Syria's radical armed groups.[31] Kuwaiti financiers provided seed money for Syrian groups close to al Qaeda that enabled them to become a major player on the ground.[32] President Obama reportedly chastised Qatar's Emir last year for allowing weapons his country had purchased to fall into the hands of

[28] American Jewish Committee, Press Release, "AJC Urges U.S. to Press Saudis on Textbooks," March 26, 2014. (http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=7oJILSPwFfJSG&b=8479733&ct=13805419)

[29] David Cohen, "Remarks of Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen before the Center for a New American Security on 'Confronting New Threats in Terrorist Financing'," *Remarks before the Center for a New American Security*, March 4, 2014. (http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2308.aspx)

[30] Karen DeYoung, "Kuwait, a U.S. Ally on Syria, is Also the Leading Funder of Extremist Rebels," *The Washington Post*, April 25, 2014. (http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/kuwait-top-ally-on-syria-is-also-the-leading-funder-of-extremist-rebels/2014/04/25/10142b9a-ca48-11e3-a75e-463587891b57_story.html)

[31] Ben Hubbard, "Private Donors' Funds Add Wild Card to War in Syria," The New York Times, November 12, 2013; (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/13/world/middleeast/private-donors-funds-add-wild-card-to-war-in-syria.html) & Ellen Knickmeyer, "Kuwaiti Court Upholds Parliamentary Vote, A Setback for Muslim Brotherhood," The Wall Street Journal, December 23, 2013. (http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304244904579276383918948044)

[32] Joseph Braude, "The Muslim Brotherhood's More Frightening Offshoot," *The Atlantic*, July 15, 2013; (http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/07/the-muslim-brotherhoods-more-frightening-offshoot/277786/) & Michael Weiss, "The Unraveling: How Obama's Syria Policy Fell Apart," *Politico*, January 2, 2014. (http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/01/how-obamas-syria-policy-fell-apart-101704.html#.U3zW-fldVUU)

the al Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra.[33] Since then, the terrorist group has urged its supporters to send money through a Qatari charity fund.[34]

Kuwait and Qatar's problems with terrorism finance can be encapsulated by two prominent individuals, even though this issue ultimately involves comprehensive institutional failures as well as dubious actors.

Kuwait's problem is neatly symbolized by a prominent individual named Nayef al-Ajmi, who was appointed in January to serve in two separate capacities as the country's Minister for Justice and for Islamic Affairs. His image or written endorsement had been used by three separate fundraising networks to aid radical extremists in Syria.[35]

One of these networks has been linked by the U.S. government to al Qaeda's main Syrian affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra.[36] All three networks appeared to be sending aid to Ahrar al-Sham, another Syrian rebel group that was co-founded by Ayman al-Zawahiri's representative in Syria, an al Qaeda veteran named Abu Khaled al-Suri.[37]

When U.S. officials called al-Ajmi's appointment "a step in the wrong direction," Kuwait's cabinet fired back by expressing its "resentment" at the allegations against one of their own.[38] An initial offer of resignation by al-Ajmi was rejected, and he was granted prime photo opportunities with the country's Prime Minister as well as the

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[33] Mark Mazzetti, C.J. Chivers, & Eric Schmitt, "Taking Outsize Role in Syria, Qatar Funnels Arms to Rebels," *The New York Times*, June 29, 2013. (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/30/world/middleeast/sending-missiles-to-syrian-rebels-qatar-muscles-in.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

[34] Joby Warrick & Tik Root, "Islamic Charity Officials Gave Millions to Al Qaeda, U.S. Says," *The Washington Post*, December 22, 2013. (http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/islamic-charity-officials-gave-millions-to-al-qaeda-us-says/2013/12/22/c0c53ad6-69b8-11e3-a0b9-249bbb34602c_story.html)

[35] David Andrew Weinberg, "New Kuwaiti Justice Minister Has Deep Extremist Ties," *The National Interest*, January 16, 2014. (http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/new-kuwaiti-justice-minister-has-deep-extremist-ties-9719)

[36] David Cohen, "Remarks of Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen before the Center for a New American Security on 'Confronting New Threats in Terrorist Financing'," *Remarks before the Center for a New American Security*, March 4, 2014. (http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2308.aspx)

[37] David Andrew Weinberg, "New Kuwaiti Justice Minister Has Deep Extremist Ties," *The National Interest*, January 16, 2014; (http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/new-kuwaiti-justice-minister-has-deep-extremist-ties-9719) & Thomas Joscelyn, "Syrian Rebel Leader Was Bin Laden's Courier, Now Zawahiri's Representative," *The Long War Journal*, December 17, 2013. (http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/12/aq_courier_rebel_leader_zawahiri.php)

[38] "Cabinet Resents US Official's Remarks Against Justice Min.," *Kuwait News Agency*, March 31, 2014; (http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2369707&Language=en) & David Cohen, "Remarks of Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen before the Center for a New American Security on 'Confronting New Threats in Terrorist Financing'," *Remarks before the Center for a New American Security*, March 4, 2014. (http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2308.aspx)

Amir.[39] News reports indicated that Nayef al-Ajmi submitted his resignation again last week and that this time it was finally accepted.[40] However, it is unclear if al-Ajmi has actually stepped down, since the Kuwaiti cabinet's official website continues to list him as the country's Minister for Justice and Islamic Affairs.[41]

Another prominent individual who symbolizes the Gulf's problem with terrorist finance is Qatar's Abdulrahman al-Nu'aymi, who was designated in December 2013 by the Treasury Department as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. Treasury's designation claimed that al-Nu'aymi had channeled millions of dollars to al Qaeda affiliates in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, and Somalia over the years and that most recently he had been caught transferring hundreds of thousands of dollars to Syria for Abu Khaled al-Suri.[42]

What is especially remarkable about al-Nu'aymi is that he was a publicly visible figure: as a professor at Qatar University, the head of a human rights group, the co-founder of a charity associated with a member of the royal family, reportedly even as the former head of the Qatar Football Association.[43] If Qatari authorities were unaware of his actions, then it was almost certainly an act of negligence on their part. Nor is there any sign that Qatari authorities have acted against al-Nu'aymi since his designation.[44]

More broadly, both Kuwait and Qatar have acted as a transit point, permitting private citizens to openly solicit donations from radical donors in other Gulf states that have more restrictive regimes for combating terrorist finance.[45] The State

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[39] David Andrew Weinberg. "Kuwait's Embattled Justice Minister Part of Deeper Terror Finance Problem," *The National Interest,* April 10, 2014. (http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/kuwaits-embattled-justice-minister-part-deeper-terror-financ-10225)

[40] Karen DeYoung, "Kuwait Official Quits Post; U.S. Accused Him of Funding Extremist Fighters in Syria," *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2014. (http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/kuwait-official-quits-post-us-accused-him-of-funding-extremist-fighters-in-syria/2014/05/12/31a8df86-d9fb-11e3-8009-71de85b9c527_story.html)

[41] "Council of Ministers," *The Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait's Website*, accessed May 21, 2014. (http://www.pm.gov.kw/en/government/councilOfMinisters.jsp)

[42] U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, "Treasury Designates Al-Qa'ida Supporters in Qatar and Yemen," December 18, 2013. (http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/pages/jl2249.aspx)

[43] Joby Warrick & Tik Root. "Islamic Charity Officials Gave Millions to al-Qaeda. U.S. Says," *The Washington Post,* December 22, 2013. (http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/islamic-charity-officials-gave-millions-to-al-qaeda-us-says/2013/12/22/e0c53ad6-69b8-11e3-a0b9-249bbb34602c_story.html)

[44] "Qatar Rights Advocate Hit by U.S. Sanctions Denies al Qaeda Ties," *Reuters*, December 23, 2013. (http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/12/23/uk-qatar-usa-rights-idUKBRE9BM0GJ20131223)

[45] Thomas Joscelyn. "Popular Saudi Cleric Endorses Islamic Front, Calls For Cooperation with al Qaeda," *The Long War Journal*, December 14, 2013; (http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/12/popular_saudi_sheikh.php?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=popular-saudi-cleric-endorses-islamic-front-calls-for-cooperation-with-al-qaeda#) & Elizabeth Dickinson. "Playing with Fire: Why Private Gulf Financing for Syria's Extremist Rebels Risks Igniting Sectarian Conflict at Home," *The Brookings Institution*, December 2013. (http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2013/12/06%20private%20gulf%20financing%20

Department's most recent country reports on terrorism indicated that for the entire 2013 calendar year Qatar's financial intelligence unit (FIU) only referred a single suspicious transaction for investigation, and as of the year's end even that case had prompted no judgments.[46]

Members of Congress signed onto a letter last year raising concern about Qatar's ongoing sponsorship of the Palestinian terrorist movement Hamas.[47] Since then, Doha's rulers have pledged $5 million for a fund to support Palestinians whose family members were killed in internecine fighting between Hamas and Fatah as part of the recent unity deal to bring Hamas back into the Palestinian Authority.[48]

Kuwait refuses to take action against the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, a humanitarian relief organization that has been blacklisted by America and the United Nations for providing material aid to al Qaeda.[49] Despite finally passing a law criminalizing terror finance in May of last year, the country's FIU still does not appear to be operable.[50] On the plus side, Kuwait's Ministry of Social Affairs recently declared a fundraising campaign for radical Syrian rebels illegal after years of turning a blind eye to such efforts.[51]

The Struggle for Reform

Bahrain:

Although none of the GCC states experienced a regime change during the Arab Spring, citizens in every country adopted more demanding expectations for government accountability. Governments in the region pledged massive handouts to the public, made some limited gestures toward reform, and cracked down hard on

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syria%20extremist%20rebels%20sectarian%20conflict%20dickinson/private%20gulf%20financing%20syria%20extremist%20rebels%20sectarian%20conflict%20dickinson.pdf)

[46] U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2013," April 2014, page 167. (http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/225886.pdf)

[47] Jonathan Schanzer, "Confronting Qatar's Hamas Ties," *Politico*, July 10, 2013. (http://www.politico.com/story/2013/07/congress-qatar-stop-funding-hamas-93965.html)

[48] Fares Akram & Jodi Rudoren, "Legacy of Hamas-Fatah Killings Complicates Palestinian Unity Efforts," *The New York Times*, May 19, 2014. (http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/20/world/middleeast/fatah-and-hamas-reconciliation-in-gaza-city.html?_r=1)

[49] Jonathan Schanzer & Steven Miller, "Saudi Clerics Funnel Cash to Syrian Rebels Through Terror Group," *The Weekly Standard*, June 12, 2012. (http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/saudi-clerics-funnel-cash-syrian-rebels-through-terror-group_647141.html)

[50] U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2013," April 2014, page 152. (http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/225886.pdf)

[51] Karen DeYoung, "Kuwait Official Quits Post; U.S. Accused Him of Funding Extremist Fighters in Syria," *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2014. (http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/kuwait-official-quits-post-us-accused-him-of-funding-extremist-fighters-in-syria/2014/05/12/31a8df86-d9fb-11e3-8009-71de85b9c527_story.html)

advocates of reform.[52] All of these countries are expected to face massive, long-term reckonings with regard to demographic, economic, and political realities.

Bahrain was the only regime in the Gulf that faced a real risk of overthrow since the outbreak of the Arab Spring. An autocratic Sunni monarchy ruling over a majority Shi'ite population, the Khalifa family has understandably faced major pressures to yield authority to a parliament that better represents the demographic makeup of its nation's people. Demonstrations in 2011 were met with brutal repression involving the death of scores of protesters as well as the systematic and deliberate use of excessive force, including torture.[53]

The protests in Bahrain were driven by indigenous grievances, such as extensive economic and political discrimination as well as calls by reformist Sunnis and Shi'ites alike for a constitutional monarchy and more responsive political system.[54] However, the Islamic Republic of Iran has predictably sought to take advantage of this situation by providing more than mere encouragement to radical elements of the Bahraini opposition.

Iranian support for violent groups in Bahrain is real and significant. Open source indicators of such support during the last year include the interception of a massive weapons shipment from Iraq containing weapons of Iranian and Syrian origin such as C4 explosives, the interception of wanted Bahraini individuals allegedly receiving training from Iran as insurgents, and the seizure of a weapons storehouse in Bahrain that U.S. officials believe was from Iran.[55]

Due to both Iranian interference and political polarization, Bahrain has found itself in the grips of ongoing violent turmoil on the ground. Peaceful protests do take place with government permission, but more often unauthorized demonstrations occur in Shi'ite villages virtually every night. Acts of thuggery such as tire burnings and Molotov cocktails represent a similarly frequent occurrence. Terrorist networks linked to Iran have begun building hundreds of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) inside Bahrain for use against police and government facilities.[56]

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[52] Elizabeth Dickinson, "Sire, How Much Would You Spend to Stop the Next Arab Spring?," *The New Republic*, September 1, 2013. (http://www.newrepublic.com/article/114542/silent-arab-springs)

[53] "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry," *The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, December 10, 2011. (http://www.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf)

[54] Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring That Wasn't*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), pages 33-49.

[55] Samantha Stainburn, "Bahrain finds Iranian and Syrian weapons in security raids" *The Global Post*, December 31, 2013; (http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/131230/bahrain-finds-iranian-and-syrian-weapons-security-raids) & U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2013," April 2014; (http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/225886.pdf) & Habib Toumi, "Bahrain Suspects 'Trained at Iran Camps'," *Gulf News*, January 2, 2014. (http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-suspects-trained-at-iran-camps-1.1273366)

[56] Simeon Kerr, "Explosion in Bahrain Raises Tensions in Gulf," *Financial Times*, March 4, 2014. (http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f4c1b5a4-a2e9-11e3-9685-00144feab7de.html)

Meanwhile, acts of mistreatment and reports of torture by the security forces continue. Not a single senior Bahraini official has been held accountable for the deaths of peaceful protesters in 2011.[57] Political prisoners from major opposition factions continue to linger in prison, and the top leaders of the main Shi'ite opposition party, Al-Wefaq, face trumped up charges that could land them behind bars as well.[58] According to rights groups, security forces in Bahrain use supposedly non-lethal weapons such as teargas and birdshot with excessive force in incidents that have led to dozens of deaths and injuries.[59]

However, there is also some good news out of Bahrain. Prominent rights advocate Nabeel Rajab will have served his full two-year sentence for peaceful activism later this week and presumably should be released.[60] More broadly, with the support of King Hamad, Crown Prince Salman undertook a bold move in January to relaunch stalled political dialogue with the opposition.[61] Both men deserve praise for this development.

Since then, the government in Manama has been engaged in bilateral meetings with all parties to the dialogue, and indications suggest these talks seem substantive and are aimed at a deal that would enable members of the opposition not to boycott upcoming parliamentary elections this fall.

The outlines for such a deal are clear. The elected Council of Representatives in Bahrain should be empowered with the ability to decide who the prime minister appoints to his cabinet. The Council's membership should be decided based on a fairer redistricting that allows Shi'ite parties to realistically contest a majority of seats. Any such agreement could also include a road map that provides a long-term political horizon for both sides, as well as confidence building measures such as the release of political prisoners and cooperation against violence on the ground.

Human Rights:

[57] U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013," 2013. (http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2013&dlid=220348#wrapper)
[58] Z.H., "Bahrain Still Stalling," *The Economist*, November 7, 2013. (http://www.economist.com/blogs/pomegranate/2013/11/Bahrain)
[59] Kareem Fahim, "Rights Group Warns Against Bahrain's Use of Tear Gas Against Protesters," *The New York Times*, October 22, 2013. (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/23/world/middleeast/rights-group-warns-against-tear-gas-abuse-by-bahrain.html?_r=0)
[60] "Bahrain: The Authorities Must Release Nabeel Rajab Now," *Amnesty International*, May 19, 2014. (http://www.amnesty.fr/AI-en-action/Protegeons-les-personnes/Defenseur-des-Droits-Humains/Actualites/Bahrein-les-autorites-doivent-liberer-maintenant-Nabeel-Rajab-11714)
[61] Justin Gengler, "Bahrain's Crown Prince Makes His Move," *Foreign Policy*, January 20, 2014. (http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2014/01/20/bahrains_crown_prince_makes_his_move)

In its most recent survey of global human rights, Freedom House ranks every member of the GCC as "not free" except Kuwait, which is only marginally better.[62] Saudi Arabia is the worst offender in this group, as Amnesty International warns that the Kingdom is undergoing a "sustained crackdown on human rights activists."[63] But other countries in the region are not far behind.

Numerous independent sources point to a pervasive problem with forced labor in Qatar, leading the world's largest federation of trade unions to warn that more people may die in preparations for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar than soccer players will take to the field.[64] Qatari authorities announced several new proposals this month for labor reforms, but such measures must be implemented swiftly and effectively in order to affect conditions on the ground.[65]

The United Arab Emirates recently convicted scores of nonviolent Islamists for conspiring to overthrow the government. Foggy Bottom has noted allegations that these individuals were subject to "beatings, electric shocks, and exposure to extremes of temperature while in solitary confinement" and that "guards threatened them with HIV infection, sexual abuse, death, or further torture for not admitting to charges."[66]

According to U.S. government reporting, in Oman "the media generally does not operate freely," and Amnesty International reports that in Oman "over 30 human rights activists and government critics became prisoners of conscience" in 2013.[67] Bahrain tried to impose new regulations in 2013 banning political organizations from contacts with foreign diplomats except in cases of official permission.[68] Kuwait denies citizenship to approximately 100,000 stateless individuals known as *bidoon* and has reportedly tortured several young bidoon activists.[69]

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[62] "Freedom in the World 2014: Middle East and Africa," *Freedom House*, 2014, page 2. (http://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Middle%20East%20and%20North%20Africa%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf)

[63] Amnesty International, Press Release, "Saudi Arabia Must Back Concessions on Human Rights with Action," March 19, 2014. (https://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/saudi-arabia-must-back-concessions-human-rights-action-2014-03-19)

[64] David Andrew Weinberg, "The World Cup and Lobbying Don't Mix," *Al Arabiya*, December 12, 2013. (http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2013/12/12/The-World-Cup-and-lobbying-don-t-mix.html)

[65] Doha News Team, "Live Updates: Government Announces Labor Reforms," *Doha News*, May 14, 2014. (http://dohanews.co/live-updates-government-announces-labor-reforms/) & Simeon Kerr, "Qatar Labour Reforms Fail to East Concern over Working Conditions," *Financial Times*, May 14, 2104 (http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/c6c0269a-db7e-11e3-a460-00144feabdc0.html#axzz32N8lD5Vx)

[66] U.S. Department of State, "2013 Human Rights Reports: United Arab Emirates," February 27, 2014. (http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013/nea/220380.htm)

[67] U.S. Department of State, "2013 Human Rights Reports: Oman," February 27, 2014; (http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013/nea/220371.htm) & "Annual Report: Oman 2013," *Amnesty International*, May 23, 2013. (http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/annual-report-oman-2013)

[68] "Bahrain Opposition Defies Ban on Meeting Diplomats," *AP*, September 19, 2013. (http://news.yahoo.com/bahrain-opposition-defies-ban-meeting-diplomats-121008682.html)

[69] "Kuwait: No Response to Torture Allegation," *Human Rights Watch*, April 2, 2014; (http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/02/kuwait-no-response-torture-allegation) & U.S. Department of State,

A great deal of media attention is garnered by women's activists in Saudi Arabia who seek the right to drive, but American officials should also raise concerns about the country's restrictive guardianship system, which forces women to rely on their male relatives – in some cases young children – for permission to pursue basic life choices such as work, education, and medical care.[70] Similarly, officials up to the level of the President should consistently raise cases of prisoners of conscience with regional officials.

More broadly, American officials should make clear to their Gulf counterparts that we are prepared to help them address long-term challenges to stability but only if they are prepared to treat rights defenders and peaceful advocates of reform as potential partners, not a security menace. Such measures should include amending Saudi Arabia's draconian terrorism list, ending the abuse of special security courts to convict nonviolent activists, and abolishing statutes in several Gulf countries that treat criticism of the ruler as a criminal offense.

Energy Security

It is a common, tempting fallacy that America will no longer need the Gulf in several years because we will soon have less need for oil imported from abroad. Yet because hydraulic fracturing produces a different kind of oil than America imports from the Gulf, we actually import more crude today from the GCC states than we did before the start of the shale energy boom.[71] And concerns about energy aside, U.S. security interests in the Gulf will likely endure for the foreseeable future.

Our national interests do overlap with the Gulf states in several key areas when it comes to energy policy. Both sides seek a stable global market that can withstand major supply disruptions without fluctuations in oil prices. Both sides seek to ensure that the global economy grows at a steady pace, which would ensure continued growth in demand for oil.

However, when it comes to America's burgeoning energy independence, our interests with the Gulf states diverge. All three of the Gulf's top energy producers have been indirectly bankrolling efforts that would reduce America's growing energy independence.

The American Petroleum Institute, which allegedly receives tens of millions of dollars per year from Saudi Aramco, is funding a lobbying campaign to reduce

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"Kuwait 2013 Human Rights Report." April 19, 2013, page 14. (http://photos.state.gov/libraries/kuwait/63599/PDF/hrr2013.pdf)

[70] "World Report 2013: Saudi Arabia." *Human Rights Watch Website*, accessed on May 21, 2014. (http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/saudi-arabia)

[71] "Data Focus – Has U.S. Reliance on OPEC Persian Gulf Oil Been Falling?," *The Economist*, March 28, 2014. (http://www.eiu.com/industry/article/951675879/has-us-reliance-on-opec-persian-gulf-oil-been-falling/2014-03-28)

blend-in requirements for renewable fuels here in the U.S., which in turn would earn foreign oil producers several billion dollars a year.[72] The United Arab Emirates has provided funding for Hollywood film projects that preach about the evils of fracking and deep-sea oil drilling in the United States.[73] And Qatar's television network Al Jazeera America has promoted systematically biased journalism on energy issues that selectively plays up only the potential costs of fracking without seriously grappling with any of the technique's noteworthy strategic or economic benefits.[74]

Part of this issue points to a problem with how foreign interests are represented here in the United States. The Foreign Agents Registration Act implemented in the 1930s is obsolete, leaving numerous loopholes for foreign powers flush with cash, such as the Gulf states, to promote their views through indirect, undeclared means. Members of Congress could do a great deal to update this law by tightening the requirements for public declarations when American entities receive multi-million dollar donations from foreign principals that could have a political motive in mind.

Finally, these efforts to obstruct America's energy revolution point to the fact that we will never achieve true energy independence while crude oil remains a strategic commodity that our economy cannot do without. Moving forward, the U.S. government can pursue three main measures to ensure real energy security: (1) continue to promote hydraulic fracturing whenever it is economically and environmentally sustainable, (2) adopt a national strategy for achieving fuel choice in the transportation sector, and (3) continue to promote efforts that move America's energy sector away from petroleum toward renewables in the long term.

Recommendations for Policy

Because of these significant and pressing challenges, I would respectfully submit the following recommendations for U.S. policy toward the Gulf:

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[72] "Bankrolling Smear Campaign against America's Renewable Fuels," *Americans United For Change Website*, April 30, 2014. (http://www.americansunitedforchange.org/press/releases/new_tv_ad_exposes_saudi_oil_bankrolling_smear_campaign_against_americas_ren/) "Factsheet: Saudi Oil Money Helps Finance Attacks on American Ethanol, IRS Records Show," *Americans United for Change Website*, April 30, 2014 (http://aufc.3cdn.net/4ca8d30688c1fd3311_o7m6ivyyd.pdf)

[73] Susan Schmidt, "Lobbying Through The Silver Screen," *The National Interest*, October 3, 2012; (http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/lobbying-through-the-silver-screen-7647) & "Deepwater Horizon's Final Hour Goes to Summit and Participant," *Internet Movie Database*, March 8, 2011. (http://www.imdb.com/news/ni8392763/)

[74] Aaron Ernst, "The Dark Side of the Oil Boom: Human Trafficking in the Heartland," *Al Jazeera America*, April 28, 2014; (http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/articles/2014/4/28/the-dark-side-oftheoilboomhumantraffickingintheheartland.html) & Alex Halperin, "Texas: When Fracking Comes to Town," *Al Jazeera America*, April 27, 2014; (http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/articles/2014/4/28/the-dark-side-oftheoilboomhumantraffickingintheheartland.html) & "Dirty Power: America's Energy Revolution," *Al Jazeera America Website*, accessed on May 21, 2014. (http://america.aljazeera.com/topics/topic/issue/energy-revolution.html)

1. **No Deal is Better than a Bad Deal on Iran.** This is particularly important with regard to U.S. credibility in the Gulf, where our allies worry the temptation of a foreign policy win could outweigh our motivations for holding firm on essential prerequisites for a comprehensive nuclear deal with Iran. As administration officials have repeatedly indicated, an agreement with the P5+1 that gives Iran the capability and incentives to continue pursuing nuclear weapons would be far more harmful than a stalemate in negotiations.[75]

2. **Show U.S. Resolve on Stopping the IRGC.** America's allies in the Gulf are exploring tentative engagement with Iran in order to diminish the potential fallout for their interests of U.S.-Iran détente. However, they remain fundamentally concerned about the depth, breadth, and severity of Iranian-sponsored terrorism and subversion in their own backyard. If America is truly serious about reassuring its GCC allies, then it must prove we are not seeking to embrace Iran while such interference continues. Rather, Washington should insist on opening a negotiating forum alongside the nuclear file for pressuring Iran to stop its radical regional activity, and we should plan to bring our Gulf allies to the table.

3. **Appoint a Special Envoy for Relations with the Gulf.** The fact that President Obama visited Saudi Arabia in March for the express purpose of spending some time face to face with King Abdullah highlights the exceptional importance of personal relationships among top leaders in this region.[76] The fact that they spent only two hours together suggests those relations are not going particularly well.[77] Because there is a significant trust deficit among top leaders and there is only so much time that the President or cabinet-level officials can spend in the region, the administration should appoint a special envoy who can regain the trust of the GCC's rulers. This envoy should have high-level familiarity with the issues, be given access to the White House, and not have recent ties to private business or lobbying firms with financial interests in the region.

4. **Warn Kuwait and Qatar on Terrorism Finance.** Several Gulf states are continuing to permit al Qaeda and other jihadist groups to use their territory to raise very significant sums of money. The United States should keep up the pace of terrorist designations for individuals tied to terrorist finance, and we

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[75] JTA, "Kerry on Iran: 'No Deal Is Better Than A Bad Deal'," *Jewish Journal*, March 3, 2014; (http://www.jewishjournal.com/nation/article/kerry_on_iran_no_deal_is_better_than_a_bad_deal) & "Obama Tells Saudi King U.S. Will Not Agree Bad Deal With Iran," *Reuters*, March 28, 2014. (http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2014-03-28/news/sns-rt-us-obama-saudi-differences-20140328_1_president-obama-saudi-king-abdullah-bad-deal)

[76] Carrie Budoff Brown, "Obama Meets with Saudi King to 'Look Him in The Eyes'," *Politico*, March 28, 2014. (http://www.politico.com/story/2014/03/obama-king-abdullah-saudi-arabia-iran-syria-105151.html)

[77] Jeff Mason & Steve Holland, "Obama Seeks to Reassure Saudi Arabia Over Iran, Syria," *Reuters*, March 28, 2014. (http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/28/us-obama-saudi-idUSBREA2R15O20140328)

should not shy away from broadening this list to include foreign officials when their governments turn a blind eye to fundraising by terrorists.

5. **Release the Saudi Textbooks Report.** More than ten years after 9/11, the State Department was right to commission a comprehensive study of hate and incitement to violence in official Saudi textbooks. However, the Department privileged cordial diplomatic relations over American interests by choosing to withhold the results of that study from the public eye. The U.S. government should underline its commitment to fighting terrorism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia by releasing this study without delay.

6. **Hold Saudi Arabia Accountable for Violations of Religious Freedom.** The textbooks issue is just one of many areas where Saudi Arabia is arguably the worst violator of religious freedom anywhere in the world. As called for by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, the administration should revoke the Kingdom's indefinite waiver from penalties under the International Religious Freedom Act and instead grant a non-renewable, time-delimited waiver for working with Saudi authorities to achieve tangible results on the ground such as hate-free textbooks and the release of prisoners of conscience in jail for their religious beliefs.[78]

7. **Urge the Saudis to Fix their Terror List.** Saudi Arabia broke new ground this spring by ordering mandatory penalties for anybody who provides support to radical groups on the country's new terrorism list. However, given that the list was reportedly generated as a gesture to Washington before President Obama's trip to meet with the King, the U.S. bears special responsibility for urging Riyadh to resolve problematic elements of the list.[79] Such examples include its omission of Hamas and Hezbollah's main branches, as well as its harsh penalties for atheism or peaceful demonstrations.[80]

8. **Encourage the Dialogue Process in Bahrain.** With elections coming up later this year, Bahrain is reaching a decision point on whether or not a deal with the mainstream political opposition is achievable. The United States should praise the King and Crown Prince for restarting the national dialogue and encourage all parties to set realistic expectations for how much they can expect from the other side. However, Washington should also be prepared to impose penalties on one or both sides if a deal is not reached in time for elections, depending upon who is responsible for the continued stalemate.

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[78] U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Annual Report 2014," 2014. (http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRF%202014%20Annual%20Report%20PDF.pdf)

[79] "Saudi Arabia and Qatar Will Each Seek an Accommodation With Iran in Light of US-Iranian Rapprochement." *IHS Janes 360*, March 10, 2014. (http://www.janes.com/article/35151/saudi-arabia-and-qatar-will-each-seek-an-accommodation-with-iran-in-light-of-us-iranian-rapprochement)

[80] David Andrew Weinberg, "Saudi Arabia Moves Against the Muslim Brotherhood," *FDD Policy Brief*, March 7, 2014. (http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/saudi-arabia-moves-against-the-muslim-brotherhood/)

9. **Support women's rights and rights defenders.** Rulers in the Gulf like to style themselves as champions of progress and moderation, but there is no better barometer of their true intentions than how they treat women and defenders of human rights. The United States should press Gulf states to stop arresting rights defenders and to empower women to participate equally in public life. Most notably, Saudi women should be granted the right to drive, and the country's oppressive guardianship system should be abolished.

10. **Meet America's Own Energy Challenges.** We share an interest in helping the Gulf states address skyrocketing domestic energy consumption in order to free up more crude oil for export to the global market. However, our interests with the GCC significantly diverge when it comes to American energy independence. The U.S. government should continue to promote the use of hydraulic fracturing at home when economically and environmentally viable, and it should use the resulting increase in oil and natural gas as a bridge to more lasting energy solutions. This includes generating a national strategy for fuel choice in the transportation sector and increasing renewable energy supplies to shift away from fossil fuels in the longer term.

11. **Fix the System for Foreign Lobbyists.** The original intention of the 1938 Foreign Agents Registration Act was that individuals representing the interests of foreign governments in a "political or quasi-political" manner should publicly disclose the nature of those ties.[81] Yet the specific requirements of that law are obsolete and fail to achieve its core purpose.[82] Because they are flush with energy revenues, the Gulf states give hundreds of millions of dollars in the law's gray zones to U.S. persons, charities, and institutions, often with an eye toward advancing foreign interests in internal American political debates. Congress should examine ways to tighten the rules for entities receiving multimillion dollar donations from abroad that seem to have a political objective in mind.

12. **Engage Gulf States on the Muslim Brotherhood.** Although Washington should not take sides in the current GCC spat over Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood, it should encourage the mitigation of this dispute because it endangers collective security efforts in such fields as missile defense and maritime cooperation.[83] The United States should explain its

[81] U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Resource Manual, "2062 Foreign Agents Registration Act Enforcement," accessed May 21, 2014. (http://www.justice.gov/usao/eousa/foia_reading_room/usam/title9/crm02062.htm)
[82] Bill Allison, "Ukraine Lobbying Exposes Holes in Foreign Agent Registration," *The Sunlight Foundation Website*, February 12, 2014. (https://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2014/02/12/ukraine-lobbying-exposes-holes-in-foreign-agent-registration/)
[83] Taimur Khan, "Strained Relations Within GCC Affect US Security Interests," *The National*, March 11, 2014. (http://www.thenational.ae/world/saudi-arabia/strained-relations-within-gcc-affect-us-security-interests#full)

> concerns to Qatar about empowering the Muslim Brotherhood in places like Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, and Sudan. Similarly, officials should explain to the other Gulf states why they need to meet a higher standard of evidence if they want us to consider designating the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group. Meanwhile, the United States should work with these countries in the Gulf to ensure that their aid to post-Brotherhood Egypt is used effectively and encourages Egyptian authorities to pursue structural economic reforms and some modicum of political moderation and inclusivity moving forward.[84]

Esteemed Members of Congress, I thank you for the opportunity to address you on America's security relations with the Gulf, and I eagerly look forward to your questions.

[84] Richard LeBaron, "Building a Better US-Gulf Partnership," *The Atlantic Council*, December 2013. (http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Building_a_Better_US-Gulf_Relationship.pdf)

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Dr. Weinberg.
Mr. Henderson.

STATEMENT OF MR. SIMON HENDERSON, BAKER FELLOW AND DIRECTOR, GULF AND ENERGY POLICY PROGRAM, THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY

Mr. HENDERSON. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about such a critical and timely issue.

Despite the prosperity of the GCC member states—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman—I cannot recall a time when disunity in the alliance has been so obvious, prospects for reconciliation so poor and implications for the Middle East region and perhaps the rest of the world so bad.

The GCC states have three features that distinguish them from most of the Arab world. They are on what they perceive as the front line of Sunni Islam adhered to by most of the Arab world against Shi'ite Islam, which has been led since the 1979 Islamic revolution by non-Arab Persian Iran.

They are all also oil-based economies and, although not democratic, their political systems are paternalistic rather than dictatorial. The GCC has been a bulwark against instability since it was established in 1981, less than a year after the start of the Iran-Iraq War.

While the battles of that war raged, the GCC member states were collectively able to avoid being dragged into the conflict. They established themselves as a third power bloc in the region without having to align themselves too openly with fellow Arab leader Saddam Hussein against the threat of destabilization initiated by Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution.

The recent events in the last few years of the so-called Arab Spring have had an impact on these countries and which have only been nation states for a few decades. Now their immediate political future, given an almost nuclear Iran, is uncertain.

To make matters worse, the trend line of their greatest asset, their hydrocarbons, is bad. In 10 or, more likely, 20 years an energy glut, comparatively speaking, is predicted for North America—that is, Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, considered collectively—which will likely hammer oil and natural gas prices.

So even if the GCC's member states collectively have more than 30 percent of the world's oil and more than 20 percent of the world's natural gas, lower prices would probably spell disaster for their relatively undiversified economies.

Further to this, there has opened in the last few months a wide schism essentially between Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE against Qatar, with the other two states of Kuwait and Oman standing on the sidelines.

Apparently there had been a row about this last year, which was unreported, but had led to a peace agreement in late November 2013.

But this year, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE decided Qatar was not living up to its side of the bargain and announced the withdrawal of their ambassadors. It is hard for me to see a situation whereby this can be reconciled immediately and this is some-

thing which it is very important for the United States to work on particularly because it is not a one-off from this year and last year.

But the division between Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain on one side and the rest of the GCC on the other mirrors pretty exactly what happened in 2011 when Saudi Arabian and UAE forces entered into Bahrain to help provide some calm in the disturbances there.

An additional danger for the United States is the age of the rulers, particularly of Saudi Arabia where King Abdullah is in ill health and there appears to be what might well be a family feud going on in the house of Saud.

I therefore recommend that the U.S. links with the GCC states and need to be worked on and a special envoy should be appointed and the U.S. should seek to engage as an honest broker in helping to overcome their disagreements.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Henderson follows:]

The Gulf Cooperation Council: Deepening Rifts and Emerging Challenges

Simon Henderson
Baker Fellow and Director of the Gulf and Energy Policy Program
Testimony submitted to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
May 22, 2014

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about such a critical and timely issue.

I have spent most of my life writing about the Persian Gulf region. I was a reporter for the *Financial Times* in Tehran during the 1978-79 Iranian revolution and the 1979-80 U.S. embassy hostage crisis. In September 1980, I covered the southern Gulf for the *Financial Times* at the start of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. In 1991, my biography of Saddam Hussain was published.[1] In 2003, I wrote a study of the GCC states and U.S. strategy for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.[2] In the last three years, I have traveled to the Gulf six times, including a visit to the carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* as it conducted flight operations 30 miles off the coast of Iran.[3] My most recent trip—to Dubai and Doha—was just last month.

Despite the prosperity of the GCC member states—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman—I cannot recall a time when disunity in the alliance has been so obvious, prospects for reconciliation so poor, and implications for the Middle East region, and perhaps the rest of the world, so bad. After briefly reviewing the history and internal dynamics of the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as the current relations of the United States with its individual members, I will follow with recommendations on ways to improve ties and ameliorate risks.

The GCC states have three features that distinguish them from most of the Arab world:

1. They are on what they perceive as the frontline of Sunni Islam, adhered to by most of the Arab world, against Shiite Islam, which has been led, since the 1979 Islamic revolution, by non-Arab, Persian Iran.
2. They are all oil-based economies.
3. Although not democratic, their political systems are paternalistic rather than dictatorial.

Looking at these in turn:

[1] *Instant Empire: Saddam Hussein's Ambition for Iraq* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1991).
[2] *The New Pillar: Conservative Arab Gulf States and U.S. Strategy,* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003).
[3] http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/03/27/danger_zone

The Sunni/Shiite Divide

The Gulf Cooperation Council has been a bulwark against instability since it was established in 1981, less than a year after the start of the Iran-Iraq war. While the battles of that war raged, the GCC member states were collectively able to avoid being dragged into the conflict. They established themselves as the third power bloc in the region, without having to align themselves too openly with fellow Arab leader Saddam Hussein against the threat of destabilization initiated by Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution.

Energy

The importance of the GCC states rests chiefly with their oil reserves, even if, when compared to the Gulf region as a whole, they found oil late in the game. Oil was first discovered in Iran in 1908 and in Iraq in 1927. The first oil on the southern side of the Gulf was found in Bahrain in 1931. In comparison, Saudi Arabia, which now has the largest reserves of conventional oil in the world—between a sixth and a quarter of the total depending how you do the math[4]—found its first oil only in 1938, and production did not take off until 1941. Oil was not found in Abu Dhabi, the leading emirate of the UAE, until 1958, but it is now estimated to have around 6 percent of the world's reserves. And even though shale oil has been discovered in large quantities in recent years in the United States and elsewhere, Persian Gulf oil is far cheaper to exploit, a crucial commercial advantage.

Natural gas is also significant. Qatar has the third largest reserves in the world after Russia and Iran, and is the world's biggest exporter of LNG. The UAE and Oman also export LNG, primarily to Asia.

Another distinguishing feature of the conservative Gulf Arab states is their small populations. Saudi Arabia is the largest, with a population of around 27 million, although this total probably includes at least 7 million expatriates. The smallest is Qatar, with a population of around 2 million, but perhaps as few as 10 percent, 200,000, are actual Qatari citizens.

High revenues from energy exports and relatively small populations have made the GCC countries rich, some of them fabulously rich. Kuwait and Bahrain were the first sheikhdoms to approach the status of world-class city-states such as Singapore and Hong Kong, though these have been overtaken by Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Doha.

Nevertheless, this arrival on the world stage coincides with the region's collapse into political turmoil. They have only been nation-states for a few decades, yet their immediate political future, given an almost-nuclear Iran and the turmoil of the Arab Spring, is uncertain. To make matters worse, the trend line of their greatest asset—their hydrocarbons—is bad. In ten, or more likely twenty years, an energy glut is predicted for North America (Canada, the U.S. and Mexico), which will hammer oil and natural gas prices. So, even if the GCC member states collectively have more than 30 percent of the world's oil and more than 20 percent of the world's natural gas, lower prices would probably spell disaster for the relatively undiversified economies of the Gulf Arabs.

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[4] http://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/about-bp/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy-2013.html

Political Structure

Since 1981, the Gulf states have seen crises come and go, but with the exception of Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, have themselves been spared political catastrophe. Indeed, one could make the argument that their quasi-monarchial-but-listening approach to government and administration has worked well. It hardly fits into the democracy playbook of liberals in the United States and Europe—and it's certainly tough on individuals who have been jailed for tweeting and the like—but the overall success of the Gulf Arab semi-monarchial model has been in marked contrast to the deficiencies of the republican dictatorships in countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya.

Of course, the populations of the GCC are not immune to the aspirations for change and greater freedoms flooding the Arab world. But, so far, it seems that most prefer the status quo to the confusion, even chaos, of political change.

Created to blunt external threats, the GCC's major problem would appear to be the growing internal contradictions between its GCC member states. In early March 2014, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE announced the withdrawal of their ambassadors from Doha to protest Qatari meddling in the internal affairs of the other countries. Apparently, there had been a row about this last year, which had led to a "peace agreement" in late November 2013. But Qatar was not living up to its side of the bargain. The root cause of the crisis was Qatar's support of the Muslim Brotherhood, although this was unstated. Indeed, the November 2013 pact had never been revealed and the announcement of the withdrawal of ambassadors only emerged in a communique issued at the end of a meeting of GCC foreign ministers in Riyadh.

In this year's crisis, it is worth noting that the action was taken by the camp of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain. Kuwait, apart from mediating, and Qatar and Oman stood to one side. This largely reflects the division in early 2011 when substantial contingents of the Saudi national guard and UAE police arrived in Bahrain to support the government in quelling internal unrest. Kuwait's involvement was to send a small patrol vessel, while Oman sent a liaison officer. Qatar stood to one side.

Bilateral Relations with the United States

Saudi Arabia: Riyadh and Washington are at odds over the challenges facing the region. Riyadh emphasizes the dangers of a potentially nuclear Iran and is unhappy with the current diplomacy. Riyadh also supports the military-led regime in Cairo. The meeting outside Riyadh last month between President Obama and King Abdullah does not appear to have gone well. On top of this, the kingdom is facing a succession crisis that may be erupting into a family feud. King Abdullah is 91 years old this year and his half-brother and designated replacement, Crown Prince Salman, is 78. Neither man is in good physical health. Last weekend King Abdullah failed to have a public meeting with the visiting King of Spain. There are concerns about Salman's mental abilities. Competition to replace either man will likely be intense from sons and nephews, many of whom are more privileged than they are able. Stability in the kingdom is maintained by conservative attitudes and generous distribution of subsidies and government jobs. If the oil price falls, the government's ability to maintain these handouts will be lessened. Uncertainties for the future include a drop in oil exports as more energy is consumed at home. The populace has become used to highly subsidized prices for gasoline and electricity. Re-educating them will be a challenge.

Kuwait: Washington is angry at Kuwait for its imposition of rules that allow funds collected in the sheikhdom and elsewhere in the Gulf to reach jihadist groups fighting in Syria against the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Feuds in the ruling family are erupting publicly, challenging the authority of Kuwaiti ruler Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, 84 years old, with a lifetime of government service and experience but now in poor health.[5] The authority of the al-Sabah ruling family is limited by the high standing of other prominent families and a political system that makes for gridlock Once the most modern emirate in the Gulf, Kuwait has been overtaken by Qatar and the UAE, partly a consequence of never really recovering from the shock of Saddam Hussein's invasion in 1990. There must be a concern that, next time, American forces will not come galloping to the rescue. When Sabah retires or dies, the ruling family will nominate possible replacements but the final choice will be a compromise with the members of the national assembly.

Bahrain: Washington and Manama disagree about the way forward to resolve a political crisis that blew up in 2011 when government forces quashed demonstrations of mainly Shiite protestors, leading to the resignation of Shiite members of the national assembly. At the same time, the U.S. military is grateful for Bahrain's provision of port facilities for the U.S. Navy and its hosting of the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet. There appears to be a debate within the Bahrain royal family on whether compromises should be made. The lead conciliator is Crown Prince Salman, but he is opposed by hardliners, including the minister of the royal court and the commander-in-chief of the Bahrain Defense Forces, collectively known as the Khawalid. Some members of the royal family are angry at U.S. pressure and appear willing to risk the withdrawal of facilities provided for the U.S. military. King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa vacillates between the two factions. Failing political reforms, the more likely outcomes include more violence and fresh involvement by Saudi security forces. The House of Saud is anxious that violence in Bahrain does not spread to the kingdom and that political reforms do not encourage demands for matching gestures by Saudi Shiites. An outside possibility is that Saudi Arabia will seek political union with Bahrain.

Qatar: The relationship between Doha and Washington is close but tense. Qatar seems to almost enjoy annoying the United States, provoking Saudi Arabia, and being conciliatory towards Iran. The "enfant terrible" of the GCC, a status achieved under Sheikh Hamad (who abdicated in June 2013), is an even more accurate label for his son and successor, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, who is just 33. In regional terms, the interesting question may be how long will Saudi Arabia put up with the situation. The al-Thani is a large clan but many members are excluded from real political power. Riyadh has caused trouble in the past and could do so again.

United Arab Emirates: The ruler, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahyan, is unwell and has essentially already handed over the strings of power to his crown prince and half-brother, Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed, who is pro-American but, like many Gulf leaders, deeply skeptical of the Obama Administration. MbZ, as he is known, represents the new generation of Gulf leadership. He seems to fear the expansion of Iranian influence but is well aware that his biggest danger is a military confrontation with Iran, which would ruin the commercial viability of Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Oman: Sultan Qaboos usually shuns GCC meetings and can take positions unhelpful to the U.S. — that is, of course, until he can be helpful to Washington by facilitating secret talks with Iran before the diplomacy on the

[5] http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/05/08/kuwaits-royals-are-taking-their-feuds-public/

nuclear deal opened up. Although not as rich as other GCC member states, Oman's strategic position, on the southern side of the Strait of Hormuz, makes it vital for Gulf energy flows, even if the U.S. becomes effectively energy independent.

Although the GCC states have had and continue to have a dependence on the United States, it is doubtful that that they think they can rely on Washington for much longer, certainly not forever. The sensible way forward would be to develop their unity. There remains the prospect of cutting unpalatable deals with Iran. The GCC states would take a position of coerced neutrality, much as Finland did as a neighbor of the Soviet Union after the Second World War.[6] So far, perhaps with the exception of Oman and perhaps Qatar, this option is being rejected. But it makes for a worrying future.

Recommendations

1. U.S. links with the GCC states have been maintained and nurtured by State Department-led diplomacy and the efforts of the U.S. military with their GCC counterparts. But this is now insufficient. The Obama administration needs to articulate a more supportive overall policy concerning the Iranian nuclear and Syrian civil war issues in particular.
2. A U.S. special envoy to the GCC should be appointed to work with the GCC leadership so they can develop policies to resolve the challenges of aged leadership and a smooth transition to a new generation.
3. Given the possible repercussions from the tensions between some of the member states of the GCC, the U.S. should take the role of "honest broker" to at least lower the degree of antagonism.

[6] http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323495104578312642205201714

Mr. WEBER. Ambassador Seche, you are up.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE STEPHEN A. SECHE, SENIOR ANALYST, DENTONS US LLP (FORMER AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES TO YEMEN)

Ambassador SECHE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch, distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am very pleased to be able to take part in today's hearing, which offers a timely opportunity to assess U.S. relations with the Arab Gulf States and the nature of the relationships these nations maintain with each other.

As Ranking Member Deutch has already noted, much has been made in recent months of the rift between Washington and some of our key Gulf allies over U.S. policies in the region. We know well what these policies are and each of the speakers this morning has identified them—in short, Syria, Iran and Egypt.

These developments prompt two questions. Are the differences on these issues real and are they capable of inflicting permanent damage to our relationships with key Gulf partners. The answer to the first question is yes.

Gulf anxiety about U.S. policies in the region is genuine and needs to be addressed. As for the extent of damage these differences can inflict, I think the answer has got to be very little if we tend to our relationships carefully, explain ourselves clearly and leave no doubt that our commitment to Gulf security and stability is as strong today as it has been since FDR met with Abdulaziz Ibn Saud nearly 70 years ago.

If the administration can be faulted, I believe it is failing to respond promptly to the clear signals of impatience and concern issued by our GCC partners, particularly the Saudis, and for too often seeming to think that a public statement of support delivered by an administration spokesman standing in a briefing room in Washington will be sufficient to put Gulf anxieties to rest.

That said, I also believe that the administration has made up for its slow start by assembling an impressive list of senior-level visitors to the region including the President himself and the Secretaries of Commerce, State and Defense.

In fact, as has been noted, Defense Secretary Hagel has just convened a meeting of Gulf defense chiefs in Jeddah. This kind of personal diplomacy is essential and must be sustained. Secretary Hagel's message is that U.S. engagement with the Gulf States is intended to support and facilitate, not replace, stronger multilateral ties within the Gulf Cooperation Council.

This, in my judgement, is absolutely the right direction for the U.S. to take. Our GCC allies expect to be treated like mature reliable partners. Let them therefore overcome internal differences and work together to ensure their collective security.

It should not be construed as America walking away from its commitments to the security of the Gulf. We will maintain our forward military presence which includes 35,000 service men and women, our Navy's Fifth Fleet, advanced fighter aircraft and a wide array of missile defense capabilities.

Nevertheless, internal divisions and rivalries within the GCC conspire against the kind of unified planning the administration has been encouraging. On the one hand, Saudi Arabia and the

UAE, generally supported by Kuwait, are the most concerned about Muslim Brotherhood and Iranian intentions while Qatar and Oman define their interest somewhat differently and are less eager to accept Saudi dominance. Washington must be cognizant of these tensions and acknowledge that they are genuine and deep rooted while not accepting these differences as an excuse for the GCC states failing to take meaningful steps toward a coherent regional defense posture.

With regard to our own policy differences with our Gulf partners, I would like to briefly address the two that I consider to be the principal sources of tension—nuclear negotiations with Iran and our policy toward the civil war in Syria.

It is clear that the P5+1 negotiations have prompted Gulf States' fears that at the end of the day Tehran will be permitted to maintain some enrichment capacity and continue its destabilizing activities in the region. A couple of points on this.

First, if a deal can be struck, and I think that is still a very big if, the outcome will do much more to impede Tehran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon than the alternative, a limited military strike with much less potential for negative consequences around the world.

On the question of Iranian destabilizing behavior in the region, Secretary Hagel made it very clear that the P5 negotiations will under no circumstances trade away regional security for concessions on Iran's nuclear program.

Perhaps if the nuclear talks succeed a second expanded round can be convened immediately on the subject of Iran's relations with its neighbors, bringing the GCC to the table with P5+1.

Syria is a more difficult issue and an affront to our collective conscience and increasingly home to a metastasizing violent extremist movement. Gulf States are unhappy because President Obama has declined to join them in supporting the armed opposition with lethal assistance and for failing to enforce his own red line when evidence of chemical weapons used by the Assad regime became clear.

While we certainly have an interest in seeing Hezbollah's wings clipped in the Levant, I also believe as we address the situation in Syria we need to be very careful to avoid becoming a party to a campaign that has as much to do with sectarian dominance as it does good governance.

My bottom line is this. For all their public displays of unhappiness with the United States, our Gulf partners know well that no other nation can or will ensure their security as we have done for the past 70 years.

Our strategic interest in the Gulf will endure and with them our continued investment in the region's stability.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Seche follows:]

Written Statement submitted by Stephen A. Seche, Senior Analyst, Dentons US LLP

House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on May 22, 2014:

"The Gulf Cooperation Council: Deepening Rifts and Emerging Challenges"

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutsch, Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

I am very pleased to be able to take part in today's hearing, which offers a timely opportunity to assess the state of US relations with the Arab Gulf states, and the nature of the relationships these nations maintain with each other. In the first instance, much has been made in recent months of the rift between Washington and some of our key Gulf allies, in particular, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, because of unhappiness over US policy on some key issues in the region.

We know very well what these policies are: our unwillingness to provide lethal assistance to the Syrian opposition; our participation in the P5+1 negotiations designed to prevent Tehran from developing a nuclear weapon, and Washington's decision to support the popular revolt in Egypt that led to the ouster of long-time ally, Hosni Mubarak, and the emergence of a Muslim Brotherhood-led government.

These developments prompt two questions: are these differences real, and are they capable of inflicting permanent damage to our relationships with key Gulf partners? The answer to the first question is yes, Gulf anxiety about US policies in the region is genuine and needs to be addressed. As for the extent of damage these differences can inflict, I think the answer has got to be very little if we tend to our relationships carefully, explain ourselves clearly, and leave no doubt that our commitment to Gulf security and stability is as strong today as it has been since that historic moment in February 1945 when FDR sat with Abdul Aziz ibn Saud aboard the USS Quincy and laid the foundation for a relationship that has become one of the most important the US maintains anywhere in the world.

If the Administration can be faulted, I believe it is for failing to respond promptly to the clear signals of impatience and concern issued by our GCC partners, particularly the Saudis, and for too often seeming to think that a public statement of support delivered by an Administration spokesman standing in a briefing room in Washington DC would be sufficient to put Gulf anxieties to rest. That clearly is not the case.

That said, I also believe that the Administration has made up for its slow start by assembling an impressive list of senior-level visitors to the region, from the President and the secretaries of Commerce, State and Defense, to a host of other officials from the White House and executive-branch agencies. In fact, Defense Secretary Hagel just returned from Jeddah, where he convened a meeting of Gulf defense chiefs, a forum he made clear last December at the Manama Dialogue he wanted to revive. This kind of personal diplomacy is essential and must be sustained.

In his remarks in Jeddah, Secretary Hagel made a point that I think merits repeating: US engagement with the Gulf states "is intended to support and facilitate, not replace, stronger multilateral ties within

the Gulf Cooperation Council." This is, in my judgment, absolutely the right direction for the US to take. Our friends in the Gulf expect to be treated like mature, reliable partners, and one way for them to demonstrate that maturity is to assume a much greater share of the burden for their own defense by overcoming internal differences and working together.

This should not be construed as America walking away from its commitments to the security of the Gulf. We will maintain our forward military presence, which includes 35,000 servicemen and women, our Navy's Fifth Fleet, advanced fighter aircraft, sophisticated intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets, and a wide array of missile defense capabilities. But the most effective way for our Gulf partners to complement the advanced weaponry, air assets and human resources the US has placed at their disposal.is to develop an effective and collective regional defense network.

The ability of the GCC states to achieve this goal is not a foregone conclusion, given the internal divisions and rivalries that conspire against the kind of unified planning the Administration has been encouraging. One the one hand, Saudi Arabia and the UAE (generally supported by Kuwait), tend to be the most concerned about Muslim Brotherhood and Iranian intentions, while Qatar and Oman tend to adopt more accomodationist views, and are less eager to accept Saudi dominance. Washington must be cognizant of these tensions and acknowledge that they are genuine and deep-rooted. On the other hand, we should not accept these differences as an excuse for the GCC states failing to take meaningful steps towards a coherent, regional defense posture.

Which brings me back to our own differences with our Gulf partners, and the concerns that our regional policies have generated. In addition to the issues I mentioned earlier, Gulf states are paying close attention to our self-proclaimed interest in a "pivot" to Asia, to the prospect that America is poised to become the world's top energy producer, and to the effects of sequestration and defense-budget cuts on deployments, fearing that each of these will weaken the traditional base of our ties to the Gulf. For the purpose of this statement, I will limit my consideration to what I believe to be the two principal issues in play: the nuclear negotiations with Iran and our policy toward the civil war in Syria.

In the first instance, the ongoing P5+1 negotiations designed to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon have prompted Gulf states' fears that, at the end of the day, Tehran will be permitted to maintain some enrichment capacity, even as it pursues its destabilizing activities in the region. A couple of points on this: first, if a deal can be struck - and it is a big if - the outcome will do much more to impede Tehran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon than the other alternative course of action -- limited military strikes-- with much less potential for negative consequences. On the question of Iranian destabilizing behavior in the region, we have consciously kept "regional issues" off the table in order to maintain focus on how we can stop Iran's militarized nuclear program. But as Secretary Hagel said in Jeddah last week, and I believe this is true, the P5+1 negotiations "will under no circumstances trade away regional security for concessions on Iran's nuclear program." Someone has suggested that, should the nuclear talks succeed, a second, expanded round should be convened immediately on the subject of Iran's relations with its neighbors, bringing the GCC to the table with the P5+1.

Syria is a more difficult issue, a humanitarian nightmare, an affront to our collective conscience, and increasingly, home to a metastasizing violent-extremist movement that will almost certainly threaten US friends and interests in the region and, quite likely, well beyond. Gulf states are unhappy because President Obama has declined to join them in supporting the armed opposition with lethal assistance, and for failing to enforce his own red line last summer when evidence of chemical weapons use by the Assad regime became clear. Personally, I think we can and should do more to influence the outcome of this struggle, but we should do so in support of our own interests, not to mollify our Gulf allies. Frankly, for them, eliminating the Assad regime is the quickest way to sever the so-called Shia crescent that they see arcing across the Levant, from Hizballah in Lebanon to the Presidential Palace in Baghdad. While we certainly have an interest in seeing Hizballah's wings clipped, we equally want to avoid becoming party to a campaign that has as much to do with sectarian dominance as it does good governance.

Madame Chairman, Ranking Member Deutsch, Distinguished Members, my bottom line is this: for all their public displays of unhappiness with the United States, our Gulf partners know well that no other nation can or will ensure their security as we have done for the past 70 years. Similarly, our strategic interests in the Gulf will endure, and with them, our continued investment in the region's stability. This is the assurance conveyed by every senior Administration official who has engaged with our Gulf allies in recent months, and I believe it to be a genuine expression of American commitment.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Ambassador Seche.

I am going to forego my chance to ask questions for just a minute and I am going to defer to the ranking member here.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thanks. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to focus on Iran. There have been suggestions that there should be a parallel track dealing with Iran's meddling in the region and support for terror.

Ambassador, you talked about a follow-up round of negotiations dealing with Iran's relations with its neighbors. Is there any ideal resolution to the Iranian nuclear question that the Gulf States believe can be reached through this current round of negotiations?

Dr. Weinberg, we will start with you.

Mr. WEINBERG. Sure. I think the comparison with Israel is illustrative to some extent here. I think the Israelis are primarily concerned about the nuclear issue as an existential threat when it comes to Iran.

I think with the Gulf States they are also extremely concerned about the nuclear issue but the ways in which they view the nuclear issue are in part affected by how they view Iran's intentions related to regional subversion activities.

And so I think as long as Iran continues to pursue these sorts of activities and the United States is not making it an issue on the negotiating track, I think they are going to have questions about how effectively and committedly the United States can enforce a nuclear deal with Iran.

So I think having a dialogue with the Gulf States on this issue—on the nuclear issue is extremely essential to make sure that there aren't significant surprises on the negotiating track.

They were very upset, for instance, when they discovered that the United States had been engaged in conversations with Oman in this regard. If the United States had perhaps maybe informed them that private talks were going on without giving a specific location so it couldn't be leaked and exposed fully that might have been more productive.

But looking forward to the future, having senior officials involved in the nuclear file, such as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, go and brief officials in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, for instance, is very constructive and very productive.

But when it comes to trusting the nuclear deal, I cannot emphasize enough how important the IRGC element of it is for reassuring the trust that the Gulf States have in us.

Mr. DEUTCH. Right, which I understand. So when we have seen, though, as I referred to earlier, you know, with all have the Gulf States engaging with Iran, are they just following our lead? Is it about proximity to Iran if the nuclear deal falls apart—they don't want to be left in a stalemate or a worse position? What is the calculation?

Ambassador, let me just ask you what is the calculation between voicing displeasure with U.S. policy but simultaneously seeming to pursue closer relations with what has been referred to throughout here as their number-one enemy?

Ambassador SECHE. Sir, I think it is important to realize that each of the GCC countries maintains diplomatic relations with

Iran. They all have Embassies in Tehran. They all deal with Iran in one level or another.

They will continue to do so for their own self-interest. They are unhappy with the fact that we have maintained what appears to be a process that was going to relegitimize Iran and its ability to influence events in the region.

However, they have also asked us not to negotiate——

Mr. DEUTCH. I am sorry. They are concerned about our efforts to relegitimize Iran even as they continue to engage in diplomatic relations and seemingly have undertaken efforts to increase those relations with Iran just over the past few months.

Ambassador SECHE. Yes, sir, and there is a contradiction clearly inherent in this approach of theirs. But on the other hand, I am not sure the logic enters into an emotional argument they make which is the fact that unleashed Iranian influence will, again, become a juggernaut that is going to really destabilize their interest.

Now, our position in the U.S. Government or the U.S. Government's position is that, frankly, the best way to ensure that Iran's behavior is normalized is to bring it to the table, ensure its reentrance back into the community of international nations as a legitimate power that has to have relations that are maintained as other nations do in the region.

Mr. DEUTCH. All right. Mr. Henderson.

Mr. HENDERSON. Yes. Thank you. The GCC states realize——

Mr. DEUTCH. Is your microphone on?

Mr. HENDERSON. I beg your pardon. The GCC states realize they live in that neighborhood. The United States doesn't. So they have to make their compromises all the way through with the other countries in their neighborhood, including Iran at this particular point.

Their fear is that the diplomacy on the nuclear issue will not only recognize Iran as a quasi nuclear state if you allow it to hold on to enrichment technology, this is a better deal than the UAE had to negotiate with the United States in going for nuclear power plants.

And they also fear that such a diplomatic agreement would anoint Iran as the hegemonic power in the Gulf area. They fear that this would lead to what I would call the Finlandization of the Gulf, comparing it with the state of Finland alongside the Soviet Union during the Cold War when at that time Finland was what I would—had to adopt a strategy of what I would call coerced diplomacy.

Unfortunately, in yesterday's Washington Post David Ignatius also wrote an article about the Finland aspect of diplomacy in relation to Ukraine and quoting an unspecified State Department document which actually turned on its—to my mind, turned on the head—its head the definition of what Finlandization is all about.

Mr. DEUTCH. I appreciate it and I am out of time. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you. And the Chair now recognizes Steve Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Yes. I was actually not here before the other gentlemen so I would be happy to——

Mr. WEBER. Adam, do you want to jump in?

Mr. KINZINGER. Well, I appreciate it and thank you all. Let me just first off say thank you to the witnesses for being here. I very much appreciate the focus on this issue, which I don't think has gotten enough attention.

Our alliance with the Gulf States has been very instrumental in us promoting peace and security across the region and I think, you know, the administration's unfortunate use of the term pivot has caused us as much damage as anything—the idea of pivoting away from the Middle East, which I think is a very epic mistake, and a pivot away from the Gulf even though in many cases that doesn't seem like the case.

What has actually been shocking to me is as we look at what is going on in Iraq and Syria, Iran, Egypt and all over, I am hearing from our allies, you know, where is America—what has happened to American leadership.

If you look at Europe, you see as America backs away from interests in Europe something has to fill that void. It is Russia. You look at Asia—it is China. And you look at the Middle East and you see two things—chaos, terrorism and Iran filling the lack of American leadership.

Mr. Henderson, you mentioned the 1–2–3 agreement with the United Arab Emirates and a similar situation exists in South Korea. America holds this commitment of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula even though we know that in North Korea they have nuclear weapons. But we like to hold the idea that we are committed to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.

We said that we are committed to a nuclear-free Middle East region so the UAE very graciously agreed to no enrichment. And so you find out that our allies get no enrichment and our enemies potentially get the right to enrich uranium.

So it begs the question to our allies, okay, being close to the United States gets you what versus being far from the United States and a thorn in its side gets you what.

And so it is very concerning, and you look at Syria.

There is a hundred and—at least 150,000 people who have died in Syria. You have a President that put out a red line as America has held to for generations that the use of chemical weapons will have no place in a civilized world, and his backing off and failure to enforce the red line in Syria has led me in my discussions—I think many members of the committee here who have talked with diplomats and heads of states of other countries—to say that was one of the biggest, most terrible turning points in America's foreign policy. That is the point at which your enemies no longer feared you and your allies no longer trust you.

So I have just a few questions. Mr. Henderson, you talked a little bit about the coercion and you also talked about coerced neutrality. How could the neutrality of the GCC states hurt our ability to stop Iran from attaining its nuclear weapon and at what point do you think our allies would take on this position and this calculation?

Mr. HENDERSON. It is an excellent question and what I see as likely to happen amongst the GCC states, particularly the cases of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, is that they will go their own way and quite what that way is isn't terribly clear but there are signals on what that way is.

At the end of the last month, Saudi Arabia held a huge military exercise culminating in a parade at a military base in the north of the country which had over 130,000 men on parade.

It was the largest exercise and largest parade they have ever had and the Saudis also took the opportunity to display at that parade two of the Chinese East Wind missiles, which are usually referred to in American terms as medium range or long range.

And the important thing is that they can get from Saudi Arabia to Tehran and this was a clear signal to Tehran that Saudi Arabia is unhappy with the situation. It was also or should have been a clear signal to Washington, DC, that Saudi Arabia was unhappy with the situation.

Mr. KINZINGER. Well, I was just going to say, because my time is running out and I know many people have questions, if this was a—this is a very bipartisan committee.

That is one of the reasons I love serving on this committee. If this was a Republican administration I would be screaming just as loudly about the decline of American leadership around the globe.

I had one more question but I don't have time to ask it. But I do want to make the point again that I made, which is I think the failure of the United States of America to enforce the red line in Syria, and today, even when we hear about more chlorine gas attacks and barrel bomb attacks and everything has been one of the biggest foreign policy blunders not just of this administration but probably over the last couple of decades.

Mr. Chabot, thank you, and Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Kinzinger. Now the Chair recognizes Mr. Schneider.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am pleased to follow on the questions of my colleague from Illinois.

Mr. Henderson, you used the terminology the GCC states live in the neighborhood and the United States doesn't and that the sense that we may be turning away or pivoting from that is raising levels of concern.

I know you touched a bit on this in your testimonies but can you be a little more specific of what we can do to reinforce and demonstrate our commitment to the region, the fact that we understand it is a crucial strategically important region and also in the same vein things we might do differently or stop doing to reinforce the confidence in the region?

Mr. HENDERSON. Thank you. I am tempted to say to try to wind the clock back. I recognize I cannot do that. But one of the significant mistakes to my mind of what the administration has done has, at least from a GCC point of view, is they—the GCC thinks Washington, DC, misunderstood the Arab Spring and thought the so-called Arab Spring was a great thing and this was the way forward.

The GCC states considered that Iran was the major threat. They regarded their own political systems, which I have described as patriarchal rather than dictatorial, as being, in a sense, post-Arab Spring anyway. They have already got that improved level of politics.

One can debate that but you can sense what I mean. And they were furious that U.S. support for President Mubarak in Egypt

flipped from firm support to he must go within 3 weeks, leaving them thinking, hell, if that happens in Egypt what is going to happen with us if the pressure mounts on us.

A further anxiety from a GCC perspective, certainly from Saudi Arabia, probably Bahrain and the Emirates, is that they saw the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Damascus as being important not only for its own purposes because he was a dreadful dictator but also because this would give a strategic setback to Syria's main ally, Iran.

And the absence of that overthrow and, indeed, the sense that Bashar is in there for the way ahead has infuriated the GCC and feels that that strategic setback hasn't been delivered and in fact it's been a strategic plus for Iran.

So what do they do now or what can we do is we have to give the GCC a sense that we better understand their position. In fact, I don't actually believe the Obama administration recognizes that they are at fault in their understanding.

The logic of their diplomacy on the Iran nuclear issue is sort of self-fulfilling, and as I have said before I think this needs to be corrected because you are heading into a situation whereby there will be a neutralized Gulf but it won't be neutral in the favor of the United States or, indeed, the West.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Right, and I will share that what you are saying and the sense from the Gulf States is consistent with everything I have heard talking to people who have relations in Chicago, where I am from.

There is that great concern. It is not new and it is not, I don't feel, being addressed sufficiently to do that. Dr. Weinberg, it looks like you wanted to say something as well.

Mr. WEINBERG. If I could just jump in quickly. I think some constructive things the United States can do or is doing include on Secretary Hagel's visit he presented concrete specific steps for increasing military partnerships in areas such as maritime security, missile security.

I think that is a constructive measure. I think the extent to which the United States is willing to contemplate a partially increased role related to Syria will see the Gulf States willing to appreciate that but also foot some of the bill.

As I noted before, the importance of potentially appointing an envoy to regain trust with the GCC States could be constructive as well as keeping the focus on the IRGC. But, additionally, as these Gulf States engage to some extent with Iran, as Ranking Member Deutch drew particular attention to, I think it is important for the United States, just as they insist from us on an eye into what is going on in the nuclear talks, I think we should insist from them to know what they are talking about with Iran.

I think this is important to prevent buck passing and freelancing on the part of some of these Gulf States but also to ensure that there are no surprises that we are confronted with.

For instance, after the Khobar bombing that occurred in Saudi Arabia and has been tied to Iranian intelligence, the United States felt that we had extreme difficulty getting access to some of the suspects in this crime in Saudi Arabia and it seemed as though, in retrospect, that the Saudi authorities had cut their own separate

deal with Iran on some security issues at the time in a limited tactical way and they were slow rolling the investigation.

So in order to prevent something like that, I think it is important for the United States to insist on a clear eye on what is actually going on in these dialogue talks as some of the Gulf States tactically engage with Iran. Thank you.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you. I see I am over time so thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish we could go more into the no deal better than a bad deal. It is a crucial issue with Iran—the textbooks. I thank the witnesses for being here and I yield back.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Schneider. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Can any of you gentlemen think of a time when there was tranquility in the Gulf? No, I don't—I can't. I have been thinking about maybe when the Ottoman Empire dominated the whole region but even then there was Lawrence of Arabia and all sorts of House of Saud fighting the Turks at that time. Mr. Henderson, you were going to say that there was a time period?

Mr. HENDERSON. Well, you are asking a historical question and history is a matter of personal opinion. But there was a tranquility in the Gulf in the sense of no war at the time when the Shah of Iran was the leader of Iran and his demise in the 1979 Islamic revolution is year zero in my calculation.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Of course, you realize the shah did—became the shah after he—we overthrew a democratically-elected President—a guy named Mossadegh, I seem to remember his name was.

Mr. HENDERSON. Well, actually he was the shah before and Mossadegh, who was elected, actually tried to undermine the shah, which is the historical spin on that one.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Right. We Americans sort of like that idea of getting the king out of our lives sometimes, you know.

Mr. HENDERSON. Well, you have got six kings or quasi kings in the GCC states.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Right.

Mr. HENDERSON. And it is a challenge to have good relations with GCC states if you take that point of view.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me—let me ask another historical question. Now, about that time the Ba'athist movement was basically emerging as a force in that part of the world and at the same time you had—historically my read back there was that is about the same time as well as the creation of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Can we say that there was a competition in that time period between whether or not that region would go with the Ba'athists because there were Ba'athist Parties in all of these countries, I believe, versus radical Islam and radical Islam as one?

Mr. HENDERSON. Dr. Weinberg has, I think, a degree in—a Ph.D. in history and so perhaps he would want to come in on this one. But essentially the events of the 1950s, which was the rise of the Ba'ath Party, were a struggle between old style monarchial regimes.

That was the end of Egypt. Jordan's throne was under threat. Iraq's ruling royal got dragged through the streets.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. He was assassinated. Right.

Mr. HENDERSON. But it was also the time when the Muslim Brotherhood developed as an underground movement. But the main struggle at that time was—in the 1950s was between nationalists, who were essentially secular, and communists.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Yes. I am actually thinking more of the ideological fight that goes on and in the end I believe determines what direction history will take. I have just—you know, we are in for some big changes in the world and one of the big changes is the United States is going to become oil and gas independent.

In fact, we will start exporting oil and gas within a decade. This would tend to eliminate that mandatory tie that we have had to being involved in the Gulf. I notice now and for your testimonies today that it has been noted that China is now becoming a major weapons supplier to the Gulf—rockets and missiles to various elements.

Do you expect China to emerge now in some sort of relationship with radical Islam as we see it in Iran as well as, I might add, Saudi Arabia is governed by what I would consider a radical Islamic philosophy?

Mr. HENDERSON. The China role is an interesting question but it is watch this space—you know, find out what the hell is going on in Beijing. I wouldn't have thought that China will head in the direction of identifying itself with the radical Islam.

It has problems with the Uyghurs, who are Islamists in western China, and I can't imagine that Beijing thinks that this is the way forward. China's history in the Gulf area has a cynical aspect to it.

During the 1980 to '88 Iran-Iraq war, China was supplying ammunition to both sides, presumably because they made more money that way, but as much as this notion of increasing American energy independence becomes an important factor, I don't think it makes it simple for the United States to withdraw from the Gulf area because energy is very much a universal world, particularly related to price.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for giving me a chance to ask questions and I just would end my part of the—the world is changing at a very fast rate and I would believe that our situation with oil and gas will have major repercussions as to how much the American people are willing to commit to being involved in a arena of turmoil in the Gulf. I am sorry. I don't have much time—any time left. Thank you very much.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, sir. The Chair recognizes Lois Frankel. I understand that we are probably going to call votes here just any minute. So the gentlelady from Florida.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, first, I would like to welcome Edona Krasniqi from Kosovo, whose specialty is child protection and she is here as a Hope Fellow to learn how to improve her and advance her advocacy.

So welcome. Thank you for being here. I hope you have a good stay here in the United States.

Mr. WEBER. Could you have her stand up? Is she back over here?

Ms. FRANKEL. Yes.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Welcome.

Ms. FRANKEL. Welcome. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. I wanted to ask a couple questions on this nuclear—the potential of a nuclear Iran. First is if Iran should get a nuclear weapon would you expect there would be a proliferation and which of the Gulf countries do you think would be next to try to obtain a weapon?

Mr. HENDERSON. Saudi Arabia would go to Pakistan tomorrow and ask for one and Pakistan would probably give them more than one.

Ambassador SECHE. I would certainly concur with Mr. Henderson's view that the Saudis are quite inclined to act and quickly in the event that Iran were to acquire a nuclear weapon.

I think that is also why Saudi Arabia can understand that the nuclear P5+1 negotiations are the best alternative to keeping that from happening.

Ms. FRANKEL. Apparently, Iran's President Rouhani was quoted today saying that a deal over Iran's nuclear program is "very likely by July 20 deadline."

Do you know or do you have an opinion as to whether his version of the deal he is talking about would be one that Saudi Arabia and the GCC can live with?

Mr. HENDERSON. I fear that President Rouhani's version of a deal is something which Washington, DC, can live with. I am almost certain that the GCC cannot live with it and particularly Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, probably Kuwait as well.

Ms. FRANKEL. Right. And could you just expand on that?

Mr. HENDERSON. Because these countries feel that too many concessions are being made to Iran and their interests aren't being taken into account and it will leave Iran with its nuclear technology and nuclear industry intact, which will give it a quasi nuclear weapons status of a country which has always professed that it has no interest in nuclear weapons but most people have never believed that statement.

Ms. FRANKEL. So which specific concessions are they opposed to?

Mr. HENDERSON. They don't want Iran to have—well, I don't think they want Iran to have any centrifuges and the idea that there is a small number of centrifuges which is a reasonable number—they can't believe it is a reasonable number.

And they fear also that the deal will not require Iran to come clean on what they have done in the past and which is called possible military dimensions in the jargon of their program.

And with—if Iran doesn't come clean on that part it is naive and essentially allows them to retain the military nuclear weapons program both in structure and in personnel.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And oh, Madam Chair, you are back. Good to see you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Ms. Frankel. It is a delight to see you.

Ms. FRANKEL. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. And now we are so pleased to recognize Mr. Chabot and thank you, Mr. Weber, for doing a wonderful job. Thank you. Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Mr. Kinzinger had asked—actually made kind of a—some statements, most of which I agreed with, and then asked some questions

and so I will leave out most of the statements that I would make because I agree with him about sort of the power vacuum around the world, at least the perception of one by the United States.

And I will just note that when there is a power vacuum when the U.S. is less engaged around the world bad actors have a tendency to fill in there and we are seeing that in South China Sea with China and the Middle East with Iran and now in Europe, particularly in Ukraine with Russia and Putin acting up.

And my question would be this, first of all, and I got here a little late so this may have already been—you may have already talked about this. But Saudi Arabia sort of shocked, I think, the administration and the world to some degree when they turned down, you know, membership on the Security Council of the U.N. and a lot of people thought it was kind of a slap in the face at the U.S. for not backing the Gulf States up and our traditional allies in the region. Would anyone like to comment on that, what they think about that particular issue?

Ambassador SECHE. Perhaps I will begin and then turn to my colleagues. But I do think there was a strong signal sent by the Saudis last fall of their unhappiness and this was one of the issues that I think we moved slowly to respond to. We saw the——

Mr. CHABOT. An unhappiness with what in particular?

Ambassador SECHE. Well, fundamentally, with our lack of involvement in Syria and supporting the opposition.

Mr. CHABOT. The United States lack of involvement. The United States lack of involvement.

Ambassador SECHE. United States involvement in supporting the armed opposition. I think P5+1. I also think that our support for the popular revolt in Egypt.

All of these combined to create a serious sense of unease and the Saudis were simply demonstrating the extent to which that unease had captured them and I think that we needed at that point to send someone immediately to Riyadh and sit down and have a face to face, and we did not.

And I think, again, we were slow to react but I think we finally began to understand the depth of this unhappiness and the fact that it was beginning to tear at the fabric of the relations that we have and we consider to be so important.

Mr. CHABOT. And with respect to—you mentioned Egypt—there is also a perception in that region of the world, particularly in Egypt but I think throughout the Gulf States, that not only is less resolve and less commitment and less involvement and less engagement from the United States but there is even a perception that not only did we not support sort of the government but that we are pro-Muslim Brotherhood.

I mean, I am not saying that is true but I am saying is that not kind of the perception amongst a lot of folks—public opinion in that part of the world?

Ambassador SECHE. Well, there is a perception but I think the perception may be somewhat missing the point. The fact of the matter is the Muslim Brotherhood government came to power in Egypt by virtue of what everyone agrees was probably the most open and fair election in Egyptian history.

No one was content with the fact that a Muslim Brotherhood government started to turn against the very democratic process that put it in power and I think this demonstrates the immaturity to some extent of these movements.

They are able to use the democratic process to their advantage but are still so afraid of it that they begin to consolidate power in very anti-democratic ways once they have an opportunity to do so.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. Would any of the other—yes, Dr. Weinberg.

Mr. WEINBERG. If I could jump in there. I think with regard to your first question first, it is also important to note that the Saudi leadership gave up an opportunity to address the U.N. General Assembly this fall, which is an extremely unusual choice.

Related to that decision and the U.N. Security Council seat decision, the Saudi official line pointed to a whole range of silly points like oh, well, we are mainly upset about the Palestinian issue or we are mainly upset about Rohingya Muslims in Burma—issues on which the Saudi leadership had been doing basically nothing in the months before that.

I mean, these are not silly issues per se in foreign policy but they—you know, they weren't a core element of Saudi initiatives at the time. I think it is worth noting that they came within mere days of President Obama's telephone call with President Rouhani in Iran.

So I think Iran was a part of that, I think Syria was a part of that and I think frustration with the U.N. apparatus and the international community for not doing more had something to do with that. But I think also another element is King Abdullah's temper in Saudi Arabia.

I think we saw this also in the withdrawal of the Saudi Ambassador from DOHA in Qatar and I think it points again to the importance of personal relations in this region where power is so centralized with a few individuals. The fact that President Obama went to Saudi Arabia in March to look the king face to face I think was a very positive development.

However, I think the fact that they spent all of about 2 hours together is a sign of how frayed those relationships are, pointing to the importance of having somebody out there, perhaps an envoy, to rebuild trust with these leaders.

With regard to the Muslim Brotherhood, as you noted, I think there is deep, deep mistrust of the Muslim Brotherhood from the leaderships in the United Arab Emirates and in Saudi Arabia.

I actually just came back from Abu Dhabi and Dubai and I heard people describing their views of the Muslim Brotherhood compared to the Comintern, Hitler and Mussolini. I think there is real fear that this organization in the long term could pose a threat to established regimes there.

But at the same time, Qatar does not in any way seem prepared to revisit their extensive broad-reaching sponsorship of the Muslim Brotherhood throughout the broader Middle East. And so I think it is reasonable for the United States to expect this GCC spat to linger on and I think we need to adapt to that.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chabot. Mr. Weber.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Madam Chair. A question for all of you all. Well, I have got all kinds of questions but they will call voting. Does the GCC endure if through this should the United States come in and say look, okay, we understand your view our foreign policy as faltering but we would like to come back in a very comprehensive way now, strong, come out and say look, we would like you all to renounce all forms of terrorism and list the terrorist organizations and then we will kick back in, and it will take an administration, quite frankly, in my opinion that would say no more negotiations on Iran getting nuclear weapons, and we will talk a little bit about that in a minute, Mr. Ambassador.

But if the United States came in and said we want you all to become more cohesive, stronger than ever but here is the steps it is going to take, is that a viable option for us to put on the table to try to really get them to renounce terrorism, list the terrorist organizations and to get on the same page? Or is that just pie in the sky?

Ambassador SECHE. Yes. If I may, sir, I think it is going to be very difficult at this point to see the very disparate interests of Saudi Arabia and the UAE come to terms with Qatar's behavior. I think there is a sense that Qatar, even having had agreed to some sense of a modus vivendi with their neighbors, is probably still not persuaded.

Mr. WEBER. So if they were alienated that the rest of them actually came to that table and Qatar thought they were going to be left out—pressure on them?

Ambassador SECHE. Qatar has enjoyed very much its role as the maverick in the Gulf and I think it sees itself as now punching way above its weight and having an opportunity to exercise influence and it does, certainly through Al Jazeera, certainly through its enormous wealth that it has and they demonstrated around the world that it can buy its way into a lot of countries and societies.

So I am not sure how easily, and I think the Gulf States may be trying to test a young emir recently empowered to see if he has the mettle that his father had or if he will cave under that kind of pressure.

Mr. WEBER. Also, let me follow up on that, Ambassador. You said in earlier comments that Iran needed to be back in the international neighborhood. But I was curious when you said that. Is that devoid of any nuclear capability? You didn't really qualify that, but they needed to be made a player again. Explain that.

Ambassador SECHE. Well, I certainly think the terms for that would have to be that Iran does give up any opportunity to develop a nuclear weapon, that there is a success——

Mr. WEBER. Including enrichment?

Ambassador SECHE. Well, I don't think they will give up enrichment. I think Iran is absolutely intent upon maintaining——

Mr. WEBER. We are too far down that path is what you are saying.

Ambassador SECHE. Right. And I think there is probably an inherent unfairness in the fact that this is going to, if it succeeds, allow Iran to have some enrichment capacity and others have noted that the UAE, for example, forsake that option.

But I do believe that this deal—it is not this deal or a better deal. It is this deal or no deal, and this is the one moment we have a chance to put something on the table that will guarantee if it is done properly and if it is airtight and very verifiable——

Mr. WEBER. Okay.

Ambassador SECHE [continuing]. That there will not be a nuclear weapon.

Mr. WEBER. Now a question for all three and I have got 2 minutes left. Arab Spring—is that going to reemerge, revive or are we going to see that in the GCC? What is the likelihood?

Mr. HENDERSON. Because of the different political systems and the inbuilt notion of consensus in the albeit quasi monarchy systems they have, I don't think you are going to see the Arab Spring in the sense that you saw it in Tunisia where there was a dictator or Egypt where there was a dictator or even Yemen.

But what I am watching and what I expect we will see is that the degree to which the people of the GCC countries, the citizens of the GCC countries which are essentially over subsidized and cosseted are accept—continue to accept the system despite its benefits——

Mr. WEBER. Not as unhappy as some of the others.

Mr. HENDERSON. They are very conscious of the fact they live in a region where there is—things are happening. When it is turmoil they don't like it.

But when they want to tweet and they want to do social networking and all this sort of thing these are things which the old style governments aren't—don't have built-in mechanisms to know how to cope with.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Final question, and I think as you, Ambassador, said, Hagel is going over there negotiating, you said, maybe an enhanced role for the United States in Syria. Explain.

Ambassador SECHE. Well, I don't know that I said that but I do believe the United States is reexamining our role in Syria at the moment and I think that there is enough pressure building——

Mr. WEBER. Maybe it was Dr. Weinberg. An enhanced role in Syria—Chuck Hagel—military role and what does that look like.

Mr. WEINBERG. I don't think that was specifically tied to Secretary of Defense Hagel's visit to the region, which I think was mainly focused on defense partnerships in the Gulf region per se.

But I do think the U.S. administration has acknowledged that there is some need for a reevaluation of its policy in Syria. Now, as to whether that involves a fundamental reevaluation of some of the shortcomings of that policy or whether it is incremental, I think has yet to be seen.

But there is some reason to believe that the administration may be increasing its program for training members of the Syrian opposition that are vetted and moderate and, for instance, there was a recent David Ignatius column which suggested that Qatar has been paying the difference for the increase in this training program.

Mr. WEBER. I saw that.

Mr. WEINBERG. And that the Saudis are providing U.S.-made anti-tank TOW missiles to vetted members of the Syrian opposition. So I think to the extent to which the United States is willing to explore increasing its support to the right people in Syria, I

think there is hunger in the Gulf States for that and I think they will support us in that and appreciate it in our broader relationship.

Mr. WEBER. Okay.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Weber.

Mr. WEBER. Madam Chair, thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. The U.S. has over 35,000 service men and women in the Gulf nations, giving us a rather robust military presence, and we have an important intelligence presence in the region as well, making our relations with these countries strategically important.

What does the administration need to do in order to repair, to expand, to strengthen those relationships in order to ensure our national security interests are being best served and also to strengthen our relationships with the GCC countries that want a closer relationship with us in the United States?

Mr. HENDERSON. I think the United States has to better explain what it means to have these military forces and in the Gulf area and because the notion of using force, which is after all what a military is all about, has—seems to have been redefined by Washington, DC, in recent years.

It is not as if you have to go to war but you have to at least give the impression you will actually use the military and from a GCC perspective they, while grateful for the U.S. military there, they are uncertain whether the strength of this military, the deterrence of this military, is recognized any longer by troublemakers such as Iran.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And I know that you want to comment but let me just give this question out. If the United States and the P5+1 reach an agreement with Iran that still allows Iran to enrich its own uranium, what does our relationship with the GCC countries look like the next day?

Mr. WEINBERG. Well, I think several of the members on this panel have highlighted the potential risk of Saudi Arabia pursuing a nuclear weapon if they believe that Iran's nuclear program is not going to be suitably restricted.

I think Mr. Henderson here was a little modest in that he didn't mention that he is published. He has personally been told by A.Q. Khan, the father of the Pakistani nuclear program who also was linked to nuclear weapons information sharing and sales to several rogue countries, has visited Saudi Arabia dozens of times, so he claims, and I think the linkages between the Pakistani and Saudi military establishments including in this arena are extremely close and need to be a cause of concern.

When it comes to the UAE's perspective, I think there will be considerable resentment about the fact that they signed an agreement forgoing the opportunity to enrich when Iran, on the other side of the Gulf, retains it.

So I think it comes down to the fact that as, I think, Congressman Schneider noted and I noted in my written testimony, a bad deal is worse than no deal. Even with the administration——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Let me just go over here. We are out of time.

Ambassador SECHE. If I may for a moment, ma'am, I don't believe that a deal—a P5+1 deal with Tehran it allows them to have minimal enrichment—10,000 to 12,000 centrifuges—a breakout time of 4 to 6 months is going to send the Saudis to Pakistan to acquire a nuclear weapon.

I believe they would do that—if Iran gets a nuclear weapon they would respond in kind. But I also believe they know that the alternative, which is a limited military strike, is going to have unintended consequences across the region that are going to be far more dangerous to the well being of the Gulf States than a deal which is verifiable and comprehensive with the Iranians.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, and I know that we have lots more to say and there is zero time remaining on the clock for our votes. Thank you, gentlemen, for excellent testimony. Thank you to all of our members and to the audience.

And with that, the subcommittee is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 10:49 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman

May 16, 2014

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held by the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at www.foreignaffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Thursday, May 22, 2014

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

SUBJECT: The Gulf Cooperation Council: Deepening Rifts and Emerging Challenges

WITNESSES: David Andrew Weinberg, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

Mr. Simon Henderson
Baker Fellow and Director
Gulf and Energy Policy Program
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

The Honorable Stephen A. Seche
Senior Analyst
Dentons US LLP
(*Former Ambassador of the United States to Yemen*)

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *the Middle East and North Africa* HEARING

Day *Thursday* Date *05/22/14* Room *2172*

Starting Time *9:30 a.m.* Ending Time *10:48 a.m.*

Recesses [*0*] (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Weber

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [ ]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [ ]

TITLE OF HEARING:

The Gulf Cooperation Council: Deepening Rifts and Emerging Challenges

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, Reps. Ros-Lehtinen, Chabot, Kinzinger, Cotton, Weber, Cicilline, Schneider, and Frankel.

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

None

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] No [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

SFR - Rep. Connolly

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *10:48 a.m.*

Subcommittee Staff Director

Statement for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable Gerald E. Connolly of Virginia

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a strategic ally for the United States in a region that is experiencing drastic changes on several fronts. GCC countries pursue economic integration and coordinated defense policy through the Council, but have failed to reach a consensus with the U.S., and in some instances among GCC membership, on flashpoints in Syria, Egypt and Iran. In Syria, the GCC has encouraged the U.S. to provide lethal assistance to opposition forces, but the U.S. has limited its involvement to humanitarian assistance. While the U.S. welcomed the popular revolt in Egypt in 2011, most GCC countries lamented the loss of an ally in Hosni Mubarak and opposed the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood. The U.S. is engaging Iran in P5+1 negotiations, but the GCC remains concerned that Iran will be allowed to continue a limited enrichment program.

Syria is in its fourth year of a brutal civil war. The regime of Bashir al-Assad has turned its guns, barrel bombs and chemical weapons on the people of Syria and committed untold atrocities in an effort to quell an uprising against the brutal dictator. The violence has displaced 6.5 million Syrians internally and caused 2.8 million refugees to seek refuge in neighboring countries. The U.S. has contributed $1.7 billion to the humanitarian relief efforts and is the largest contributor of assistance funds. Two weeks ago, this Committee reported two resolutions pressing the urgency of the situation in Syria. H. Res. 520 directs the President to report back to Congress within 60 days on a new strategy to address humanitarian crisis, and H. Con Res. 51 lends support for investigating and prosecuting war crimes in Syria.

In Egypt, we are witnessing the erosion of the country's democratic transition. In the wake of the military intervention in Egypt in July 2013, freedoms of assembly, association, religion and expression have been under attack. Particularly troubling, constitutional reform initiatives would consolidate power within the very military and police force that are enforcing a brutal crackdown against the activists advocating for these personal freedoms.

GCC states are unanimous in their appraisal of Iran as a threat and source of regional instability. However, strategies for engagement vary among member countries. The U.S. remains committed to preventing Iran from the obtaining nuclear weapons. In March of this year, I joined with a bipartisan coalition of my colleagues in sending a letter to the Administration calling on the U.S. to pursue an agreement with Iran that requires the permanent dismantlement of Iran's nuclear weapons-related infrastructure. We expressed our concern with Iran's poor track record at the negotiating table and demanded that Iran work closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency to verify that it is abiding by the terms of its agreement. Further, we stated our concern over Iran's state sponsorship of terrorism, detainment of American citizens, violation of human rights, efforts to destabilize its neighbors, pursuit of intercontinental ballistic missiles and threats against Israel.

Objections to U.S. policy in Syria, Egypt, and P5+1 negotiations have created some outward anxiety from the GCC. However, in the wake of growing regional threats, the U.S. has taken steps to strengthen our defense collaboration with the GCC. In December 2013, the Administration announced that the GCC was eligible for Foreign Military Sales. The U.S. also

continues to advance Ballistic Missile Defense cooperation with GCC. There are currently 35,000 U.S. troops in the Gulf, and we remain committed to protecting them along with our friends and allies.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how the U.S. can continue to strengthen our strategic relationship with the GCC. I would be particularly interested in how the U.S. can lead on these sources of policy divergence and encourage consensus in the Gulf. I thank you for your testimony.

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