

Making Sense of Qatar

News:

On Monday 5 June 2017, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the UAE severed their diplomatic relations with Qatar, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism. In addition, the states announced that they were suspending air, sea, and land transport with Qatar, while Qatari citizens were required to return home within two weeks. US President Donald Trump rubber stamped this move and claimed credit for it, he said his recent visit to Saudi Arabia was "already paying off". He later tweeted: *"So good to see the Saudi Arabia visit with the King and 50 countries already paying off. They said they would take a hard line on funding... extremism."*

Comment:

So, what has Qatar done to be on the receiving end of such isolation by the world's superpower and the regional nations?

Over the past few decades Qatar has come to play a major role is frustrating US plans within the region and beyond and using its huge gas wealth to arm, fund and organise militias, groups and other countries. Qatar has however not proposed any new solutions to the region's problems but has taken part in implementing, hosting and organizing Britain's political plans in the Middle East and beyond and this can be seen from a number of perspectives.

Sudan – America brokered the Naivasha peace accord in 2005, which culminated in the eventual termination of the civil war between the main rebel group, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the Sudanese government. The terms of the agreement included a variety of measures that gave the South autonomy and secession in 2011 when the deal expired. America [actively aided and supported](#) the minority Christian rebels in Southern Sudan by providing them with arms without which the rebels would not have had the success they enjoyed in forcing the Sudanese government to pursue a peace settlement. To counter this both Britain and France provided [arms to Chad](#), which supported and armed the rebels in Darfur, creating Darfur as an issue. Both nations successfully internationalised the issue of Darfur and complicated US plans to separate the South of Sudan and turn it into an independent nation. Qatar hosted and acted as mediator for the peace negotiations that were aimed at brokering an agreement between the Government of Sudan and the various Darfur rebel groups, Qatar was thus part of the UK-French plan to use Darfur to complicate America's agenda in Sudan. This all failed in the end as South Sudan is today an independent nation, although it's on the verge of collapse.

Libya – Britain mobilized a coalition of the willing and armed and supported various tribes and militia groups to overthrow Gaddafi and his regime in 2011. After Gaddafi's fall, Britain with France created the new political leadership in Tripoli. It established the National Transitional Council (NTC) in February 2011, this temporary government was mainly composed of people from the former Gaddafi regime. Then in July 2012 a permanent government was established — the General National Congress (GNC), Britain successfully replaced Gaddafi with another set of cronies. Qatar was the first Arab country to recognize

the rebel government, the Transitional National Council. It sold Libyan oil on behalf of the rebels to avoid sanctions and supplied them with gas, diesel, and millions of dollars in aid. Al Jazeera, the satellite broadcaster based in Doha, covered the struggle of the Libyan rebels in even greater detail and depth than it has the Arab world's other revolutionary movements. Qatari transport aircraft regularly departed Doha with armaments for the rebels, including French-made Milan antitank missiles and Belgian-made FN assault rifles. Qatari special forces reportedly provided basic infantry training to Libyan rebel fighters in Tripoli. Qatar has armed, trained and funded the Libya dawn group, which in effect is the militia of the GNC government in Tripoli. Several weeks after [losing the July 2014 election](#), Libya Dawn seized the capital city of Tripoli. And banished US backed Tobruk government out of the capital.

Syria – In the early days of the Syria conflict, when many groups existed and both the US and Britain were still determining who to back, Britain attempted to cobble together a transitional group loyal to it, which was septate to the National Transitional Council which the US established. These groups were formalised into the 'Friends of Syria' group and Qatar was central to the friends of Syria conference in April 2012, which was a EU organized meeting to bring the various groups and factions in Syria together under both Britain and France. Although this grouping failed to impose itself upon Syria, the role of Qatar in supporting British aims was clear.

Qatar's support for British political plans is what has driven Trump to attack it so openly. America's lackeys in Saudi Arabia and Egypt followed this up by cutting ties with it, after Trump met them on his first foreign visit as US president. The US has long been unhappy with Qatar's role in serving Britain. In a report prepared for the US Congress on Qatar by Christopher M. Blanchard, titled "Qatar: Background and U.S. Relations," in November 2014, it noted: *"Qatar's approach to regional affairs can be described as a multi-directional balancing act. To the chagrin of Saudi Arabia and other regional powers, Qatar has sought in recent years to mediate regional conflicts and political disputes by engaging a wide range of parties in Yemen, Lebanon, Sudan, Libya, Egypt, and Gaza, some of whom are hostile to the United States."*

In conclusion Qatar's support of Britain's agenda, is the underlying issue causing the current tension.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Adnan Khan