
**QATAR'S ROLE IN CONFLICT AND PEACE:
AN ASSESSMENT OF MOTIVATIONS AND INFLUENCE**

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QATAR'S ROLE IN CONFLICT AND PEACE: MOTIVATIONS AND IMPACT³

Sultan Barakat and Sansom Milton

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within the past two decades, Qatar's dynamic economy and regionalized power has brought it into the evolving landscape of international aid, which is increasingly occupied by 'non-traditional' donors (Cotterrell & Harmer 2005). Although traditionally known for its commercial activities, Qatar is cultivating a sophisticated engagement with peace and conflict issues extending far beyond the provision of aid; it embraces a wide range of operations, from relief to military intervention and conflict mediation. Yet, Qatar remains a little-understood new actor on the humanitarian scene.

Qatar's rise as a humanitarian actor should be understood alongside other 'non-traditional' donors including the Gulf States, the BRIC states, Brazil, India and China. It has assumed a leadership role in recent conflict-affected contexts across the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) and from Yemen, through Lebanon, to Darfur. A clear understanding of its motivations for undertaking this role, however, and the impact of its engagement has not yet been sought. This may be, in part, because Qatar's humanitarian portfolio is made up of a flurry of very recent activity. This research paper attempts to address this knowledge gap by providing an assessment of Qatar's peace and conflict engagement activities with a specific focus on conflict mediation.

The study has forward looking significance, too. Following the Arab Spring of 2011, the need for regional political responses to instability and conflict is bound to continue, as is Qatar's role as a mediator. An understanding of motivations and impact is vital to re-stabilisation. This study begins to address this need in highlighting the characteristics of and motivations behind Qatari intervention, which provide useful and timely insights into the ways in which conflict mediation might be conducted more effectively in the near future.

A central research question framing the study concerns the motivations behind Qatar's involvement in peace mediation:

why does Qatar engage in conflict-affected and post-conflict contexts?

The paper first draws on a brief history of Qatar's rise to global prominence at the end of the 20th century in order to place its humanitarian engagements in context. Next, the study provides a typology of the Qatar's

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peace engagement activities. An overview of its sectoral activities in conflict and post-conflict contexts is then offered, with a specific focus on conflict mediation. Finally, the significance of the Arab Spring to any future peace engagement role for Qatar is considered. On the basis of this multi-faceted analysis, recommendations as to how Qatar might enhance its role are advanced in the final section of the paper. Suggestions for areas of further research are also made.

Qatar's rise

A number of key findings emerge from an analysis of Qatar's engagement in conflict-affected contexts and its policies and activities in promoting peace:

- ❖ Qatar has emerged as a powerful and wealthy state in the Arabian Gulf having pursued a strategy of state branding, charted an independent foreign policy, and strategically followed a path of economic and limited political liberalisation
- ❖ A wide sectoral range of interventions are pursued by Qatar in conflict-affected and post-conflict contexts including humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention, conflict mediation, post-conflict reconstruction, and military intervention
- ❖ Qatari assistance is primarily directed towards states within the West Asia North Africa (WANA) region⁴ although the reach of its efforts has extended beyond the region
- ❖ Its conflict mediation activities have enjoyed a high profile, particularly in Lebanon, Darfur, and the Houthi conflict in Yemen
- ❖ Qatari engagement in conflict-affected contexts has benefited from the widespread perception that it is a relatively neutral actor
- ❖ The regional and global geopolitical context in which Qatar has engaged over the past decade is currently being transformed by events associated with the 'Arab Spring'

While Qatar has engaged in a wide range of conflict and peace activities, its conflict mediation efforts are most prominent and thus provide the principal focus of this study. A number of key lessons can be drawn from the analysis of Qatari engagement in conflict mediation:

- ❖ Qatar has used its immense wealth as a tool in conflict mediation which has enabled some impressive short-term successes. The approach may be unsustainable, however, in the long-term.
- ❖ In a similar vein, Qatar's conflict mediation approach can effectively resolve immediate short-term issues between parties but has less transformative power over the long-term

⁴ The term WANA region is used in the text. It offers a more inclusive and wider scope than referring to the Middle East. It encompasses areas of the Horn of Africa, Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and elsewhere that are not classified as part of the Middle East in its conventional definition yet are important to understanding the inter-connections and dynamics of this geographic area.

- ❖ As an Arab and Islamic country, Qatar potentially has an advantage over Western parties when engaging in conflict-affected countries in the WANA region. In some cases of Qatar's conflict mediation, however, local values and practices have been sidelined by general Arab and Islamic approaches.
- ❖ Qatar benefits from a personalised and pragmatic approach to conflict mediation but greater utilisation of best-practice knowledge from the field could enhance its activities
- ❖ Gulf state donors including Qatar often exhibit a wide discrepancy between pledged and disbursed aid.

A lack of institutions and mechanisms for follow-up and monitoring undermines Qatari mediation efforts and highlights the important lesson that external actors must stay engaged after formal agreements.

QATAR'S THREE-PRONGED RISE TO PROMINENCE: A GUIDING FRAMEWORK TO ITS HUMANITARIAN ENGAGEMENT

Findings indicate that three strategies critical to Qatar's recent emergence as an important state internationally have also influenced and shaped its motivations in mediating conflicts in the region. These have been: i) a concerted exercise in state branding, ii) the pursuit of an independent foreign policy and iii) the shift towards political and economic liberalisation. The compound effect has been not only to drive a social, political and economic transformation since the 1990s, but also to prompt the establishment of the country's mediatory role in conflict-affected and post-conflict contexts. It is argued that Qatar's role as mediator in the WANA region and further afield cannot be adequately understood or evaluated without reference to these three factors. They highlight positive and negative characteristics in Qatari interventions that provide the bases for recommendations to address current weaknesses and build on existing strengths.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This study was primarily designed as desk-based research, in response to the need for an overview of Qatari peace-building activities and the immediate relevance of information of the kind in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. It was decided that the study would constitute an initial scoping exercise that would point toward areas for further in-depth research.

Every attempt is made throughout this study to present an objective and balanced account of Qatar's peace engagement. It is readily apparent that there is a range of perspectives on the approach, motivations and impact of Qatar's engagement; these are presented accurately and according to principles of academic rigour. In no sense is this study intended solely as a critique of Qatari activity. While weaknesses are identified and suggestions given for improved efficacy in intervention, strengths in Qatar's approach are also found and emphasised as potential best practice for broader application.

The first phase of desk research began in mid-April 2011, allowing two weeks to identify preliminary findings and important themes for presentation in the form of an early paper at the WANA Forum in Amman, Jordan, 8-10 May 2011. Sources consulted for this document included academic literature, policy documents, and news sources. Of these, academic resources were preferred, but were not widely available due to the under-researched nature of Qatar's peace-related activities. Thus, scholarly articles and volumes were supplemented with policy documents and news reports where necessary. While this presents a limitation in terms of the breadth of the literature review, it enables the inclusion of current and timely information that contributes to the immediate relevance of the study. This is particularly the case with the recent events in Libya and ongoing negotiations in Darfur.

In addition to desk study and secondary literature, a limited number of interviews and consultations with key informants were conducted. Although restricted in terms of extent and sampling, primary data collected supplemented the literature and provided another means through which to situate the analysis in the immediacy of the current context. Respondents included a number of academics and practitioners concerned with Qatar's role in peace and conflict or with expertise in the regional context.

2. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

2.1 STATE FORMATION AND TRANSITION TO AN OIL ECONOMY⁵

Before the Second World War, and prior to the discovery and extraction of oil reserves, Qatar remained isolated from major trade routes and economically reliant on the pearl industry (Mallakh 1979; Crystal 1990). Political power was exercised by an alliance between the ruling family and a class of pearl merchants (Crystal 1990), whose revenues were extracted through tax and customs duties and provided the primary resource base for the state. The merchants' power was exercised through their presence in social councils and inter-marriage with royals. One strategy of rule has been to marry important royal family members to the descendents of Al Thani Sheikhs who opposed the Emir's rules in the 1980s and 1990s, for example, the powerful merchant Al-Misnad family of Sheikha Mozah was a source of protest in the 1960s and has been co-opted into the regime through marriage (Menas 2006).

Power dynamics between the merchants and the ruling family changed, however, with the onset of multiple economic crises during the inter-war period. Revenues from the domestic pearl industry disappeared with the introduction and development of cultured pearls in Japan, leading to economic collapse and mass migration with up to half the population and almost the entire merchant class migrating (Mallakh 1979, p.31 Crystal 1990, p.5).

⁵ This section draws heavily on Crystal's (1990) classic comparative study *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar*.

Oil was first produced and exported from Qatar in 1949 but it was not until 1973 that the Qatari state began to purchase stakes in Qatar Petroleum Company (Mallakh 1979, p.38) with the nationalisation of the oil industry completed in 1976 (Mallakh 1979, p.34). During this period Qatar maintained a 'cautious approach toward development of the country' (Mallakh 1979, p.14), a clear contrast with what would later become a dynamic economic trajectory during the 1990s and 2000s. The advent of large oil revenues was to radically transform the domestic polity (Crystal 1990). Distributive policies including delivery of social services and a guarantee of state employment for Qatari nationals increased popular dependency on the state and weakened the intermediary function of the merchant class in providing services and employment (Crystal 1990, p.10).

Partly as a means to compensate for the decline of their public role, the ruling al-Thani family allocated a stake in oil revenues to the merchant class and offered them economic protection. New merchant families were selected as regime clients. One significant cost of this economic patronage to the merchant class, however, was their retreat from political life. This then consolidated political power solely in the hands of the al-Thani family, which was not a cohesive unit historically and whose members did not often perform public administrative duties. In order to control the newly centralised and oil-dependent state apparatus, the inner circles of the al-Thani family were assigned important bureaucratic posts. This served to further fragment the family, in that ministries were subsequently mobilised for personal gain and challenges to succession. This resulted in a series of discontinuities in rule by different factions within the long continuous rule of the al-Thani family (Crystal 1990, p.13).

After gaining independence from Britain on the 1st September 1971, Qatar and Bahrain opted to remain independent rather than form part of the United Arab Emirates under a British proposal (Da Lage 2005). During failed negotiations over forming a union of nine emirates, Qatar was considered an outsider, 'disruptive', and 'troublesome' by the other Gulf states who perceived a Qatari interest in a loose Emirati union rather than a strong one so that Qatar would not be isolated and prone to absorption by Saudi Arabia (Smith 2004, p.78). Qatar's independent position at that time was a precursor of the controversial and independent foreign policy it would pursue later on (see section 2.3). Without the security guarantee of the United Kingdom the newly independent Qatar existed until the First Gulf War in 1991 under the security orbit of its larger neighbour Saudi Arabia. However, the failure of regional security mechanisms to prevent Iraq from invading its neighbour, Kuwait, marked a change in the security calculations of the small Gulf States who since 1991 have sought to expand their economic and security interests beyond Saudi Arabia (Dargin 2007; Rabi 2009; Ulrichsen 2009).

2.2. ACCESSION OF EMIR SHEIKH HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL-THANI

A bloodless coup on 27th June 1995 brought a new Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, to power at the expense of his father, the Emir Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, who had gradually ceded *de facto* control to his son. The precise reasons behind the transition are unclear: some commentators have suggested that Emir Al Thani perceived his father to be a hindrance to economic development, while others

have contended that Emir Khalifa’s plans to transfer power to other members of the family prompted Emir Al Thani to initiate a coup to demonstrate who in reality was the ruler of Qatar (Rabi 2009). Additionally, there is unconfirmed speculation that the coup d’etat was supported by the USA, which was very quick to recognise the legitimacy of the new regime (De Lage 2005).

The new Emir came to power with the promise of widespread modernization and since then Qatar has undergone some dramatic changes (Kamrava 2009). Since his accession, some challenges have been made to the Emir’s regime – notably in 1996 and 2005 when coup attempts were made and attributed by the Qatari government to Saudi instigation (Peterson 2006; Ulrichsen 2009, p.12). Most recently, a coup attempt is reported to have taken place in 2009 although rumours surrounding it were not widely reported or commented upon at the time (El-Katiri & Tatham 2009). In spite of these attempts, however, Qatar’s regime has remained stable throughout the 16-year period of Emir Al-Thani’s rule, during which time the nation’s developmental trajectory has been dynamic.

The Peace Index offers a global ranking of countries according to their scores on a number of indices. Qatar’s high levels of stability and the absence of violent conflict are reflected in Qatar’s leading regional ranking on the Peace Index, in which it has maintained an impressive position in an otherwise volatile region (see table 1 below).

TABLE 1: PEACE INDEX: QATAR AND SELECTED WANA STATES⁶

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Qatar	30	33	16	15	12
Oman	22	25	21	23	41
UAE	38	42	40	44	33
Kuwait	46	45	42	39	29
Bahrain	62	74	69	70	123
KSA	90	108	104	107	101
Lebanon	114	132	132	134	137
Israel	119	136	141	144	145

2.3. TRANSITION TO A LEADING REGIONAL POWER

Emir Al Thani is credited with transforming Qatar from an insular society to an outward-looking and adventurous member of the international community. This transition has enabled Qatar to adopt a leading role within the WANA region; its increasing diplomatic role in regional affairs is evident in its high profile mediation in Lebanon and support for the international intervention in Libya in 2011. The three strategies

⁶ <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/#/2010/scor/SA>

central to Qatar's transformation as a state and its simultaneous emergence as a diplomatic actor in regional conflicts outlined above are discussed in detail below. They were: i) raising the profile of Qatar through state branding (Van Ham 2001 and 2008), ii) the state's consistent pursuit of an independent foreign policy, and, iii) the embrace of forms of political and economic liberalisation (Kamrava 1998; Nonneman 2001; Hinnebusch 2006). Each is addressed in turn.

STATE BRANDING

Qatar has embarked on a diverse range of high profile initiatives that have been central to the country's shift from obscurity in the international system in the 1970s to global prominence in 2011. It has been argued that such initiatives, for example hosting the Al Jazeera headquarters and winning the bid to host the 2022 World Cup, constitute a strategy of 'state branding' (Peterson 2006; Roberts 2011). State branding is increasingly important in a global political arena in which 'soft power' qualities of image and reputation have increased in importance alongside traditional 'hard power' concerns of military and economic strength (Van Ham 2002, 2008). Qatar seeks to project an image of itself as a modern, independent, dynamic, and cosmopolitan member of the international community to a global audience.

Qatar's investment in large-scale and distinctive physical infrastructure may be held to be part of a state branding strategy. Mega projects such as the Pearl-Qatar, a man-made island property development site, or the Lusail City project are large-scale urban developments that rival the ambitious construction projects of the United Arab Emirates (AMEinfo 2007). Thematic spaces have been built including Energy City, Entertainment City⁷, Education City, and the Qatar Science and Technology Park. These initiatives are a key asset of the Qatari state and serve to project its image as a wealthy, modern, and forward-looking country.

Additionally, the Doha Round of World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade negotiations, initiated in 2001 served to raise the profile of Qatar while many international conferences and events have been hosted in Doha (Peterson 2006). Sporting events in particular offer an opportunity for place branding, as was evident in the way in which the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympics was used by China to announce in spectacular fashion its emergence as a global power. The Asian Games were hosted in Doha in 2006, the first such event in an Arab country. Amara (2005) identifies that gaining recognition for Qatar as a world-class venue for international sport and its internationalist 'adhesion to the universal values of democracy, solidarity and human rights' were two central themes in the public discourse about the Asian Games of Qatari officials and newspapers. The prestige gained from the Asian Games will be dwarfed in comparison to Qatar's successful bid to host the 2022 World Cup. In addition, the Qatar Foundation sponsors Barcelona Football Club, elite athletes have been lured to compete in Qatar, and Qatar hosts a number of tournaments including the Qatar Ladies Open, Qatar Rally, and the Qatar Open Golf Masters.

Notably, Qatar hosts and finances the media network Al Jazeera which has risen to global prominence through its coverage of events in the Arab world and beyond. The station has engaged the 'Arab Street' by offering an authentic Arab voice on world events and in so doing has provided a valuable public good while

⁷ <http://www.investinqatar.com.qa/English/ForeignInvestor/Pages/MegaProjects.aspx>

causing some controversy, for example, over its Iraq war coverage or role within the Arab Spring. Al Jazeera's function in state branding is suggested by Bahry (2001) who suggests that Emir Al Thani wanted 'a TV station reflecting the new image of Qatar that he wished to project to the outside world'. Additionally, the Doha Debates, a member of the Qatar Foundation, are broadcast on the BBC and are presented as 'Qatar's forum for free speech in the Arab World'.⁸

While the cumulative effect of these state branding activities has generally been a successful promotion of Qatar's national image, there have been negative consequences also. These include the Wikileaks scandal over the use of Al Jazeera as a bargaining tool with other regional states and the allegations of vote-buying in the bidding for the hosting of the World Cup 2022 with Bin Hammam's suspension from FIFA. These all serve to tarnish the image which Qatar wishes to project to the world. This may be inevitable, however, Qatar has come under increasing scrutiny from the world's media by stepping into the international limelight.

Al Jazeera's role in the Arab Spring has come under increasing criticism. Its coverage, which has been resolutely on the side of the 'Arab Street', has been held to be uneven. Protests in Bahrain have been described as receiving relatively 'mild' coverage (Ulrichsen 2011), while Robert Fisk (2011) wrote that Al Jazeera's 'failure to mention Bahrain is shameful, a dollop of shit in the dignity that they have brought to reporting in the Middle East'. Several high profile Al Jazeera journalists resigned from the broadcaster in protest at the lopsided coverage of the Arab uprisings (Emirates 24/7 2011). Rulers affected by the wave of protests across the WANA region have furthermore attacked Al Jazeera and Qatar, with President Saleh accusing Qatar, partly through Al Jazeera, of funding chaos in the Arab World⁹, while Colonel Gaddafi accused Al Jazeera of 'turning and twisting facts' (Toumi 2011b). These developments compound the negative fallout from the Wikileaks diplomatic cables that revealed fears expressed by US officials. Those suggested that Qatar was utilising Al Jazeera as a bargaining tool with other countries to pursue its foreign policy, for example, offering to suspend transmissions to Egypt for a year in exchange for Hosni Mubarak fully supporting diplomatic efforts to secure a deal on Palestinian statehood (Booth 2010).

The question of why Qatar has placed great emphasis on state branding may be answered by assessing the different audiences at which the project is aimed. At the global level, several dimensions may be identified. First, state branding functions, in part, as a commercial strategy aimed at attracting foreign investment and is similar to Dubai's place branding in support of its drive to become a tourist, shopping, and commercial hub (Bagaeen 2007). Cooper and Momani (2009) argue that Qatar and other 'progressive' Middle Eastern states pursue state branding 'to project themselves as places that are open for business and investment, and that offer political stability and liberalism'. Similarly, Rabi (2009) writes of Qatari media initiatives, that they 'are designed to contribute to the fledgling image that Qatar strives to portray – an image of a modernizing, reform-oriented enclave in the Arab world, and an attractive place to do business'.

⁸ <http://www.thedohadebates.com/>

⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=en775E2W60s>

Second, a political component is that raising the global profile of brand Qatar is a central strategy for the facilitation of long-term security because it develops the qualities of reputation, image, and trust among foreign states and peoples that are increasingly important to the conduct of global politics (Peterson 2009). Further, as will be seen in the next two sections, both Qatar's pursuit of an independent foreign policy and its process of political and economic liberalisation should be understood within the context of its global state branding strategy.

At the regional level, two main explanations make sense of Qatar's state branding strategy. First, state branding is partly driven by competition with neighbouring states such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Second, Qatar's state branding should also be placed within the regional context of its projection of an image of an Arab and Islamic state. Qatar wishes to generate support on the ground throughout the Middle East and Arab world, for example, through hosting Islamic conferences and funding Islamic development and humanitarian agencies. This neglected aspect of Qatar's state branding is important for understanding Qatar's engagement in peace and conflict contexts across the region. Qatar's engagement in these areas is also motivated, in part, by the desire to project a positive image to a regional and global audience of Qatar as a neutral and independent country committed to peace in the WANA region.

At the domestic level state branding also serves important functions in forming identities, loyalty, and social cohesion (Van Ham 2002). Qatar's adventurous policies abroad may be explained as part of a nation-building project at home, for example, the Asian Games was found to be utilised as a force for 'national mobilization' (Amara 2005). Crystal (1990) describes how the process of nation-building in Qatar was not shaped by authentic shared myths of a glorious past. Attempts at raising the international profile and prestige of Qatar may then be argued to be partly motivated by the need to sustain collective cohesion between citizens not bound by deep and historical affective ties.

QATAR'S INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY

Charting an independent position internationally by remaining open to a plural set of relationships with other countries has been a distinctive aspect of Qatar's foreign policy. This has been a particularly difficult feat in the Middle East where diplomatic rivalries and alliances form part of a perpetual power game. The emphasis placed upon foreign policy by Qatar is evident in that the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, also serves as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and personally plays a leading role in Qatari peacemaking initiatives. Qatar's bold actions in foreign relations, however, have often shocked conventional thinking in the Arab world. Its actions in this sense have been held to be contradictory, in principle, by many observers (Da Lage 2005; Worth 2008; Rabi 2009). Rabi (2009) writes that 'Qatari foreign policy has been formulated in a manner that not only anticipates the indignant Arab reaction, but also invites it to a certain degree'.

An example of Qatar's independent stance is its consistent practice of offering sanctuary to controversial figures. This policy includes providing safe haven to Saddam Hussein's and Osama Bin Laden's relatives (Banerjee 2010), to an exiled Chechen rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev until his assassination in Doha (Myers 2004) and the Hamas leader Khaled Mishal after his expulsion from Jordan in 1999 (Kaplan 2006)

while the 9/11 Commission Report states that during the 1990s Qatar's Interior Minister provided safe haven to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks (Blanchard 2008). This open door policy has been held to be a central aspect of the country's strategy of building a global reputation and brand for the state of Qatar (Khatri 2010).

Qatar maintains diplomatic ties to Iran while hosting an American air base and a possessing a strong relationship with the United States. American interest in the Gulf has been closely bound up with Arab-Iranian relations. Before the Islamic revolution of 1979 Iran provided strategic and security needs in the Gulf. Since 1979 Iran has increasingly been constructed as a security threat to the West while the Arabian Peninsula has become vital to the security and energy needs of the USA and other Western states. While Qatar also perceives an existential threat from Iran, economic interdependency and geopolitical realities necessitate relatively friendly diplomatic relations (Da Lage 2005), for example, a maritime border between Iran and Qatar straddles the giant North Field, the largest non-associated gas field in the world (Dargin 2007). While sitting on the United Nations Security Council, Qatar voted against sanctions on Iran and was generally pro-Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah (Worth 2008; Hamid 2011).

Relatively warm Israeli-Qatar relations have caused consternation among states and people in the Middle East (Peterson 2006; Rabi 2009). At the Madrid Conference in 1991 Qatar signalled a willingness to consider the process of normalisation of Qatari-Israel relations (Rabi 2009). Significant improvement in formal relations occurred in September 1996 when an Israeli trade office was opened in Doha. After the Israeli invasion of Gaza in 2008 the Qatari state closed the trade office. At one level this may be interpreted as driven by a humanitarian impulse. However, Rabi (2009) argues that closure of the office in 2009 in response to the Israeli invasion of Gaza illustrates that estrangement with Israel is a tool used by Qatar if it serves its interests at that time. As host of several high profile conferences in the Middle East Qatar has broken with Arab convention and extended invitations to Israeli delegations, for example, the Fourth Middle East North Africa Economic Summit (De Lage 2005). Israeli-Qatari relations appear in tension with Qatari financial support for Hamas, its relations with Iran, and Hezbollah and its efforts to become a leading Arab and Islamic state (Worth 2008; Rabi 2009). However, the contradictions of the 'calculated risk' of normalisation in relations with Israel is comprehensible as part of a broader independent foreign policy necessary to extend its security orbit beyond the Gulf (Rabi 2009).

Al Udeid Air Base was built in Qatar with the intention of attracting the US military to the country (GlobalSecurity n.d.). In the political climate of Saudi Arabia after the September 11th attacks in 2001 the presence of US troops in the country was increasingly divisive and a transferral of US military operations from Saudi Arabia to Qatar began. By 2003 the majority of US forces had been transferred from Prince Sultan Air Base to Al Udeid Air Base (Gordon & Schmitt 2003). In 2009 the forward headquarters of US Central Command (CENTCOM) was transferred from Doha to Al Udeid (CENTCOM 2009). The presence of a US military base in Qatar offers the regime enhanced domestic security with protection from external threat through inter-dependency with the United States (Ulrichsen 2011). It was a significant moment in

terms of Qatar's involvement in peace and conflict related activities in that Qatar for the first time began to align strategically with a global superpower.

From the Saudi Arabian perspective, the loss of the US base was a negative development and led to deterioration in Saudi-Qatari relations. With a single land border with Saudi Arabia, Qatar has a strategically important relationship with Saudi Arabia and strong cultural ties, for example, shared widespread adherence to Wahhabi Islam. However, ties between the two countries have had a turbulent trajectory for example, with border disputes and rivalry over Qatar's increasingly prominent regional role. In 2009 69% of Qataris and 40% of Saudis agreed that the term 'Cold War' best characterises Saudi-Qatari relations (Moran 2009). Rivalry between Qatar and Saudi Arabia is fierce and has been held to explain, at least in part, Qatar's new role in conflict mediation, Saudi Arabia's traditional domain (more on this below). Despite perennial differences, the two countries are locked in a long-term dependency relationship, for example, with transportation routes for the export of oil and gas running through both territories (Bower 2009).

It may be asked why Qatar has adopted a resolutely independent foreign policy. Rabi (2009) writes that Qatar 'employs an independent and nuanced foreign policy in order to promote its regional position as well as upgrade its international profile'. Qatar's independent stance in foreign affairs stems from its need to navigate the complex politics of the Middle East in order to enhance long-term security. Independence positioned Qatar as a bridge between the two regional camps of Iran and Syria on one side and Saudi Arabia on the other within the Arab 'Cold War' (Moran 2009; Hamid 2011); although the contours of regional politics were redrawn during the Arab Spring in 2011. From this position it is held that Qatar can be flexible in adapting to the changing geopolitical and security environment in pursuit of its national interests (Rabi 2009).

Finally, while Qatar's level of security has been very high by regional standards, it suffered a setback in March 2005 when the Doha Players theatre was destroyed by a suicide bomber who killed one UK citizen, injured 15 persons, and nearly caused many more casualties. The attack was sophisticated and suggests a 'highly capable' terror-cell operating in Qatar (Oxford Analytica 2005). Close relations with the US, cooperation with Israel, political liberalisation, and religious tolerance have been argued to have been the main drivers of Salafist/Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula hostility to the Qatari regime (Oxford Analytica 2005). According to a report by the UK newspaper *The Sunday Times*, the attack prompted the Qatari state to renew payments to Al Qaeda in an effort to purchase security (Mahnaimi 2005). If the report is accurate, the payments to Al Qaeda exemplify the pragmatic and independent approach to foreign and security policy adopted by Qatar which stands in contrast to the Western approach to the region which is hampered by its unwillingness to engage with key actors on a pragmatic basis.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIBERALISATION

The Emir has embarked on a path of political liberalisation since 1995, introducing universal suffrage for municipal council elections in 1999 and a new constitution in 2003 (Bahry 1999; Ulrichsen 2009; Kamrava

2009; Lambert 2011). Some remain sceptical, however, of how meaningful these changes have been in transforming the nature of the Qatari state (Saif 2008). It has been held, for example, that the creation of formally democratic institutions has not brought about genuinely democratising pressures in Qatar because the public finances remain firmly controlled by the Royal Court (Rathmell & Schulze 2000). Lambert (2011) further argues that introducing national elections and women’s political participation are part of a strategic liberalisation process intended to ‘generate international attention for “democratic” and “modern” reforms’ in order to bolster the legitimacy and security of the Qatari regime. Liberalisation, in this account, is an extension of the branding of Qatar as a modern cosmopolitan member of the international community.

Despite the slow pace of reform, the Arab Spring of 2011, which led to widespread protests and unrest across the Arab world, has not affected Qatar internally. It has been argued that with a booming economy and prestige projects such as the 2022 World Cup ‘Qatari citizens simply have too much to lose by rocking the boat and disrupting the status quo’ (Ulrichsen 2011). A ‘Day of Rage’ was reportedly called in Qatar for which nobody turned out (Heeg quoted in Burke 2011).

Qatar has been heralded for allowing the iconoclastic Al Jazeera to broadcast from Doha and is a highly visible sign of its stated commitment to liberalisation. However, while Qatar promotes political and economic liberalism abroad, its national ranking in terms of press freedom is not outstanding by regional comparison and since 2008 Qatar has fallen 47 places (see table 2 below). The Qatari regime abolished the Ministry of Information in 1998, formally a liberalisation of the press. However, the impact of this move on press freedom has been held to have been limited. It has been argued that journalists ‘instead of knowing with certitude where the red lines are drawn, they have to guess’ (Da Lage 2005).

TABLE 2: PRESS FREEDOM INDEX FOR QATAR AND SELECTED WANA STATES

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Israel	50	44	46	93	86
Kuwait	73	63	61	60	87
UAE	77	65	69	86	87
Lebanon	107	98	66	61	78
Qatar	80	79	74	94	121
Bahrain	111	118	96	119	144
KSA	161	148	161	163	157

SOURCE: REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS¹⁰

¹⁰ http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=1034

In addition to political liberalisation Qatar has also introduced economic liberalisation measures. An economic diversification strategy was launched due to a bleak economic prognosis in the 1990s and included expanding steel, petrochemicals, and tourism while privatising public enterprises and creating a regulatory environment favoured by businesses and investors (Gonzalez et al 2008). In 1995 the Doha Stock Market was established, in part to enable the privatisation of state-held assets (Rathmell & Schulze 2000). Qatar is placed 50th on the World Bank's Doing Business rankings out of 183 economies globally (see table 3). However, economic reform measures have not totally liberalised the Qatari economy. In 2011 Qatar sought to re-classify its economy from 'frontier market' to 'emerging market'. However, it is reported that a cap on foreign ownership set at 25% would fail to meet the required criteria (Halime 2011).

TABLE 3: DOING BUSINESS: ECONOMY RANKINGS

	2011
KSA	11
Bahrain	28
Israel	29
UAE	40
Qatar	50
Kuwait	74
Lebanon	113

SOURCE: WORLD BANK¹¹

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) was first exported in 1997 and in 2006 Qatar became the world's largest LNG producer. In 2010 Qatar reached 77.5 million tonnes per annum (mmta) which was approximately one-third of global LNG supply (Canty 2011). The country's proven reserves are the third largest in the world. In 2011 Qatargas signed a three-year deal to supply Centrica, the largest gas supplier in the UK, with LNG (Bawden 2011). The timing of the first LNG exports was fortunate as it coincided roughly with the ascension to power of Emir Al Thani, a global shift to seeking cleaner and cheaper alternatives to oil, a period of slow economic growth in the 1980s and early 1990s, and rapidly declining oil reserves (Gonzalez et al 2008, p.37). Qatar's GDP per capita grew rapidly over this period; increasing by more than fourfold in the 19 years between 1990 and 2009, increasing from \$15,747 to \$69,754 (see table 4). Qatar's GDP per capita as shown in Table 3 below is the highest in the Gulf and Middle East and by some calculations the country has the highest GDP per capita in the world. In 2011 Qatar's economy is forecast to grow 20% which would make it the fastest growing economy worldwide (Hankir 2011).

TABLE 4: GDP PER CAPITA: QATAR AND SELECTED WANA STATES (CURRENT USD)

	1990	2000	2009
Qatar	15,747	28,793	69,754
UAE	18,024	21,801	50,070

¹¹ <http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>

Kuwait	8,672	17,223	54,260 ¹²
Israel	11,264	19,836	26,256
Bahrain	8,581	12,262	26,021
Oman	6,340	8,271	16,207
KSA	7,182	9,128	14,799
Lebanon	954	4,576	8,175

SOURCE: WORLD BANK¹³

The coming on-stream of LNG can be identified as a watershed moment in the transition of Qatar from relative obscurity to its leading regional role and growing global profile. It has powered Qatar's remarkable economic boom since 1997 and has enabled bold mega-projects, massive investment in a range of sectors, and ambitious activities overseas. Qatar's sovereign wealth fund investments provide diversification of risk away from dependence on oil and gas. Qatar Investment Authority holds a diverse portfolio of investments including in Harrods, the London Stock Exchange, Porsche, leading German construction firm Hochtief, Jordan's Housing Bank for Trade and Finance, and agricultural company Adecoagro.¹⁴

While oil and gas have enabled Qatar's rapid economic transformation, reducing energy export dependence through diversification is central to the Qatari vision 2030 (GSDP 2008). One aspect of that vision is to improve the human resource base so that Qatar can reap the possibilities of the global knowledge economy (GoQ 2007). To meet this objective educational initiatives are underway. Education City in Doha is an ambitious and innovative extra-territorial educational space housing branch campuses of elite world universities including Georgetown and Northwestern. In addition, Qatar University is in the process of reform to meet the educational needs of the majority of Qatar's post-secondary student population (Moini et al 2009).

Qatar's strategy of state branding, its pursuit of an independent foreign policy, and its political and economic liberalisation comprise three individual but interconnected strategies employed in recent years which have led to the emergence of the country as a player on the international stage. Qatar's embrace of liberalisation and its independent open door policy have been seen to be in part motivated by a desire to project itself as a liberal state globally in an exercise of state branding. In addition, Qatar's drive for liberalisation has been held to be in part motivated by differentiation of the state from its GCC neighbours, in particular to show independence from Saudi Arabia (Rathmell & Schulze 2000). The connection between independence and state branding is signified by the slogan used to advertise the country; 'Qatar, as independent as you are'.

The rapidity of Qatar's transition to a leading regional power has entailed a relatively low level of institutionalisation comparative to regional neighbours such as Kuwait or Jordan. Institutions, it should be

¹² Kuwait figure is for 2008, the latest year with available data

¹³ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>

¹⁴ <http://www.swfinstitute.org/tag/qatar-holding/>

remembered, take a long time to develop and cannot be had to order (Leftwich 2007). In one sense the states with a longer history in the region have developed stronger and more distinctive political cultures which are a mark of state maturity. State branding may be interpreted as signifying a lack of political maturity.

These three strategies are arguably central to the remarkable transformation of Qatar since 1995. As will be discussed below, this transformation has occurred simultaneously with the country's pursuit of high profile conflict mediations, which also lend credence to its independence in foreign affairs. Time and resources invested in post-conflict contexts help to publicise Qatar as a state committed to liberalisation internationally while its full range of peace engagement activities serve to define and communicate Qatar as a global brand.

While the interpretive framework offered in this paper for understanding Qatar's rise to prominence and role in peace and conflict is useful a qualification should be added: the theories are of heuristic value and cannot capture all the inherent complexities involved in the case at hand. One insight from studying states and political life in the WANA region is that many of the most developed theories of political science consistently perform poorly when explaining or predicting events. Political systems and conflicts in the region are often highly personalised and an intimate knowledge of the actors involved is required for full understanding. The Arab Spring offers one compelling example in which expectations of stability held by most observers were proven incorrect in dramatic style.

3. QATAR'S CONFLICT AND PEACE ACTIVITIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MEDIATION

Qatar's level of conflict and peace engagement has increased considerably over the past decade and its scope has extended to encompass conflict mediation and military intervention. In this section the rise of Qatar as a donor will be overviewed followed by an analysis of its motivations for engaging in conflict-affected contexts. Then a typology of Qatari engagement will be presented including an in-depth analysis of its conflict mediation activities.

Qatar has emerged as a significant 'non-traditional' donor and makes a substantial contribution to development assistance globally. In 2003 Qatar was the fourth largest non-DAC donor and the twenty fifth largest overall (Cotterell & Harmer 2005: 17) while it was the third largest non-DAC donor in 2007 (IRIN 2010).

The merging of private and public spheres is evident in several facets of Qatari life including its development and humanitarian operations. Much assistance is delivered through the non-profit Qatar Charity and the Qatar Foundation, formally a charitable organisation chaired by Sheikha Mozah, the high-profile wife of the Emir of Qatar. Qatari institutions that play a humanitarian or diplomatic role are frequently headed by a single member of the Royal family and their policies face few obstacles to implementation (Roberts 2011). This is a marked contrast to the oftentimes restrictive bureaucratic cultures in donor agencies situated in Western diplomatic capitals.

In contrast to the other Gulf state donors Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, Qatar employs direct financial transfers rather than intermediary governmental bodies, although Qatar Foundation is increasingly adopting this role (Barakat & Zyck 2010). Similarly to other non-traditional donors such as China and Brazil, Qatar is quietly offering an alternative to the conventional 'best practice' aid policies of powerful Western donors (Woods 2008). For example, Qatar and other Gulf state donors avoid conditionality and tying of aid; a practice that respects Islamic principles of charity and the sovereignty of recipient governments and communities (Barakat & Zyck 2010).

Although Qatar's assistance is global in reach it has made strong efforts to respond to crises within the WANA region, including some protracted conflicts and post-conflict environments. Qatar's multiple roles in fragile and post-conflict contexts range from immediate conflict prevention responses, to the provision of humanitarian assistance, to military intervention, to post-conflict reconstruction investment. These among other activities are discussed here before a central focus on conflict mediation is made.

Motivations of Qatari Engagement

It is important to understand the motivations for Qatar in its active engagement in humanitarian relief, conflict mediation, and peace operations. Yet the reasons for why Qatar pursues such activities have been under-analysed. Nonetheless, a number of explanations of Qatari efforts have been put forward and will be presented in this section.

Interest-based accounts have been offered to explain Qatar's new role. Gerd Nonneman states that Qatar is 'trying to somehow take the sting out of some of the worst conflicts that might rebound on its own interests' (quoted in Moran 2009). Security-based explanations have been offered to explain Qatari engagement in conflict and post-conflict contexts. It has been argued that Qatar engages in mediation of regional conflicts that threaten to spillover with potentially destabilising consequences for the security of Qatar and other Gulf states. This explanation is most convincing in the case of mediation in Yemen, where Qatar has a direct interest in preventing a 'failed state' from emerging in the Arabian Peninsula. However, in many of the contexts in which Qatar has been involved for example, Lebanon, Sudan, and Libya there is no direct security interest that can account for Qatari engagement.

Economic-interest has also been held to explain Qatar's willingness to attempt to resolve regional conflicts. For example, Qatari mediation in Yemen and interest in the Horn of Africa has been held to be partly explained as a strategy to maintain stability of states along the transit routes for its LNG exports (Gulbrandsen 2010, p.43). Gulbrandsen (2010) documents ties between Qatari business diplomacy and conflict mediation, arguing that the distinction between politics and business virtually ceases to exist. Qatar is held to have strong business interests in conflict-affected countries in the WANA region that drive its foreign policy. For example, it is argued that as a small dry desert state Qatar's food security is dependent upon imports, which motivates an interest in a stable Sudan, the breadbasket of Africa, and the possibility of post-conflict investment possibilities for Qatari companies in Sudanese agriculture. In addition, it has been argued that Qatari intervention in Libya is driven by the lucrative possibilities of oil and gas opportunities in the post-conflict period (Zhdannikov, Doherty, & Abbas 2011).

Humanitarian motives have also been assigned to the actions of Qatar. The top-down and highly centralised institutional set up of the Qatari state ensures that the desires of power-holders can swiftly become policy (Roberts 2011; Hill & Nonneman 2011). With Sheikha Mozah a powerful figure with large resources and a stated commitment to humanitarian principles, it is plausible that ethical concerns are at least in part a motive for Qatari peace-related activities. Further, it has been held that Qatar responds to regional issues out of the conviction that 'Arabs should solve Arab problems' (Roberts 2011).

Qatar's motivation for engaging in conflict and peace interventions may best be explained as a combined strategy of pursuing an independent foreign policy and state branding (Peterson 2006; Rockower 2008; also see section 2.3). Roberts (2011) holds that Qatar's proactive role in regional conflicts including its mediation efforts and intervention in Libya can be usefully analysed through the lens of 'promoting brand QatarTM' as a modern and dynamic state. To illustrate the importance of conflict mediation and peace engagement to the

Qatari state an interview with Emir Al-Thani published in the Financial Times (2010) is worth quoting at length.

Financial Times: Your Highness, Gulf states in general are all developing rapidly, but what distinguishes Qatar from the other states? What makes you and your policies special?

Sheikh Hamad: I think every country has its own special situation and peculiarities. We, in Qatar, focus our attention on education, on health reform, and also investment both internally and externally. We try and stay away from arming and army issues. We are a peace loving nation: our aim is always to live in peace and do away with conflict. We are always ready and prepared to play a mediating role in any conflict... This is what we focus our attentions on. It is important to note that when it comes to mediation the parties involved in conflicts come to us; they approach us and they ask us to play this role for what they know of our being on the neutral side. We do not take any sides in conflicts.

It is clear from the Emir's statement that conflict mediation and a vision of peace is conceived as a distinguishing feature of the Qatari brand. Qatar's foreign policy, including its conflict mediation, have been held to award the state 'regional prominence and thrust it into the limelight' (Rabi 2009). As Gulbrandsen (2010, p.74) argues in the context of Darfur, mediation is 'likely driven, at least in part, by the attention which the Doha process brings to the Qatari capital, and its latest "brand" of "regional peacemaker"'.

To illustrate this relatively new dynamic a contrast may be drawn between Qatar in 1975 when its foreign aid disbursements were 15.6% of its GDP and it was described as 'keeping a relatively low profile in publicity on the country's activities' (Mallakh 1979, p.155), and the outreach scheme launched to publicise reconstruction funding in southern Lebanon in 2006. The discrepancy between Qatar's pledges and disbursements of financial assistance to conflict-affected contexts signifies the use of publicity surrounding aid to bolster the image of the state as committed to peace. This is symptomatic of a wider trend in regional donorship whereby 'many Arab countries appear to be using aid (or unfulfilled offers of aid) primarily as a means of public relations or foreign policy' Zyck & Barakat (2010, p.60).

With powerful regional neighbours such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, Qatar as a small state has a security dilemma. Qatar has been held to contradict the predictions of realist theories of international relations that small states will find it rational to maintain a low profile (Peterson 2006; Cooper & Momani 2010; Farha 2010). However, contrary to these theories, through its distinctive actions on the regional and global stage Qatar has gained an influence and reputation that is disproportionate to its size (Hamid 2011). Engaging in peacemaking has enabled the Qatari state to gain domestic and international legitimacy and thereby enhance its long-term survival prospects (Peterson 2006).

Qatar's role as a regional broker emerged in the context of the failure of regional security mechanisms in the wake of the First Gulf War and the subsequent need to pursue an independent foreign policy (Rabi 2009; also see section 2.3). Acting as an impartial broker willing to talk to all parties to regional conflicts

contributes to the perception that Qatar is following an independent stance in international affairs. Also, Qatar's actions may be interpreted in light of its long-standing rivalry with Saudi Arabia and desire to distinguish its approach to regional politics from that of its larger neighbour. For example, Qatari investments in post-July War Lebanon and intra-Palestinian negotiations have been seen to be in part motivated by Qatari-Saudi rivalry. Additionally, it has been held that Qatar's mediation of the Sa'ada conflict in Yemen was driven by 'brotherly competition' to prove that it has a large capacity and can play a big regional role.¹⁵

All the above explanations contain part of the answer to the question of why Qatar engages in peace and conflict activities. While interest-based accounts can help explain Qatar's involvement in some contexts, for example the Saada mediation in Yemen, Qatar has embarked on a wide range of peace-related activities that cannot be reduced to the pursuit of direct interests. A more convincing general account holds that Qatari peacemaking is driven by a broader dual strategy of state branding and pursuing an independent foreign policy, in addition to the strategic concerns analysed above. Fundamentally, Qatar's engagement with conflict-affected areas in the WANA region is not driven by an overarching ideology, organised around a clearly defined public policy, or motivated by a direct interest or threat.

3.1 FROM PREVENTION TO RECONSTRUCTION: A TYPOLOGY OF QATARI ACTIVITIES IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT CONTEXTS

CONFLICT PREVENTION

Conflict prevention and peacekeeping activities have not been a prominent aspect of Qatari engagement in conflict-affected areas. However, in September 2006 Qatar pledged to commit 200 to 300 troops to a UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, becoming the first Arab state to do so (MEJ 2007, p.137). As part of the Qatari mediation of the Djibouti-Eritrea border dispute in 2010 (more on this below) a team of Qatari peacekeepers were dispatched to the disputed boundary to monitor the terms of the ceasefire agreement. In addition, as the 2011 conflict in Libya unfolds a debate is emerging about the possibility of ground forces being sent to protect civilians. In such an event it is possible that Qatari troops would form part of an international peacekeeping force (Roberts 2011).

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Qatar has given billions of dollars in response to emergencies around the world. Help has been offered in many contexts of disaster relief. Following a contribution to relief efforts in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, in May 2006 Qatar donated \$100 million in aid for victims of Hurricane Katrina in

¹⁵ Interview with Yemeni senior NGO official who wishes to remain anonymous. Interview conducted on 18th May, 2011

southern USA, with over \$30 million of the total amount allocated to universities in Louisiana (Wasley 2006). A Qatari team joined the worldwide relief response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti (Gulf Times 2010) and assistance was also given to support victims of the Pakistan floods in the same year. After the 2011 tsunami and earthquake in Japan the Qatari government pledged \$100 million to assist the reconstruction process (istockanalyst.com 2011).

In addition to disaster relief Qatar has provided humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected areas. In February 2011 Qatar donated \$960,000 towards humanitarian relief supplies for Libya (Toumi 2011). Qatar Charity delivered a shipment of emergency food and medical supplies to the besieged city of Misurata through a humanitarian corridor secured by the World Food Programme (The Peninsula 2011) and the Qatar Foundation launched a programme to assist Libyan refugees in Tunisia (Toumi 2011). Qatar pledged \$30 million of relief aid after the 2008-9 Israeli invasion of Gaza. The money was pledged to UN agencies operating in Gaza including UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (UN 2009). It is reported that by October 2010 the pledge had not been disbursed with Qatari officials apparently citing 'unforeseen circumstances' (Lynch 2010). However, the UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service lists \$10 million to the WFP as a paid contribution and \$5 million to UNICEF as a pledge.¹⁶

POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

Qatar has emerged as a large Gulf State donor to post-conflict reconstruction activities, particularly to states in the WANA region. The scale of reconstruction aid has increased greatly since the 1990s. After the conclusion of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Qatar provided \$5 million in reconstruction aid to Bosnia (Barakat & Zyck 2010). This relatively small contribution is in contrast to 2006 when it is estimated that Qatar gave \$150 million in housing reconstruction assistance to post-July War Lebanon (Barakat & Zyck 2011). The average compensation per household for housing to properties of all levels of damage was \$32,389 – almost three times greater than the next largest contributor (Barakat & Zyck 2011). Qatar utilised a modality of 'direct execution' in which money was transferred directly to individual families through grants, bypassing Lebanese authorities and enhancing 'ownership' of reconstruction spending (Barakat & Zyck 2008). This contrasts with the delivery mechanism employed by Saudi Arabia in which money was transferred to Lebanese governmental agencies (Barakat & Zyck 2010).

Donations to Lebanon sparked inter-state competition in a 'Battle for Hearts and Minds' as Sunni Gulf States feared that Shiite Iran would win favour from large-scale assistance. In response, Qatar invested an estimated \$250 million in rebuilding Bint Jbeil, a Shiite area in Southern Lebanon (Barakat & Zyck 2010). Reconstruction was highly politically charged (Hamieh & Mac Ginty 2010) and great effort was made to publicise Qatari generosity for example, through the high profile visit of Emir Al Thani to reconstructed

¹⁶ UN OCHA – Financial Tracking Service – accessed 3rd June 2011 http://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=search-reporting_display&CQ=cq030611135223n32KPSIm5w

villages in Southern Lebanon in 2010 (Zaatari 2010) or the outreach campaign including advertising banners to convey the message of Qatari goodwill in 'Aita al- Cha'b (Sasso, Bekdache & Hassan 2010).

Qatar's proposal to establish a development bank in Darfur for reconstruction and development needs of the region was accepted in 2011 at a donor's conference in Cairo (ReliefWeb 2010). The investment is aimed to redress the historical under development and marginalisation of Darfur. The Qatari government has pledged to donate \$2 billion for the establishment of the bank. In addition, Qatar has invested heavily in Sudan, for example, Hassad Foods established by the Qatari Investment Authority in November 2009 signed a deal worth a potential \$1 billion to utilise arable land to supply food to Qatar (Walid 2009). Qatar has in several instances utilised the prospect of funding post-war reconstruction as a leveraging tool in conflict mediation. The \$2 billion pledged by Qatar to the recovery of Darfur is a substantial sum and encouraged rebel groups to participate in talks.

Similarly to other Gulf state donors, Qatar pledged reconstruction funds to Iraq and delivered very little. \$100 million that was pledged could not be publicly tracked (Barakat & Zyck 2010). Large pledges of aid at international donor conferences followed by failures to deliver are symptomatic of states seeking publicity for their generosity. This is a trend exhibited by many donor countries and agencies. In the case of Gulf States, the near absence of centralised publicly available aid databases renders the tracking of aid from pledge to disbursement problematic (Barakat & Zyck 2010).

Other 'softer' forms of reconstruction assistance have been provided. The Qatar Foundation/UNESCO International Fund for Higher Education in Iraq was established after a \$15million donation from Qatar. The Fund has been active in distributed materials to Iraqi universities such as laboratory and engineering equipment, classroom furniture, computers and textbooks, in addition to offering fellowships to Iraqi academics (UNESCO 2006). Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser al Missned, First Lady of Qatar, is personally involved in rehabilitating higher education in post-conflict Iraq playing a leading role in raising awareness of the plight of Iraqi academics by hosting high-profile international conferences on Iraqi higher education (UNESCO 2008).

MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LIBYA

On March 17th 2011 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1973 which authorised a no-fly zone over Libya and all necessary measures to protect civilians. Bellamy and Williams (2011) note that Qatar, alongside NATO, favoured a wide interpretation of Resolution 1973 as permitting use of force against the Libyan military because it represented a threat to civilians. Qatar has also taken the lead role among Arab nations in supporting and legitimising international intervention in Libya.

The United Kingdom and Qatar co-chaired the first meeting of the Libya Contact Group on the 14th April 2011 in Doha (Blanchard 2011). Qatar has provided six Mirage 2000-5s fighter aircraft and two C-17 A

aircraft for the no-fly zone over Libya and also for relief operations (Blanchard 2011). This support was deemed crucial to the international coalition that wanted to ensure that the intervention was not perceived as a purely Western led mission with no buy-in from Arab countries.

While many countries have supported the rebel cause in Libya, the assistance delivered by Qatar demonstrates singular characteristics – indeed, according to one analysis, ‘what makes Qatar different is the breadth and depth of its aid’ (Zhdannikov, Doherty, & Abbas 2011). Qatar was the first Arab country to recognise the Libyan Transitional National Council (TNC) (Al Jazeera 2011). Support of the ITC went further when in early April 2011 Qatar confirmed that it had sold \$120 million or 1 million barrels of oil from rebel-held Tobruk and had shipped gasoline and other fuels to Benghazi (Schreck 2011; Reuters 2011c). The income derived from these sales was important to meeting the humanitarian needs of the Libyans affected by the conflict. In early May 2011 Qatar pledged to donate \$400-500 million to the rebels while the United Arab Emirates pledged \$180 million (Mackenzie & Noueihed 2011).

Other forms of Qatari assistance include claims that Qatari banks are facilitating the re-capitalisation of the banking system in Benghazi (Abbas 2011). In addition, it has been claimed that direct military support was also forthcoming as French-made anti-tank Milan missiles were supplied by Qatar to the Libyan rebels (Nordland 2011; Black 2011). Qatar, the United Kingdom, and France argued that the shipments were permitted under the provision for protecting civilians (Black 2011). In addition, Qatari advisers are credited with playing the greatest role in providing fitness and basic infantry training the undisciplined and inexperienced rebel army in Benghazi (Walker 2011). The head of economy for the rebels expressed gratitude to Qatar stating, ‘they really helped us a lot. It’s a channel for transportation, for help, for everything’ (quoted in Zhdannikov, Doherty, & Abbas 2011).

Military intervention in Libya marks a watershed moment in Qatari involvement in conflict and peace activities. It signifies the growing confidence of Qatar’s diplomacy and increases the width of Qatari conflict engagement from relief through mediation to intervention. With the massively increased international attention on Qatar a number of explanations for its willingness to intervene have been advanced.

Conventional strategic interests have been used to explain Qatar’s intervention. First, it is suggested that Qatar is attempting to gain leverage over the post-Gaddafi leadership in Benghazi to advance its commercial interests in the oil and gas sectors (Zhdannikov et al 2011). Second, it has been argued that by supporting international intervention Qatar is attempting to curry favour with Western powers as a long-term security guarantee (Stephen et al 2011). David Roberts (2011) explains Qatar’s intervention in Libya as driven in part by a strategy of state branding in that ‘Qatar loves the limelight’ and military involvement has truly thrust the country into the international limelight with an unprecedented level of popular attention to its achievements and public profile. This argument is bolstered by Stephen et al (2011) who hold that Qatar is seeking to ‘burnish its image in the Middle East’ through supporting the Libyan rebels.

3.1 CONFLICT MEDIATION

The principal form of peace engagement pursued by Qatar has been conflict mediation, defined in its classic form as ‘a process of dialogue and negotiation in which a third party assists two or more conflicting parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict without recourse to force’ (Griffiths & Whitfield 2010). Article 7 of Qatar’s constitution requires that the state play an active role in conflict mediation. It states that:

The foreign policy of the State shall be based on consolidating international peace and security by encouraging the settlement of international disputes peacefully and supporting the right of self-determination of people; and not interfere in the internal affairs of countries; and cooperate with peace-loving nations.¹⁷

In this section some of the most high profile mediation attempts are presented. The cases fall in chronological order beginning with the proposal for a Palestinian unity government, the Houthi conflict in Yemen, the 2008 political crisis in Lebanon, the Darfur Doha peace process, and finally the Djibouti-Eritrea border dispute in 2010. Other mediation efforts have occurred, for example, the Qatari mediated prisoner release of Moroccans captured by the Polisario in Western Sahara in 2004 (ICRC 2004). Further, Qatar was frustrated in its attempts to mediate after the 2008 Israeli invasion of Gaza as Saudi Arabia emerged as the leading nation behind a unified Arab position (Rabi 2009).

PALESTINIAN UNITY TALKS

In October 2006 Qatari mediators proposed a six-point plan to secure a unity agreement between the Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah (Myre 2006). While Fatah are reported to have accepted the proposal, Hamas rejected the requirement to recognise Israel and renounce violence (Barzak 2006). The mediation ended without a deal for a unity government. However, it has been noted that in contrast with some other regional states including Egypt, Qatar was able to enter discussions due to its good relations with both Fatah and Hamas (Haaretz 2006). Rabi (2009) holds that Qatari negotiators were ‘relentless’ in their pursuit of a unity deal and suggests that Qatari efforts were in part motivated by competition with a 2002 GCC-backed Saudi Arabian unity proposal.

GOVERNMENT OF YEMEN/HOUSHI CONFLICT IN SAADA

Since 2003 the Government of Yemen has fought periodic rounds of a civil war with Zaydi Shiite rebels known as the Houthis in the northern province of Saada. Numerous ceasefire agreements have been made and subsequently failed. In May 2007 Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani visited Yemen and sent a foreign ministry delegation along with Yemeni mediators hired by Qatar to meet Houthi leaders in Yemen (ICG 2009). On 16th June 2007 a joint ceasefire agreement was announced between Government of Yemen and Houthi rebels (ICG 2009). In follow up to that agreement, on 1st February 2008 a peace agreement was signed in Doha with Qatar pledging \$300-500 million in reconstruction assistance for Saada (ICG 2009). The June 2007 and February 2008 agreements included provisions for the Government to free prisoners of war,

¹⁷ <http://www.qatareembassy.net/constitution.asp>

grant amnesties to rebels, and reconstruct war-torn areas while the Houthi rebels were expected to descend from the mountains and disarm (Dorlian 2011).

Fighting broke out shortly after the agreement and by March 2009 President Saleh announced the failure of Qatari mediation (Salmoni, Loidolt & Wells 2010). This prompted the withdrawal of the Qatari pledge of reconstruction assistance which had created soaring expectations (ICG 2009), particularly among the local populations in Saada where development projects are badly needed (Barakat, Connolly, Deely & Lewis 2011). By mid-2009 Qatar was pessimistic about its influence on the Government of Yemen and planned to revert to diplomacy rather than mediation to help resolve the conflict which could destabilise the whole region (Washington Post n.d.). On 11th February 2010 a ceasefire was announced between the Government and rebels that was not mediated by Qatar (Reuters 2010). On 29th August 2010, Qatar negotiated a renewal of the February 2010 ceasefire with a 22-point political agreement (Barakat, Connolly, Deely & Lewis 2011, p.69). These efforts eventually broke down as another round of fighting broke out (Dorlian 2011).

Mediation by Qatar in the Saada conflict may be judged as a failure. The International Crisis Group (2009) argues that the main obstacle to Qatari mediation efforts was the absence of effective follow-up mechanisms to regulate and monitor disputes in implementation and adjudication. Disagreements emerged between the Government and Houthi rebels with each blaming the other for non-implementation of the terms of the agreement (Salmoni, Loidolt & Wells 2010). Without institutionalised channels for mediating these disputes the peace agreement proved to be fragile (ICG 2009). Further, it is stated that 'the initiative essentially amounted to throwing money at a problem, hoping it would disappear'. Misuse of funds is supported by the claim that a large proportion of the financial resources paid by Qatar to the Yemeni government and opposition are transferred under the promise of reconstruction and development but in reality fuel corruption.¹⁸

Lakhdar Brahimi and Salman Ahmed (2008) argue that ignorance of the context is a common 'sin' committed in the practice of third-party mediation. It has been argued that Qatari officials did not have regularised contacts with parties to the agreement and operated without a clear understanding of the Saada context (ICG 2009). Further, it has been argued that Qatari mediation was not in alignment with traditional and customary practices of mediation or *wasata*. Salmoni et al (2010, p.186) write that 'the structure and personalities of mediation efforts, including those of Qatar, have been out of sync with traditional modes of *sulh wa tahkim*, so that the processes and resultant agreement cannot exercise adequate moral compulsion on its participants'. For example, the demand in the 2007 Doha Agreement for the Houthis to disarm while no similar demand was made on the Government, even at the symbolic level, is held to be punitive and in contradiction to the 'restorative logic of tribal mediation among equals (Salmoni, Loidolt & Wells 2010, p.186). This criticism of not recognising the equal status of parties to the conflict is contradicted by President Saleh who has levelled the charge at Qatar's mediation attempts that it has served to precisely buffer the false self-perception among Houthi rebels that they are a legitimate equal in negotiations with the Government of Yemen (Salmoni, Loidolt & Wells 2010, p.184).

¹⁸ Interview with with Yemeni senior NGO official who wishes to remain anonymous. Interview conducted on 18th May 2011.

The ICG (2009) further notes the complicating factor of competition between Qatar and Saudi Arabia led to Saudi support being channelled to the Yemeni Government and its tribal allies. Qatari involvement in the Saada region reportedly 'infuriated' Saudi Arabia and prompted them to provide assistance in an effort to scupper the 2007 Qatari mediation attempts (ICG 2009, p.17).

2008 LEBANESE POLITICAL CRISIS

Between 2006 and 2008 a political crisis erupted in Lebanon between various factions with political gridlock and protestors staging continuous sit-ins in downtown Beirut. The crisis escalated on May 6th 2008 when Prime Minister Fouad Siniora attempted to dismantle Hezbollah's communications infrastructure and remove the head of Beirut Airport. Hezbollah and Amal responded by constructing numerous roadblocks and taking control of much of West Beirut (Cutler 2011). Gun battles erupted in Beirut in fighting that brought Lebanon to the brink of another civil war (Quilty 2008; Hajjar 2009).

A group of regional states led by Qatar held crisis talks between the Lebanese parties to the conflict in Doha. On 21st May 2008 the Doha Agreement was signed in an agreement that brought an end to the 18 month crisis. The main points of the agreement were firstly to that the compromise candidate General Michel Suleiman, head of the Lebanese National Army, would become President and secondly that a national unity government would be formed with a stipulated balance between the parties that gave Hezbollah a de facto veto.

The majority of references to the May 2008 Doha Agreement hold that it was a success, with some analysts noting that it was a resounding triumph where all other efforts had failed (Rabi 2009). Moran (2009) holds that prior frustrated efforts to secure peace between Palestinians and Israelis had made Qatar seem a lightweight player, only for the success in Lebanon in 2008 to shatter that perception. One factor enabling such success was the good faith in which Qatar was held by the parties to the negotiations which allowed Qatari mediators to assume a powerful role in reaching a compromise agreement (Haddad 2009). Also, 'personal and insistent intervention' by Qatari mediators is held to be a critical factor because Lebanese crises are held to be intractable when left to domestic actors alone (Haddad 2009; Hajjar 2009).

A swift outcome to negotiations was aided by promises of investment totalling around \$300 million which provided leverage over the parties and secured a brokered agreement, prompting Rabi (2009) to describe the mediation as a form of 'checkbook diplomacy'. Further, Gulbrandsen (2010, p.55) holds that large Qatari investments in Syria provided crucial leverage over Damascus as a potential spoiler in the process.

However, it has been argued that the resolution of the Lebanese political stalemate was addressed in a crisis management mode that failed to resolve the deep rooted conflict (Haddad 2009). Firstly, Qatari mediation has been criticised for being inconsistent with the customary mediation practices in Lebanon.

While Qatari mediators could at one level frame negotiations within Arab norms and customs, 'Qatari mediators advocated settlement accords compatible with notions of justice that are accepted in their societies and are less concerned with lasting settlements in the very different context of Lebanon' (Haddad 2009).

Secondly, the Doha Agreement, in contrast to the Taif Accords, was about process in the form of re-apportioning votes rather than structural transformation. Hajjar (2009) writes that the agreement 'sought to establish dialogue and consensus among the feuding Lebanese politicians and to reject confrontation and force as political means' (Hajjar 2009). While the Doha Agreement enabled the resolution of the political deadlock, long-term issues of the structure of political institutions were not addressed (Makdisi, Kiwan & Marktanner 2010). Rather, it has been contended that the Doha Agreement made national-level policy changes more problematic and therefore 'further strengthened the sects and their roles as states within a state' (Reiche 2011).

In sum, the mediation may be judged a short-term success. However, the Doha Agreement proved to be a short lived solution to Lebanon's deep political crisis. In January 2011 the Lebanese government collapsed due to a Hezbollah walk-out prompting another round of frustrated mediation led initially by Syria and Saudi Arabia and then Turkey and Qatar that attempted to resolve the new political crisis (Evans 2011). The periodic crises and breakdown of agreements is in part symptomatic of the permanent mode of conflict management and a lack of transformative skills on the part of third-parties to the Lebanese context.

DARFUR AND THE DOHA PROCESS

Conflict erupted in Darfur in March 2003 as rebel groups mobilised against the Government of Sudan with the stated grievance of the marginalisation of Darfur. Resolution of the highly complex conflict has been made more difficult due to the many rebel factions and splinter groups that have emerged and the interconnections between the Darfur conflict and the North-South conflict in Sudan. In 2006 the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed but only between the Government and one rebel group, the Sudanese Liberation Army.

In September 2008 Qatar was appointed as the Arab League representative to mediate talks between the Government of Sudan and various Darfur rebel groups (Green 2009). Qatari mediation was designated to work alongside the African Union and United Nations joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole, foreign Minister of Burkina Faso. The Doha talks were planned as a multi-track process with one track for the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the powerful Islamist rebel group, and another track for non-JEM groups, with the prospect of merging the two-tracks at a later date (Enough Project 2010).

In February 2010 President Bashir and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) signed a ceasefire Framework Agreement in Doha (UN 2010) and President Bashir declared the war over (BBC 2011). The agreement included articles covering an immediate ceasefire, amnesty for JEM fighters, release of prisoners

of war, the incorporation of JEM into the political process, armed forces, and security services, and compensation for refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).¹⁹ The Framework Agreement was welcomed by leading members of the international community. In March 2010 Sudanese Government and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), itself an amalgamation of rebel groups formed during the mediation, signed a ceasefire agreement in Doha.

However, not all rebel groups were represented by the umbrella groups at the talks and fighting continued. The most militarily powerful rebel group, the JEM on 4th May 2010 withdrew from Qatari sponsored peace talks citing Government attacks on their positions, only to return to negotiations in December 2010 (Reuters 2010b). The Framework Agreement was not followed up with a Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Doha continued to play host to talks and a fresh round of negotiations was initiated in December 2010. Momentum gathered throughout early 2011 with concerted diplomatic efforts and an important moment in the Doha process occurred in July 2011 the Sudanese government and the LJM signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (Jones 2011).

It should be noted that the role of Qatari mediation in the Doha talks differed from its function in other contexts such as Yemen or Lebanon. While the Qatari foreign minister was prominent alongside the UN/AU joint Chief Mediator, there were many other third-parties involved in the long and complex mediation process. In some instances it is therefore difficult to isolate the impact of Qatar's mediation efforts on the outcomes of the process without further in-depth research.

A clear example of Qatari influence on the process is the use of money as a tool to leverage parties towards agreeing to sign a peace document (Gulbrandsen 2010). During negotiations with the LJM Qatar promised to invest \$2 billion and establish a development bank for Darfur once a peace agreement had been achieved (Sudan Tribune 2011). Further, the establishment in 2008 of a joint Qatari-Libyan investment fund with \$2 billion capitalisation was established which alongside other mutual business interests served to solve the problem of Libya as a potential external spoiler to the negotiations (Gulbrandsen 2010, p.72).

Doha's perceived neutrality is understood to provide a uniquely facilitative platform for talks²⁰. The selection of Doha as a venue was agreed upon by the Arab League and African Union. Qatar has financed large numbers of Sudanese delegates in Doha over a long period and has organised a series of workshops, conferences, and meetings. Arguing that neutrality has enabled Qatar to effectively mediate the dispute, Al Zein (quoted in Doherty 2010) states that 'to mediate between all the different sides -- Chad, Libya, Egypt, the Arab League, the African Union, the UN -- is quite a complex endeavour. They've tried to provide an environment for all the groups to unite, and I think they've been successful.'

The use of Doha as a platform, however, has not been without criticism as the supposed neutrality of the Qatari mediators has been challenged by some of the parties to the conflict. Some rebel factions have alleged that Qatar is not an appropriate mediator because it is partial to the Government of Sudan (Jibril 2010). It has been noted that there is some hostility to Arab countries amongst the negotiating Darfuri

¹⁹ See text at <http://blogs.ssrc.org/sudan/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Doha-Accord.pdf>

²⁰ Interview with David Roberts, Qatar University, May 2011

groups and a perception shared by some that the Arab states are only interested in Darfur to shield President Bashir from indictment for war crimes by the International Criminal Court (Ibrahim 2010). The Government of Sudan advocates the conclusion of the Doha talks and the initiation of a Darfur Political Process (DPP) leading to an inclusive consultation with all rebel groups and Darfuri civil society (US Dept of State 2011). In addition to the Government of Sudan, three Darfuri Arab tribal leaders also advocate a Darfur-Darfur peace process. It is stated that 'the Doha talks are not viewed favorably because they have focused on the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and leave out the Darfuri Arab tribes' (Stewart 2011).

Despite such positions, the location of Doha brings distinct advantages to peace talks. Characterising the positive affect of Doha on negotiations, Sudanese anthropologist, Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf (2010), writes that, 'prepared to renounce the discourse of victimization, Darfurians in Doha exhibit greater commitment to deal with the problematic native politics; the prospects of reconciliation; citizenship; Darfuri-Darfuri dynamics; banditry; border disputes; water, land, and the environment; and Islamism'. While it may be true that hosting talks in a city with greater historical ties to Darfur such as Cairo would enable mediation by those with greater contextual knowledge of the conflict, the venue would be less neutral and the above described psychological dynamic of greater openness would be impeded with potentially negative consequences for open dialogue about difficult issues.

Further, Doha's strength as a peace venue arguably includes its emerging civil society in addition to its formal state institutions. Qatar is home to one of the largest Darfuri diasporas in the world. Civil society organisations in Qatar, for example the Qatari Red Crescent, have mobilised around the cause of Darfur and have taken the lead in reaching out to the Sudanese diaspora in Doha and civil society in Darfur (Abusharaf 2010).

Other criticisms have been levelled at the Doha process. The Enough Project (2010) holds that the design of the negotiation process was flawed that that the initial JEM-Government deal 'has given way to a messy, poorly coordinated, multi-track structure that has discouraged transparency, substance, and inclusiveness'. Further, they hold that the multi-track design may have perpetuated divisions among the many rebel groups rather than encouraging unity.

The Doha talks have been characterised as failing to be inclusive of all of the main parties to the Darfur conflict (Jibril 2010). One charge levelled against the 2011 Doha Agreement is that by only including the LJM and excluding key groups such as the JEM and SLA factions the document brings little chance of peace and may even worsen the conflict (Jones 2011). This is a particular concern in Darfur where there are many parties to the conflict and previous agreements have failed to include a sufficient array of groups to be meaningful (Brahimi & Ahmed 2008). The mediation has also been held to have excluded groups such as Internally Displaced Persons, women, and civil society. A USIP (2010) report states that 'the present track-one rebel-government process is insufficient to bring peace to Darfur'. Civil society conferences have been convened for Darfuri participants in Doha since 2008 although outside formal negotiation channels. The USIP report argues that inclusion of civil society groups in any peace process is a necessity for success.

Competing claims have been made about the timing of negotiations. In 2010 Ahmed Hussein, spokesperson for the Justice and Equality Movement, claimed that Qatari mediators were pressurising Chief Mediator Bassole to ensure progress when the moment was not right for the parties to move forward because the Qatari delegation were wary of the danger that Egypt or Libya became the preferred host for negotiations (Quinville 2010). Contrarily, a network of advocacy groups issued a Roadmap for Peace in Darfur which contains an implicit criticism of the Doha process as too slow and uncoordinated (Enough Project 2011). The report recommends a post-Doha mediation approach that is more proactive in tabling proposals around a single framework document.

DJIBOUTI-ERITREA BORDER DISPUTE

A long standing border dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti centres on the Doumeirah peninsula. The boundary was demarcated by French and Italian colonial authorities in 1900-01 and 1935. Violent skirmishes occurred in 1996 and 1998 and escalated between 2008 and 2010 with at least 35 deaths during border clashes between the armies of the two states in June 2008 (Boundary News 2010). Between 2008 and 2010 the two armies took forward positions facing one another along the disputed boundary. On 9th June 2010 a ceasefire agreement mediated by Qatar was reached. Around 20 Qatari soldiers were stationed along the border to monitor the implementation of the terms of the agreement. The United Nations Security Council (2010) issued a statement supporting the agreement while the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton (EU 2010) commended the 'personal commitment of the Emir of Qatar'.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. EVALUATING QATARI MEDIATION

There several competing views on how best to conduct evaluations of conflict mediation efforts. Lakhdar Brahimi and Salman Ahmed's (2008) paper offers a framework for understanding mediation organised around 'Seven Deadly Sins' that are commonly committed by mediators. An Initiative for Peacebuilding paper entitled 'Evaluating Peace Mediation' and supported by Safer World, offers a comprehensive framework for evaluating mediation with categories derived from an earlier OECD peacebuilding evaluation tool (Lanz, Wahlisch, Kirchhoff, & Siegfried 2008).²¹ While no single approach is alone adequate for capturing the case of Qatar's mediation efforts given the complexities of the subject, the Initiative for Peacebuilding framework will be utilised here in a selective process that also draws on evaluative insights from other sources within the conflict mediation literature.²²

Lanz et al (2008) propose three models of mediation in a typology of conflict mediation efforts. Firstly, power-based, deal-brokering mediation in which mediators utilise manipulative tactics such as carrots and sticks in order to provide leverage on the parties to agree to a brokered deal. Secondly, interest-based, problem-solving mediation in which mediators adopt a more facilitative approach, support ownership by conflict parties, and strive to satisfy all parties' interests. Thirdly, transformative, long-term mediation is a multi-level intervention with the aim of altering the relationships between parties, their self-perceptions, and perceptions of other parties in a long-term process of empowerment.

Power-based mediation best describes the approach adopted by Qatar in the cases of conflict mediation analysed in the preceding section. Most small states do not have the strength and resources to attempt power-based mediation. Qatar however is an exception in that its vast financial resources offer the ability to offer incentives (carrots) to parties to the conflict rather than punishments (sticks). While Qatar's peripherality to the great power contests in the region have enabled it to adopt a prominent role as a mediator, its power is dependent on supporting diplomatic initiative with financial resources derived from oil and gas revenues (Moran 2009).

However, Qatar does not exercise pure power mediation typified by the USA. Rather, in addition to power derived from rewards, Qatar exercises legitimate and referent power largely based upon its credentials as an Arab and Islamic society which offers greater cultural legitimacy than Western third-parties in societies in conflict in the WANA region. The three strategies highlighted of state branding, an independent foreign policy, and political and economic liberalisation all contribute towards these two forms of power. By

²¹ The paper offers seven evaluative categories with questions for each category. The categories are relevance, effectiveness and impact, sustainability, coherence and coordination and linkages, coverage, and consistency with values.

²² See GSDRC website section on Ending Violent Conflict – Third Party Mediation for access to the state-of-the-art conflict mediation literature. Available online at: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/conflict/chapter-3-preventing-and-managing-violent-conflict/ending-violent-conflict-third-party-mediation>

adopting forms of liberalisation Qatar has garnered legitimacy with global powers and organisations that has enabled the state to operate more effectively in the diplomatic sphere. Independence in foreign affairs confers legitimacy as a neutral actor and therefore eases access to mediation contexts. Branding Qatar as an Islamic and Arab yet modern state builds a form of referent power based on the identification of parties to conflicts in the WANA region with Qatar as a third-party.

Money as a Means of Mediation

The impact of Qatar's use of financial incentives in leveraging peace deals may be evaluated in terms of short and long-term impact. In the short-term the use of 'carrots' may be beneficial for initiating negotiations. Financial incentives have been used in Darfur with business deals to sweeten potential spoiler states such as Libya (Gulbrandsen 2010, p.75), promises of reconstruction financing used to maintain commercial relationships with governments such as Sudan and Yemen, and financial payments of \$300-500 million to bring conflict parties to negotiations in Lebanon (Rabi 2009). It has been remarked that Qatar is one of the few countries in the world that can afford to pay money to bring about an end to fighting.²³ More cynically, Abdul Moneim Said states that 'Doha can bribe two or three factions to sign anything' (quoted in Weber 2010).

However, a policy of relying on money as a tool to leverage conflict mediation may prove unsustainable in the long-term because once the incentives are withdrawn the peace agreement may break down. Failed Qatari mediation of the Saada conflict is described as amounting to throwing money at the problem (ICG 2009). Furthermore, financial power-based mediation can negatively impact upon the 'coverage' of issues by attracting conflict parties to negotiations on the basis of short-term calculations rather than a will to address underlying conflict dynamics. Qatari 'checkbook diplomacy' (Rabi 2009) may be argued to perpetuate a crisis management mode rather than a conflict transformation mode. While hailed as a success in the short-term for delivering an agreement where others had all failed, the 2008 Doha Agreement has been argued to have focussed more on process than structure and was therefore unable to address deep causes of the Lebanese crisis.

It is argued in this paper that Qatar's mediation activities form part of its broader strategy of state branding (see section 3). When Qatari mediation is framed in the approach of state branding the dynamic of 'checkbook diplomacy' becomes clearer. For a state that wishes to project an image of itself as independent there is no better form of place branding than adopting the role of third-party mediator in armed conflicts because the position is conventionally understood to be impartial by definition. In the calculation of the Qatari state the benefits to its image of a short-term deal leveraged with financial incentives easily outweighs the negative impact of the breakdown of an agreement years later that will receive less media coverage and may be explained *ex post facto* as dependent upon other variables. Crucially, this drive for state recognition may be held to have a net negative impact on the sustainability of mediation interventions because of this incentive for short-term success over long-term transformative change.

²³ Interview with David Roberts, Qatar University, May 2011

In terms of efficiency it may be stated that Qatar's bountiful financial resources have enabled it to pursue mediations that are costly in time and money. A positive consequence of ample resources is that while aid budgets were being cut in Western diplomatic capitals in response to the 2008 global financial crisis Qatari spending on peace and conflict activities was not adversely affected. Further, vast wealth offers a practical advantage in that large numbers of participants in talks can be accommodated at Qatar's expense for long periods, for example the hosting of Darfuri delegations in the Doha talks. However, this has brought the criticism that participants to talks are content with lengthy negotiations while personally benefitting from the luxury setting of Doha.

Qatar's Perception as a Neutral Third Party

Conventional conflict mediation theory postulates that mediation should be conducted by an impartial and neutral external arbiter (Mitchell 2008). It is theorised that these two qualities enable both parties to accept the mediator and establish trust. From this perspective, Qatar's principal strength is that it has generally been perceived to be a relatively neutral mediator whereas other regional actors including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, or the United States are held to have vested interests. For example, in Palestinian unity negotiations, the Lebanese political crisis of 2008, and the Yemeni conflict Qatar's neutral position enabled it to adopt the role of mediator. Relatedly, Doha was held in the Lebanese and Darfur cases to be a neutral venue that facilitated the process of negotiations. However, this quality of neutrality has come under increasing strain (more on this below).

Moran (2009) explains that Qatar has gained a reputation as a relatively trustworthy and neutral arbiter because it is not a 'primary competitor' in the strategic geopolitics of the Arabian Gulf. Relative neutrality was crucial to the success of Qatar in negotiating a solution to the Lebanese political crisis in 2008. Unlike its large regional neighbours, Qatar was perceived to have few direct interests in favouring a particular faction in the dispute. Similarly, mediation of the Yemeni conflict between the Government of President Saleh and the Houthi rebels was aided by the perception of Qatar as an impartial broker.

However, Qatar has not been hailed as neutral by all parties to the conflicts in which it has mediated and as the state's profile has increased the perception of neutrality has been challenged. Mediation of the Saada conflict was criticised by Saudi Arabian media as influenced by Iran and designed to prevent the Houthi rebels from an expected outright military defeat (ICG 2009). In April 2008, Ethiopia severed diplomatic ties with Qatar stating that Qatari support for Eritrea made it a 'major source of instability in the Horn of Africa' (quoted in Worth 2008).

Qatar's status as a relatively neutral broker in the WANA region has been challenged by the events of 2011. Military intervention in Libya has created unease amongst states in the region (Zhdannikov, Doherty, & Abbas 2011) and drawn criticism that Qatar is conferring regional legitimacy on Western intervention in an Arab Muslim country. Qatari armed forces accompanied a GCC force led by Saudi Arabia to form the Peninsula Shield Force in defence of the monarchy during Bahrain's popular uprisings. Qatar's support of protestors and rebels in Libya stands in contrast to its support of the monarchy in Bahrain and has been held to raise a contradiction within Qatar's approach to the Arab Spring (Loudon 2011).

In April 2011 President Saleh of Yemen accused Qatar of conspiring against his country and objected to the presence at a planned signing of Qatari negotiators who he claimed were the main drivers of a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) proposal for a power transition that would include President Saleh stepping down (Reuters 2011). President Saleh claimed that Qatar and Al Jazeera were responsible for the widespread unrest in the region and were orchestrating a plan to topple his regime. In early April 2011 Yemen withdrew its envoy from Qatar in protest at GCC plans and told a rally of his supporters, 'we don't get our legitimacy from Qatar or from anyone else ...we reject this belligerent intervention' (Reuters 2011b). This position is a swift departure from the supposed neutrality exercised by Qatari mediators in the Houthi conflict only nine months previously and contrasts markedly with President Saleh's statement in 2008 that 'God willing we will be fortunate enough to have Qatar host a Palestinian-Palestinian meeting' (Reuters 2008).

It can be concluded from this brief discussion that the quality of neutrality that was widely attributed to Qatar when it adopted a conflict mediation role has been increasingly challenged. Strains on the perception of Qatar as a neutral honest broker occurred over several years in various contexts. Dramatic developments in the Arab Spring in 2011 have accelerated this trend as Qatar has been placed under the scrutiny of the international limelight. The implication of this development is that Qatar's involvement in some conflict-affected contexts in the WANA region may be more problematic, particularly in securing acceptance as a third-party actor in conflict mediation. However, it must be qualified that this trend should not be overstated as Qatar may still possess a more neutral image than other regional states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Value-based mediation

Consistency with values offers another criterion for evaluating mediation and conventionally refers to the fit between a third-party intervention and the 'universal' values promoted by Western donors such as good governance, democracy and human rights. Qatar's approach exhibits divergence and follows an independent and less normative stance. A neglected yet more important aspect of value consistency is the extent to which mediation efforts are congruent with the values of the 'recipient' societies particularly in terms of indigenous methods of dispute and conflict resolution.

Qatar's status as an Arab and Islamic country arguably provides it with a competitive advantage over Western third parties in mediating conflicts in the WANA region. This is particularly the case within the global context of multiple conflicts involving Islamist non-state actors that are highly complex and require mediators with cultural acceptance and understanding (Griffiths & Whitfield 2010). At a superficial level Qatar has been perceived to be offering a culturally authentic alternative to Western mediators who have been criticised for importing 'universal' norms into conflict settings with negative impacts (Mac Ginty 2008). This perception of Qatar as a culturally appropriate third-party is bolstered by the self-image that Qatar wishes to portray as an Arab and Islamic mediator in a strategy of state branding targeted at a regional

audience. In one sense this is correct, as for example it was seen in the Lebanon case that Qatari mediators could frame the talks in Arab norms that are appropriate for the context.

However, it has been seen in the cases of the Doha Agreement in Lebanon and the Saada conflict that Qatari mediation was not consistent with local customary practices of mediation (Haddad 2009; Salmoni et al 2010). Rather, a closer investigation reveals that Qatari mediation does not offer the culturally appropriate alternative to Western mediation that has been attributed to it. While this is a weakness in the Qatari approach to mediation it also represents a significant opportunity for change. The above analysis of the comparative advantages of Qatar as a potential mediator remains true. With greater foundational preparatory work that enables a holistic understanding of the contexts of third-party intervention Qatar has the potential to perform a path-breaking role as mediator in the WANA region.

Informational and Human Capacities of Qatari Mediation

Relevance refers to the relationship between mediation strategy and the broader context of intervention (Lanz et al 2008). A deficit in knowledge about best-practice mediation, post-settlement implementation, and ceasefire monitoring has been identified as a central dynamic within the field of peacemaking (Crocker 2007). There is a perception that Qatar does not approach mediation based on best-practice tools and lessons derived from academic or policy literature.²⁴ Rather, Qatar relies upon the capabilities of its individual mediators, for example, Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Al-Thani is the Qatari Prime Minister and also Foreign Minister and has played a prominent personal role in conflict mediation throughout his career. In several of the conflict mediation cases, notably Palestine, Lebanon, and Darfur, the qualities of persistency and commitment were attributed to Qatari negotiators. In addition, knowledge of the local context is frequently gathered from expatriates in Qatar, for example, the relatively large Darfuri and Yemeni expat communities.²⁵

Sustainability of Qatari mediation is hampered by weak bureaucratic capacity to monitor and implement peace agreements. A lack of follow up and monitoring mechanisms hampers the effectiveness of implementation attempts, for example, the lack of institutionalised channels for mediating disputes was found to be an obstacle to success in Yemen (ICG 2009). This aspect of Qatar's approach is not well documented and requires further primary research. However it may be qualified that the weakly institutionalised structure of Qatar's humanitarian and peace efforts offers the advantage of there being no obstacles to implementing of policies and directives of key power holders (Roberts 2011).

5. THE NEXT PHASE OF QATAR'S PEACE ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

As can be seen from the above discussion of neutrality, the regional context in which Qatar operates is undergoing a dramatic transformation. Beginning in Tunisia in late 2010, the Arab Spring or Arab Awakening is reshaping the contours of the WANA region. One example of an abrupt transition is the shift

²⁴ Interview with David Roberts, Qatar University, May 2011

²⁵ Ibid

in Qatari formerly strong relations with Syria to diplomatic isolation of the Syrian regime due to its repressive response to domestic protests.²⁶ The context of Qatari engagement has changed due to the external developments with a proliferation of crises and explosion of popular protest movements and the internal factor of Qatar's evolving role within the ongoing developments.

Qatar has enormous potential as a conflict mediator in the WANA region, in particular in relation to a region-wide cooperative alliance for peace. With conflict and crisis engulfing almost all regional states but in particular Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, the possibility of a single third-party mediator resolving the regions problems has been reduced. There is a growing need to build region-wide cooperative responses to the political and social conflicts within the WANA region (bin Talal in WANA Forum 2009). Gulf Cooperation Council efforts to mediate the Yemeni crisis offer one such regional response, despite Qatar's withdrawal from Yemen in May 2011. The GCC is a more effective third party than Western actors in Yemen because it has much greater ease of navigating the complex domestic array of actors and in particular, the informal networks of power and local power holders (Hill & Nonneman 2011).

However, there are tensions between GCC approaches in Yemen and Bahrain. While a collective interest in maintaining stability in Yemen led to the mediation attempt, the decision to send troops into defend the monarchy in Bahrain signifies the fear held by GCC elites of similar situation unfolding in their domestic arenas. Additionally, the response to the unrest in Bahrain was complicated by confusion engendered by the fact that the threat was internal while the GCC Peninsula Shield Force was devised to respond to external threats. Proposals to expand the GCC to include Jordan and Morocco, two regional states with strong militaries and intelligence services, would extend the geographical reach of the Council while maintaining its status as a group of Monarchical regimes (Razoux 2011). The new formation can be interpreted as a strategic counter-bloc to the revolutionary protests sweeping Arab Republics in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Syria. Further, the inclusion of Jordan can serve as a strategic buffer state between the GCC and an increasingly unstable Syria.

Interactions between the states of the Gulf take place both inside and outside of the GCC. Different sectors of cooperation have differing levels of institutionalisation within GCC channels. GCC diplomatic activity in relation to mediation has a relatively low level of institutionalisation compared to the economic sphere. Further, formal GCC efforts may be dominated by the efforts of a single state (Pinfari 2009). Multilateral organisations engaging in conflict mediation have recently embarked on a learning process with the UN taking the lead in establishing a Mediation Support Unit. Mediation under the auspices of the GCC would benefit from establishing a similar unit capable of providing intelligence, training, and greater capacity to manage complex mediation tasks.

Upheavals in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and elsewhere have prompted Western donors to pledge billions in aid to assist transitions in the Arab world to peaceful democratic states. Qatar and other Gulf state donors have contributed large sums of money to states across the region and in some contexts have provided greater sums than those provided by Western donors. While an international aid architecture and global 'best-practices' exist for the OECD aid community, the Arab Gulf states employ a more individualised and

²⁶ <http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/07/18/idINIndia-58320620110718>

idiosyncratic approach to aid policy. With greater international donor priority placed on assistance to fragile, post-conflict and transitional states in the WANA region there will be greater attention on the extent to which Gulf state assistance aligns with or diverges from 'best practice' approaches to aid, third party intervention in conflict-affected contexts, and policy towards fragile states.

Finally, the Arab Spring could alter the internal context of Qatar. In the short-term the regime appears safe from the type of protests witnessed in neighbouring Bahrain. With a booming economy and high profile confidence boosting actions such as winning the 2022 World Cup bid, it may indeed hold true that 'Qatari citizens simply have too much to lose by rocking the boat and disrupting the status quo' (Ulrichsen 2011). However, given the often turbulent history of the Al Thani family and the inexorable move towards popular demands for greater freedoms in the Arab World the practice of subduing the Qatari population through clientelistic networks may become harder to sustain. A move towards greater political participation and meaningful freedoms will be crucial to the medium term prospects of the regime. Additionally, there may be greater pressure to channel resources spent on external affairs into domestic spending for example, the healthcare system requires investment; in 2010 it was reported that Qatar had 1.4 hospital beds per 1000 people, the lowest in the GCC and fewer than the Democratic Republic of Congo (Lepeska 2010).

6. CONCLUSION

From a peripheral backwater of the Persian Gulf, Qatar has been transformed in the past fifty years into a rich and powerful state with a global diplomatic role. It has emerged a significant diplomatic and humanitarian actor with a diverse portfolio of activities in humanitarian aid, conflict prevention, conflict mediation, post-conflict reconstruction investment and military intervention. Qatar's reputation for neutrality, its ample resources, and small state status have enabled the country to play a prominent role as a conflict mediator in some difficult and protracted conflicts in the WANA region including a successful resolution to the Lebanese political crisis of 2008, a failed mediation of the Houthi conflict in Yemen, and the complex Darfur peace talks in Doha. These sectors and contexts in which Qatar has engaged were investigated to provide a broad overview of the country's peace engagement activities.

The approach taken in the paper has strived to offer an objective analysis of Qatar's peace and conflict engagement with a particular focus on conflict mediation. In evaluating Qatari conflict mediation, it has documented several positive factors which include the widely perceived neutrality of Qatar as a third-party, its familiarity with the cultural and social contexts of the WANA region, and positive personal attributes of Qatari officials. Negative factors include weak capacity for follow-up and monitoring, lack of transparency, and a gap between pledges and disbursement of aid. Qatar's immense wealth is seen to be both a strength and weakness of its conflict mediation, enabling initial success through 'buying peace' but exhibiting a tendency towards 'checkbook diplomacy' unlikely to address the root causes of conflicts. A central argument is that Qatar's desire to project its image in a strategy of state branding through engagement in conflict and peace has fuelled this tendency towards short-term 'checkbook diplomacy' and rendered problematic the

prospects for a long-term transformative approach to mediation that could catalyse sustainable peace. It may be stated that there is a mismatch between the qualities ascribed to Qatar, such as neutrality and shared values with conflict-affected countries that enable it to gain access as a third-party and the technocratic and institutional capacities of Qatar as a mediator to manage peace processes. This discrepancy is signified by the gap between the level of resources committed by Qatar towards mediating conflict and the mixed outcomes.

While the assessment of Qatari conflict and peace engagement has revealed some weaknesses in its approach it should be qualified that success in mediation is dependent on many factors other than the qualities of the mediator. The perceived failure of Qatar's particular mediation attempts is influenced by external and contextual factors, for example in the Houthi conflict may be explained in part as due to the unwillingness of the parties to come to an agreement or the role of Saudi Arabia as a spoiler.

There are clear limits on the power of any single mediator from the WANA region to determine the outcome of a particular conflict. Outside support for a peace process from external actors such as France or the United States is, in the final analysis, often crucial to securing the political will necessary for success. There exists a clear need for a genuine partnership in which actors from outside the WANA region engage key actors with potential to mediate conflicts and harness their distinctive styles in a complementary and cooperate rather than conflictual approach.

Competing explanations for why Qatar engages in such activities were documented, including the pursuit of national interests such as national security or business and economic ties and genuine humanitarian concern. It can be concluded that Qatar's desire to project the image of a modern dynamic and cosmopolitan state through state branding, its pursuit of a resolutely independent foreign policy, and its embrace of forms of political and economic liberalisation offer the best explanation of Qatari engagement in conflict-affected contexts.

As Qatar has evolved from debutante in the world of mediation to a confident global actor its new prominence has brought new challenges. The widely perceived quality of neutrality that enabled Qatar to assume a position as a mediator has been attacked in recent years, most notably by President Saleh in early 2011. With Qatar's profile raised to even greater heights during the 2011 Libyan civil war this trend of increasing pressures on Qatar's perception as a neutral third-party will be worthy of attention as Qatar is involved in future peace engagement activities.

Finally, the possible consequences of the Arab Spring for Qatari engagement in conflict-affected contexts must be considered. These include the need for region-wide coordinated responses to conflict and the prospect of domestic social change. The regional socio-political context in 2011 is one far removed from the environment in which Qatar operated in the mediation examples given above. Nevertheless, important

lessons may be drawn from this analysis to inform Qatari policy in fragile and conflict-affected contexts in the next phase of Qatari peace engagement. The following recommendations are derived from the above analysis of Qatar yet hold more general relevance as lessons learned that may be applicable to conflict mediation and peace engagement for other actors in the WANA region and beyond.

6.1 NEXT STEPS

- Qatar would benefit from formalising its vision and mission of peace and conflict engagement. A recurring theme is that Qatar has been perceived to have used money as a bargaining tool, even prompting the ICG to claim that Qatar was simply throwing money at the problem of Yemen. Developing a peace philosophy in harmony with traditions of the region offers the possibility of harnessing culture as a greater tool than money. It is important to the sustainability of success in Qatar's third party engagement that its impact is to create conducive conditions for negotiations between consensual parties rather than a short-term scramble for resources that breaks down when the external party leaves.
- There is a growing need for and expectation of region-wide approaches to conflict mediation and resolution. Forms of regional and international cooperation between Qatar and other partners have the potential to offer robust responses to conflicts in the WANA region. Intra-GCC conflict mediation should be the subject of further study to offer lessons for more effective future engagement.
- Developing clearer rules and a peace vision would enhance the prospects greater regional and international coordination.
- Effective engagement with conflict-affected areas requires qualified personnel with the ability to understand the context in which they are operating and master state-of-the-art practice in their field or fields of expertise. For example, in the case of conflict mediation it is crucial that negotiators are cognizant of cultural, social, and local factors such as customs, languages, norms, and power relations. In order to equip Qatari officials with the requisite skills to implement conflict and context-sensitive approaches to conflict mediation there is a need to include specialised training in Qatari universities. Fostering indigenous research capacity in this area would enable the establishment of a knowledge pool that could benefit Qatar's peace engagement capacity, the societies in which Qatar operates, and the wider policy community.
- An identified weakness of Qatar is its capacity in peace and conflict activities, for example, a lack of follow-up and monitoring mechanisms. With the ongoing turmoil in the WANA region it is to be expected that there will be greater rather than less demand for the presence of Qatar as a third party mediator or aid donor. This will inevitably place greater strain upon existing capacity. It would

be advantageous if Qatar worked with international capacity development NGOs to build critical capacity in key areas. For example, NGOs could assist with the technical side of the peace talks in preparing the ground for Qatari negotiators to enter.

- Qatar, like other Gulf States, does not have open transparent procedures governing aid and international assistance. Efforts should be made to develop institutions with a greater degree of openness and accountability.
- Gulf donors including Qatar have made large pledges of humanitarian aid that have been left unfulfilled. In order to emerge as a credible and mature donor, greater efforts should be made to honour financial commitments.

Despite the limitations identified in Qatar's current approach to conflict mediation and peace engagement it has a number of considerable strengths. Moreover, Qatar has enormous potential to become a truly path-breaking agent for peace in the WANA region. By developing its human and institutional capacities for conflict mediation and harnessing more transformative tools around a vision for peace Qatar would be well-positioned to shape a new paradigm for third-party intervention in the WANA region, the power and effectiveness of which is derived from local knowledge and cultural legitimacy in addition to financial or military strength.

6.2 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This desk research aimed to review existing literature on Qatar and provide a broad overview of its conflict and peace-related activities around the world. While there is some insightful information on this topic available there remain a number of gaps in the literature. Further primary research could seek to address these gaps. A comparative study of Qatari mediation efforts would be of particular academic value. The evaluation of these efforts in a small number of country case-studies could provide a potential methodology that would support an empirical analysis of Qatari mediation and diplomatic initiatives. Furthermore, the modalities of Qatari conflict and peace assistance have not been subject to a thorough investigation. Indications that Qatar has utilised reconstruction funding as a leverage tool in conflict mediation processes also deserves closer attention. Following on from this study, an analysis of different forms of tying aid, such as conditionality, and the sectoral balance of Qatari assistance will be the subject of further primary research and will yield a comparative study between the Qatari approach and international donor 'best practice'. Finally, Qatar's positive vision of conflict mediation and peace for the WANA region should be further investigated through in-depth interviews with key participants in Qatar's mediation and peace-related efforts. This would enable an analysis of the values which guide Qatari mediation attempts and a comparison with the value systems that guide other external mediation partners

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