



# PERSPECTIVES

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## Qatar Is Pro-Iran and Anti-Gulf Arabs

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Normalized relations between Gulf States and Israel function as a deterrent to Iran. Qatar, which favors Iran at its Gulf neighbors' expense, opposes this trend. Qatar and its Aljazeera mouthpiece must not be allowed to drive a wedge between Israel and its current and prospective peace partners in the Gulf.**

The Arab world is far less divided today than it has been in recent years, and is moving in a positive direction toward conciliation and unity. Just one Arab country—Qatar—stands out like a sore thumb against this renewed Arab consensus through its support for the Muslim Brotherhood, cozy relationship with Iran, and funding of terrorist organizations. Doha is the only Arab capital to oppose normalization and peace between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain, and it will likely reject any further peaceful developments between Jerusalem and other Gulf States.

Because of its support for the Brotherhood and Iran, which manifests in constant attempts at subversion and pot-stirring intended to undermine Arab regimes, the Gulf states imposed heavy sanctions on Qatar to isolate it diplomatically and economically. This siege had the effect of pushing Doha even more deeply into the warm embrace of Tehran and, eventually, Ankara.

Qatar, which has rendered itself an outcast in the eyes of fed-up Arab regimes, is the main loser from the Israel-UAE and Israel-Bahrain agreements. All the other Gulf states fell in line in support of the treaty, either explicitly or tacitly. Qatar, alone in its vehement objection to Israeli peace with the Gulf Arabs, has unleashed incessant vitriol against the normalization agreements, mainly through its state-owned broadcaster Aljazeera.

Aljazeera stopped pretending to be objective long ago. There are innumerable examples of this, but its lack of coverage of the protests in Iran and fulsome praise of

Qassem Soleimani, a mass murderer and terrorizer of Arabs, clearly demonstrate that Qatar has rejected its Arab identity in the sphere of Iranian influence. Aljazeera demonstrates its hypocrisy openly by broadcasting completely different messages to different audiences. When addressing the West it presents a liberal façade, but in Arabic, it fervently disseminates outrageous incitement against Israel and its deals with the UAE and Bahrain.

Aljazeera has always viciously incited against Israel and encouraged violent Palestinian “struggle.” Its reports invariably present the Palestinians as the victims of an evil, merciless Israeli regime. The fact that most of Aljazeera's employees, including more than a handful of anchors, are of Palestinian descent gives this incitement a strong tailwind.

Yet Qatar was the first Gulf State to open its gates to senior Israelis. Shimon Peres visited the emirate, and Israel opened a trade bureau there in 1996. So what changed?

When Qatar's previous emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, handed over rule of the country to his son, [Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani](#), in June 2013, relations with Israel became clandestine. Contacts between the two countries were excused as efforts to [mediate between Hamas and Israel](#), and the reason for this was its dependence on Iran and Turkey due to its isolation.

Israel's warming of relations with the Gulf region is a major achievement for both Jerusalem and the Gulf States involved. This rapprochement, which is reflected politically, culturally, and economically, shows that they desire peace and want to support the Trump administration's policies toward Iran and the Palestinians. Gulf relations with Israel are a deterrent to the Iranians, and are thus looked at with disfavor by Doha. Qatar and its Aljazeera mouthpiece must not be allowed to drive a wedge between Israel and the Gulf.

*This is an edited version of an [article](#) that appeared in Israel Today on September 10, 2020.*

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