



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**INTER-ARAB COMPETITION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GULF STATE
FOREIGN POLICIES**

by

Timothy J. Bettis

September 2021

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Afshon P. Ostovar
Michael S. Malley

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC, 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE September 2021	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE INTER-ARAB COMPETITION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GULF STATE FOREIGN POLICIES			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Timothy J. Bettis				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) While historical ties between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia date back centuries, interaction between these regions in the twentieth century has traditionally been limited to religiopolitical engagements such as the hajj, or the movement of labor and remittances. In the last decade, the strategic value of Southeast Asia has risen dramatically for a number of reasons, including the growth of the region's economies as well as the rise of India, China, and other great powers. Emerging concurrently with major economic restructuring in the Middle East and the changing security dynamics of the Persian Gulf, there is little doubt that the political, economic, and military interactions of these regions will grow. Given the growing diversity of Arab interactions in the region, this raises the question, is Southeast Asia emerging as a zone of competition between Arab Gulf states? While the literature on ties between Asia and the Middle East is growing, contemporary studies of inter-Arab competition in Southeast Asia are largely missing. Through the analytical framework of Regional Security Complex Theory, this thesis concludes that Gulf Arab outreach to Southeast Asia is neither cooperative nor competitive, largely due to a lack of serious collective threats to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) emerging from this region combined with a low degree of intra-Arab enmity.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Indonesia, competition, cooperation, Southeast Asia, international relations, regional security complex theory, Malaysia, securitization, Persian Gulf, transregional security studies, regional studies, Arab competition, Gulf Cooperation Council, Asia, Middle East, Arabian Gulf, soft power, Islam, comparative foreign policy, GCC, ASEAN			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 137	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

**INTER-ARAB COMPETITION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: A COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS OF GULF STATE FOREIGN POLICIES**

Timothy J. Bettis
Major, United States Air Force
BA, University of St. Thomas, 2011
MA, American Military University, 2015

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
September 2021**

Approved by: Afshon P. Ostovar
Advisor

Michael S. Malley
Second Reader

Afshon P. Ostovar
Associate Chair for Research
Department of National Security Affairs

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

While historical ties between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia date back centuries, interaction between these regions in the twentieth century has traditionally been limited to religiopolitical engagements such as the hajj, or the movement of labor and remittances. In the last decade, the strategic value of Southeast Asia has risen dramatically for a number of reasons, including the growth of the region's economies as well as the rise of India, China, and other great powers. Emerging concurrently with major economic restructuring in the Middle East and the changing security dynamics of the Persian Gulf, there is little doubt that the political, economic, and military interactions of these regions will grow. Given the growing diversity of Arab interactions in the region, this raises the question, is Southeast Asia emerging as a zone of competition between Arab Gulf states? While the literature on ties between Asia and the Middle East is growing, contemporary studies of inter-Arab competition in Southeast Asia are largely missing. Through the analytical framework of Regional Security Complex Theory, this thesis concludes that Gulf Arab outreach to Southeast Asia is neither cooperative nor competitive, largely due to a lack of serious collective threats to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) emerging from this region combined with a low degree of intra-Arab enmity.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION.....	2
B.	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION.....	3
C.	LITERATURE REVIEW	5
1.	The Structure of International and Regional Security.....	6
2.	Contemporary Research on Arab Cooperation and Competition	7
3.	Historic and Emerging Connectivity between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia	16
4.	Conclusion	17
D.	POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES	18
1.	H1: Gulf Arab Interaction is Competitive.....	19
2.	H2: Gulf Arab Interaction is Cooperative.....	20
E.	RESEARCH DESIGN	21
 II.	 SAUDI FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS INDONESIA.....	 23
A.	OVERVIEW	23
B.	SAUDI-INDONESIAN RELATIONS FROM 1948–1990	24
C.	INDICATORS FOR POTENTIAL COOPERATION OR COMPETITION	26
1.	Saudi Arabia’s Domestic Vulnerabilities and Threat Perceptions.....	26
D.	SAUDI FOREIGN POLICIES TOWARDS INDONESIA: 2000– 2021.....	42
1.	Strategic and Diplomatic Relations.....	43
2.	Economic and Energy Ties.....	53
3.	Environmental Security and Cooperation.....	59
4.	Security and Military Cooperation	61
E.	CONCLUSION	64
 III.	 QATARI FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS INDONESIA: 2000–2021.....	 67
A.	OVERVIEW	67
B.	QATARI-INDONESIAN RELATIONS FROM 1971–1999	68
C.	INDICATORS FOR POTENTIAL COOPERATION OR COMPETITION	69
1.	Qatar’s Domestic Vulnerabilities and Threat Perceptions	69
D.	QATARI FOREIGN POLICIES TOWARDS INDONESIA: 2000–2021.....	80

1.	Strategic and Diplomatic Relations	81
2.	Economic and Energy Ties.....	87
3.	Environmental Security Issues and Cooperation	90
4.	Security and Military Cooperation	92
E.	CONCLUSION	94
IV.	CONCLUSION	97
A.	OVERVIEW	97
B.	DISCUSSION	98
C.	IMPLICATIONS	99
D.	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	100
	LIST OF REFERENCES	103
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	121

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Analytical Framework	21
Figure 2.	Revisiting Our Analytical Framework.....	100

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATQ	Anti-Terror Quartet (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE)
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
DCA	Defense Cooperation Agreement
DDII	Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IMCTC	Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition
LNG	Liquid Natural Gas
MWL	Muslim World League
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
PAS	Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
QIA	Qatar Investment Agency
QNB	Qatar National Bank
QNFSP	Qatar National Food Security Program
RSCT	Regional Security Complex Theory
SCCC	Supreme Committee for Combatting Corruption
SFES	Special Forces for Environmental Security
UIII	Indonesian International Islamic University
WAMY	World Assembly of Muslim Youth

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you Dr. Ostovar and Dr. Malley for helping me shape my academic rambling into a coherent study that was both genuinely fun and intellectually enlightening to pursue. Thank you especially to my wife, Janessa, who not only put up with the whiteboard I brought into our home for this adventure, but who also let me buy as many books as I wanted so long as I could vaguely justify why they were relevant to this research. Without you, none of my success—in school or in life—would be possible.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I. INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, Malaysia hosted high-level officials from Turkey, Qatar, and Iran, as well as a broad array of activists and leaders from across the Muslim world in a summit designed as a “platform for various Muslim leaders to address social, political, and economic issues in the Muslim world.”¹ Notably absent from this summit were representatives from Saudi Arabia or the Saudi-led Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has traditionally served as the inter-governmental institution designed to address the plight of Muslims globally. While 2019 Kuala Lumpur Summit had signaled Malaysia’s intent to pursue a broader leadership role in the Muslim world, it had a larger impact in the Persian Gulf: it triggered a sense of insecurity in Saudi Arabia because the summit was organized outside the architecture of the OIC, threatening Saudi religious hegemony in the Islamic world.²

International gatherings of Islamist parties in Southeast Asia are nothing new. In 1988, Malaysia’s Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) coordinated the first gathering of Islamist parties and affiliated groups in a conference known as “The International Gathering for the Solidarity of Muslims.”³ Later in 2006 as a reaction to Israel’s war against Hezbollah, PAS organized the “Southeast Asian Islamic Organizations Roundtable Conference of Palestine and Lebanon in facing the Zionist and Anglo-American Imperialism.” Saudi representatives were dispatched to the 1988 conference, however they were not present in the 2006 conference. During this conference, the opening speech by former Malaysian Deputy High Commissioner to Singapore, Yeop Adlan Che Rose,

¹ Prashant Waikar and Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, “The 2019 Kuala Lumpur Summit: A Strategic Realignment in the Muslim World?,” *Berkley Forum*, Geopolitics of Religious Soft Power Project, February 24, 2020, <https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/the-2019-kuala-lumpur-summit-a-strategic-realignment-in-the-muslim-world>, para. 1.

² Waikar and Osman.

³ Joseph Chinyong Liow, “The Arab Spring and Islamist Activism in Southeast Asia: Much Ado about Nothing?,” *Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World at Brookings*, Rethinking Political Islam Series, August 2015, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Southeast-Asia_Liow-FINALE.pdf, 12.

criticized the Saudi-led OIC as “impotent” and called for “the mobilization of the Muslim ummah through a different platform.”⁴

The absence of Saudi Arabia at the 2006 and 2019 summits, as well as Qatar’s presence in 2019 highlights a key question regarding the role of Arab states in Southeast Asian politics. Are we beginning to see new manifestations of inter-Arab competition for political influence in Southeast Asia? While inter-Arab competition is a subject that began to receive more attention after the Arab Spring in 2011 and the Saudi-led blockade of Qatar began in 2017 when the cohesion of the Gulf Cooperation Council came into question, recent scholarship on this subject has focused largely on the Arab near-abroad. In recent years, Gulf Arab security interests in places like Yemen have expanded to zero-sum competitions for influence, resources, and access for Arab militaries and diplomats across the Red Sea in Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia.⁵ Southeast Asia has traditionally served as an arena of Arab cooperation, led by Saudi Arabia, and largely as an effort to contain and isolate Iranian influence.⁶ Little contemporary research has looked at the changing nature of Arab cooperation and competition in Southeast Asia, however. The purpose of this thesis is to address that research gap by expanding scholarship on this important topic.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

While historical ties between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia date back centuries, interaction between Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf in the twentieth century has traditionally been limited to religiopolitical engagements such as the hajj, the movement of labor and remittances, or limited travel for jihad in Iraq, Syria, and Indonesia.⁷ In the last decade, the strategic value of Southeast Asia has risen dramatically

⁴ Liow, 13.

⁵ Will Todman, “The Gulf Scramble for Africa: GCC States’ Foreign Policy Laboratory” (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 20, 2018), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/gulf-scramble-africa-gcc-states-foreign-policy-laboratory>; Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

⁶ Fred R. von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction Between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 62.

⁷ Sumanto Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks: Migration, Education, and Islam* (New York: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2020), 25; Michael Vatikiotis, *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict in Modern Southeast Asia* (London: The Orion Publishing Group Ltd, 2017), 230.

for a number of reasons, including the growth of the region's economies as well as the rise of India, China, and other potential great powers. Emerging concurrently with major economic restructuring in the Middle East and the changing security dynamics of the Persian Gulf, there is little doubt that the political, economic, and military interactions of these regions will grow, making the rise of Southeast Asia of critical importance to the Middle East. Given the growing diversity of Arab interactions in the region, this raises the question, is Southeast Asia emerging as a zone of competition between Gulf Arab states? More specifically, how has the nature and intensity of Gulf Arab policy towards Southeast Asia changed since 2000? Are regional conditions emerging that would promote competition over cooperation, or vice versa?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

This research question is significant for several reasons. First, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia represents a key nexus within global Islam. The King of Saudi Arabia also assumes the self-appointed title of *khadim al-haramain al-sharifain*, or the "Custodian of the Two Holy Sites," referring to Mecca and Medina, Islam's two most important religious sites, as a means of legitimizing Saudi rule and to position themselves as leaders in the global Muslim community. While the modern usage of this title reappeared in 1982 when King Khaled rose to the Saudi throne, its etymology dates back to before the Ottoman Empire.⁸ The modern Saudi state was only established in 1932; the Al Saud royal family sees themselves as the continuation of a long lineage of leaders of the Islamic ummah and aspires to have the world's 1.8 billion Muslims view them as such.⁹ Moreover, Indonesia hosts the world's largest Muslim population, whose citizens provide significant economic dividends to the Saudi regime through both migrant labor and religious tourism. While Western foreign policy over the last century has been intimately intertwined with the Muslim world, the shift of U.S. focus from the Middle East

⁸ Galal Fakkar, "Story behind the King's Title," Arab News, January 27, 2015, <https://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/695351>.

⁹ David Rundell, *Vision or Mirage: Saudi Arabia at the Crossroads* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2021), 35; Michael Lipka, "Muslims and Islam: Key Findings in the U.S. and around the World," *Pew Research Center* (blog), August 9, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>.

to the Indo-Pacific will not mark Washington's departure from the Muslim world, merely deeper engagement with different aspect of it. Washington's changing focus is already being felt in the region. According to *The Economist*, "people across South-East Asia already see America and China as two poles, pulling their countries in opposite directions."¹⁰ It is therefore critical that western policymakers carry forward into Asian security policy the hard-earned wisdom collected from decades of policy missteps in the Middle East.

Second, Southeast Asia is a region of immense strategic value and economic potential, especially to Beijing. Indonesia and Malaysia are located immediately along the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea, making Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur key players in both Asia and the world's economic future—especially in the realm of energy security. The entire region's economies together constitute the fourth largest in the world when adjusted for the cost of living, surpassed only by China, India, and the United States.¹¹ Malaysian and Indonesian economies have been growing by 5–6% over the last decade, making the region alluring to Arab states whose secure futures rely on diversified economies and broader market accesses.¹²

Third, the future unity of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is important to U.S. policy goals in the Middle East. Threats to its cohesion will directly impact the success of the American initiatives to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or contain Iran's aggressive regional behavior. Understanding and dissecting the causes and consequences of inter-Arab competition both inside the GCC and on its periphery can help policymakers better understand the stability and coherence this regional alliance.¹³

Finally, as Harry Verhoeven aptly points out, scholarship on transregional national security issues is vital to facilitate the reduction of the cognitive barriers that manifest

¹⁰ "The Battle for China's Backyard," *The Economist*, February 27, 2021, <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/02/27/the-rivalry-between-america-and-china-will-hinge-on-south-east-asia>, para. 2.

¹¹ *The Economist*.

¹² *The Economist*.

¹³ Jeffrey Martini et al., "The Outlook for Arab Gulf Cooperation," *RAND Corporation*, July 26, 2016, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1429.html.

inside governments when defense departments, intelligence services, combatant commands, or research institutions delineate regional affairs bureaus along neat categories like “Middle East” and “Asia,” inadvertently obstructing the understanding of region-to-region interactions, and impeding a “nuanced [transregional] analysis of the growing importance of states in both regions to each other’s security” thereby contributing to the “uncertainty and lack of understanding that is proving so hazardous at this moment in time.”¹⁴ This paper will begin with a concise review of literature of both theories and analytical frameworks pertinent to the concept of inter-regional security studies as they relate to the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia. It will also provide a summary of historic relations between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia, with particular emphasis on relations between Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Indonesia. Gaps in literature will be identified, especially related to contemporary research on inter-Arab competition in Southeast Asia, making this research especially pertinent to today’s discourse.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

While the literature on the extent of geopolitical and economic ties between Asia and the Middle East is growing, contemporary studies of inter-Arab competition in Southeast Asia are largely missing. This is not attributed to the irrelevance of the topic. As Christopher Davidson argues, “the rapidly tightening economic interdependence between [the Persian Gulf and Pacific Asia] is a recent phenomena [sic] that deserves considerable attention.”¹⁵ A relevant study of inter-Arab conflict in Southeast Asia must cover three categories: mainstream theories of international relations relating to the structure of international and regional security; contemporary research on inter-Arab cooperation and competition; and a survey of the Persian Gulf’s historic and expanding ties to Southeast Asia. This literature review will therefore be organized along these lines.

¹⁴ Harry Verhoeven, “The Gulf and the Horn: Changing Geographies of Security Interdependence and Competing Visions of Regional Order,” *Civil Wars* 20, no. 3 (June 12, 2018): 333–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2018.1483125>.

¹⁵ Christopher M. Davidson, *The Persian Gulf and Pacific Asia: From Indifference to Interdependence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 1.

1. The Structure of International and Regional Security

Traditional explanations of state behavior in the modern Middle East tend to favor realist arguments. Classical realism focuses on self-interested states that seek to survive in an anarchic global system. Structural realists add concepts such as the relative and absolute differences in material capabilities between states, the polarity of the global system, and its balance-of-power.¹⁶ In terms of cooperation and competition, structural theories of international relations argue that the structure of the international system determines state behavior via the changing of incentives, and therefore determines whether or not states are likely to engage in competitive or cooperative behavior with one another. While these two schools of thought are straightforward lenses through which to view changes in hard power capabilities as they relate to state insecurity, they tend to fall short in helping us understand how shared identities across regions affect other states' perceptions of security and insecurity, or how the "ideas" of a particular nation's security interests change over time. Additionally, while realist theories are straightforward in their application at the system level of analysis, they become increasingly unwieldy at the regional level and below. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver's theory of regional security complexes merges some of the fundamental principles of realism with modern constructivist principles in order to create an analytical framework to explain changing patterns of security behaviors across multiple levels of analysis.¹⁷

Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) emerged in the late eighties from the "Copenhagen School" of thought in international relations as a direct challenger to structural realism because of its emphasis on non-military aspects of power.¹⁸ The theory rests on the principle that because "most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based

¹⁶ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2001).

¹⁷ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=221064>.

¹⁸ Bill McSweeney, "Identity and Security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School," *Review of International Studies* 22, no. 1 (1996): 81–93.

clusters” known as *security complexes*. The natural result of this principle is that since the end of the Cold War, the “regional level of security has become both more autonomous and more prominent in international politics.”¹⁹ While RSCT rests within the constructivist camp, it carries forward elements of structural realism such as anarchy and polarity, while choosing instead to focus on regional security complexes (RSC) instead of the international system as the primary level of analysis. These regional complexes are defined by “durable patterns of amity and enmity taking the form of sub-global, geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence.”²⁰ Also emerging from this school of thought is the idea that certain international security problems were *constructed* by actors within the system, rather than being *intrinsic* to it, outlined by a process called “securitization.”²¹ While Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde’s 1998 book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* provides a rigorous framework for understanding and applying the theory of “securitization” to practical problems, Buzan and Wæver’s 2003 work *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* better incorporates non-state actors into the theory while also providing a matrix of analysis for area studies researchers to apply RSCT both within and across regions. Its applicability in assessing inter-Arab competition has two primary benefits. First, RSCT provides a theoretical and analytical framework to guide our research on the behaviors of states within and between regions across multiple levels of analysis. Second, it provides a basis to understand and describe the behavior of states in both hard power and soft power terms. As explored in the next section, these two factors are crucial to understand how and when Gulf Arab states choose to cooperate or compete with one another in the Persian Gulf and their periphery.

2. Contemporary Research on Arab Cooperation and Competition

When do Arab states choose to cooperate with one another and when do they choose to compete against each other? Attempts to answer this question have focused either

¹⁹ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 3.

²⁰ Buzan and Wæver, 45.

²¹ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1998), 23.

on a hermeneutic approach that seeks to understand state behavior through the motives and actions of individuals and bureaucracies central to formulating Saudi or Qatari foreign policy, or the structural approach of trying to explain the behavior of states based on the rules, actions, and incentives present in international and regional systems.²² Falling across both categories, research on the changing security structures in the Persian Gulf helps partially answer this question, with a considerable amount of contemporary research coming from the Copenhagen School. The focus on this subject has grown significantly since 2001 on account of the explanatory power that securitization and RSCT have displayed in illuminating the causes and consequences of state behavior on both sides of the Persian Gulf and Red Sea.

a. The “Securitization” of the Persian Gulf

Henner Fürtig first argued that the indefinite U.S. occupation of Iraq had altered the region’s polarity, rendering obsolete any previous security structures and transforming the Persian Gulf into a triad of U.S., Saudi/GCC, and Iranian power.²³ This unbalanced triangle creates conditions for cooperation within the GCC vis-à-vis Iran, and between the GCC and U.S. In a similar approach, F. Gregory Gause, III also argued the Persian Gulf is a regional security complex that is entirely distinct from the patterns of the Levant, despite the tendency of observers to lump the adjacent regions together.²⁴ Kristian Ulrichsen merges RSCT with emerging perspectives of human security in a bid to understand how the “post-oil era” will affect regime security and survival as gulf states seek to transition their economies away from oil.²⁵ Ulrichsen follows-up this research with additional scholarship on the changing security dynamics of the Persian Gulf, arguing that the emergence of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, major economic structural

²² Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 214.

²³ Henner Fürtig, “Conflict and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf: The Interregional Order and U.S. Policy,” *Middle East Journal* 61, no. 4 (2007): 627–40.

²⁴ F. Gregory Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5.

²⁵ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *Insecure Gulf: The End of Certainty and the Transition to the Post-Oil Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 15.

reforms in petro-states, and Iran's reengagement with the international community has militarized the GCC, adding "new sources of instability into the regional security architecture," potentially changing the way gulf states view their core survival interests.²⁶ Talal Mohammed Al-Khalifa agrees. In his 2012 dissertation at the University of Exeter focusing on a comparative study of the regional security complexes of the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia, Al-Khalifa argues that the GCC emerged as a partial response to the region's security patterns, but also serves as a securitizing actor in the region.²⁷ Research papers by Jianwei Han and Hassan Hakiaman, as well as Fatemeh Shayan have also applied RSCT to the region, focusing instead on Iranian perceptions of insecurity and its implications for the GCC.²⁸ While a study by the RAND Corporation argues that GCC cohesion varies over time but that intra-GCC cooperation is likely to continue into the near future, small states like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have often pursued interests independent of the GCC due to fears of Saudi hegemony and memories of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.²⁹ While Fürtig argued that the Persian Gulf's security balance is a triad among the U.S., Iran, and the GCC, the evidence seems to indicate that there is a significant degree of competition already occurring *within* the GCC as well.

b. "Securitization" and Competition Outside of the Persian Gulf

What about inter-Arab cooperation and competition beyond the Arabian Peninsula? The evidence of this phenomenon seems to be growing. Harry Verhoeven has examined the growing involvement of Gulf Arab states in the Horn of Africa. He finds their actions are driven only partly by shared opposition to Iran's presence in the region. By applying

²⁶ Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates, *The Changing Security Dynamics of the Persian Gulf* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 17.

²⁷ Talal Mohammed Al-Khalifa, "The Gulf and Southeast Asia: Regional Security Complex and Regional Security Community" (University of Exeter, March 2012), 3, <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10036/3625>.

²⁸ Jianwei Han and Hassan Hakimian, "The Regional Security Complex in the Persian Gulf: The Contours of Iran's GCC Policy," *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 13, no. 4 (October 2, 2019): 493–508, <https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2019.1682300>; Fatemeh Shayan, "Iran and Security Complex in the Persian Gulf," *Journal of World Sociopolitical Studies* 3, no. 1 (January 2019): 45–74, <https://doi.org/10.22059/wsps.2019.276060.1094>.

²⁹ Martini et al., "The Outlook for Arab Gulf Cooperation"; Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates, *The Changing Security Dynamics of the Persian Gulf*, 191–203.

RSCT to the Gulf Arab states, he demonstrates that structural factors are driving them to engage in a zero-sum competition for power and influence in the Horn of Africa in order to enhance their own prospects for survival.³⁰ This research was expanded upon by William Todman (2018), Jos Meester (2018), and Gerald Feierstein (2020), providing thorough cases focusing directly on zero-sum competition between Arab states in East Africa, as well as a nuanced explanation of the various types of economic, political, and military power being wielded to shape geopolitical outcomes.³¹

The guiding principle that seems to emerge from these studies, central to this thesis, is that domestic threat perceptions drive Arab states towards cooperation or competition in their foreign policies. Jos Meester, Willem van den Berg, and Harry Verhoeven's 2018 report titled "Riyal Politik: The political economy of Gulf investments in the Horn of Africa" identifies two geopolitical trends which determine the nature of Arab engagement with the Horn of Africa: Riyadh's threat perception of Iran, and enmity among Arab states.³² While Iran's Islamic Revolution is forty-two years old, Riyadh is still "convinced that Iran seeks to undermine the stability of the Gulf and encircle Saudi Arabia with Shia (or at least pro-Iranian) regimes in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen."³³ Whether it is joint Saudi-Kuwaiti funding of Salafists in Indonesia in the 1980s to counter creeping Iranian influence in Southeast Asia, or inter-GCC military operations launched from Eritrea's port of Assab into Yemen over the last five years, this age-old rivalry has seemed to unite Gulf Arab interests in the pursuit of policies both inside and outside the Persian

³⁰ Verhoeven, "The Gulf and the Horn."

³¹ Todman, "The Gulf Scramble for Africa"; Jos Meester, Willem Van Den Berg, and Harry Verhoeven, "Riyal Politik: The Political Economy of Gulf Investments in the Horn of Africa," *Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations*, April 2018, <https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2018-04/riyal-politik.pdf>; Gerald M. Feierstein, "The Impact of Middle East Regional Competition on Security and Stability in the Horn of Africa," *Middle East Institute*, August 18, 2020, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/impact-middle-east-regional-competition-security-and-stability-horn-africa>.

³² Meester, Van Den Berg, and Verhoeven, "Riyal Politik," 5.

³³ Meester, Van Den Berg, and Verhoeven, 27.

Gulf region.³⁴ Indeed, the encroachment of “external” ideologies which seem to threaten the foundation of Arab monarchies has always led to this policy outcome. For example, in the 1970s, Arab states established an informal intelligence alliance known as the “Safari Club” that sought to counter the spread of communism in Africa. According to William Todman, “Saudi Arabia perceived communism as a potential military and ideological threat, being especially alarmed by Soviet and Cuban military intervention in Ethiopia and the spread of Marxist liberation movements more broadly.”³⁵

Conversely, inter-GCC enmity has often pushed Arab states’ interests to diverge. When focusing on small states like Qatar or the UAE, there exists an additional fear of these states becoming too dependent on Riyadh for their protection because of the leverage that Saudi Arabia could exert on their domestic and foreign policies. Even worse, if these states are left without other external security guarantors besides Saudi Arabia, they risk potentially repeating the same mistake that led to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990.³⁶ This enmity has led directly to competition among Arab states, either to reduce their reliance on Saudi benevolence, or to offer an alternative vision of regional stability. The former is highlighted by Qatar’s pursuit of independent food supplies in East Africa.³⁷ The latter is exemplified by the UAE’s efforts to achieve “strategic parity with Riyadh and a geo-economic dominance of the Western Indian Ocean.”³⁸ Thus, Gulf Arab domestic concerns about their survival, the likelihood of overlapping or competing interests with their neighbors, and how this manifests in their policies in East Africa as highlighted in these texts will guide this thesis’ research in Southeast Asia.

³⁴ Todman, “The Gulf Scramble for Africa,” 4; Noorhaidi Hasan and Robert W. Hefner, “Salafism in Indonesia: Transnational Islam, Violent Activism, and Cultural Resistance,” in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia* (Routledge, 2018), 248, <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315628837-20>.

³⁵ Todman, “The Gulf Scramble for Africa,” 4.

³⁶ Meester, Van Den Berg, and Verhoeven, “Riyal Politik,” 5; David B. Roberts, *Qatar: Securing the Global Ambitions of a City-State* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2017), 21.

³⁷ Todman, “The Gulf Scramble for Africa,” 2.

³⁸ Verhoeven, “The Gulf and the Horn,” 350.

c. *Internal Transformation of the Persian Gulf Regional Security Subcomplex*

While the Middle East may still be classified as a standard regional security complex, over the last decade (and most notably since 2018) there has been significant ongoing internal transformation in the character of the Persian Gulf regional security subcomplex. These include changes in the polarity of the region, changes in patterns of amity and enmity, and changes in the role of global powers in the Persian Gulf. While the analyses provided by Gause, Ulrichsen, Meester, and Verhoeven guide our approach towards understanding the durable patterns of security behavior across the Middle East, there have been several major changes in the essential nature of the Persian Gulf subcomplex since 2018 that may alter the domestic threat perceptions of Gulf Arab states and thus are to understanding emergent Arab foreign policies today.

(1) Balance of Power

In terms of the balance of power across the Middle East, Curtis R. Ryan argues that while the region's alliance politics since the Arab Spring have been dominated by the Saudi-Iran rivalry, the intensity of this rivalry has not generated a bipolar, "hostile but stable" alliance system.³⁹ In fact, Ryan reasons that the Middle East region has largely *underbalanced*, and that "despite Saudi attempts to rally much of the region against Iran as a longtime adversary," Middle East politics continued to be characterized by a missing balance of power and no coherent counter-coalition to Iran.⁴⁰ Moreover, as of 2020, the region has been characterized by patterns that suggest a multi-polar regional alignment instead, however there is still a "distinct lack of a [durable] balance of power," with alliances continuing to adjust based on highly volatile domestic and regional challenges which suggests a continued "lengthy period of domestic and regional instability for the region."⁴¹ Unaccounted for in Ryan's analysis is also the emergence of Turkey as a possible contender for regional hegemony who, since 2015, has expanded its reliance on

³⁹ Curtis Ryan, "Chapter 24: Alliances and Balance of Power," in *The Routledge Handbook to the Middle East and North African State and States System* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 351.

⁴⁰ Ryan, 342.

⁴¹ Ryan, 351.

hard power and direct military intervention in the region in order to secure its interests.⁴² In addition to maintaining a military presence in Somalia, Afghanistan, and a military base in Qatar, Turkey has also engaged in direct military operations in Syria from 2016–2020, in Libya in 2020, expanded its operations against Kurdish PKK forces in northern Iraq, and has increased its naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean in order to increase its leverage for securing potential energy resources against Greek, French, and Egyptian claimants.⁴³

(2) Changes in Patterns of Gulf Arab Amity and Enmity

Changes in patterns of amity and enmity across the wider Middle East have also been tied to changes in the balance of power in the Persian Gulf in the last few years. Overlapping security interests between Gulf Arab monarchies and Israel that emerged during the Arab Spring, including mutually-perceived threats of Iranian expansion across the region and direct military support to Hamas and Hezbollah, have contributed directly to the recent bout of normalization between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco, alleviating a critical source of regional enmity between Israel and Arab powers.⁴⁴ No explicit normalization of ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia will occur anytime soon, however. Riyadh is burdened both by its leadership role across the Arab world and by historic precedent, having led the drafting of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative which offers Arab normalization with Israel in exchange for the establishment of a Palestinian state, and by the declaration of the late King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud who said that “the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be the last Muslim country to recognize

⁴² Ross Harrison, “Shifts in the Middle East Balance of Power: An Historical Perspective,” Al Jazeera Center for Studies, September 2, 2018, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2018/09/shifts-middle-east-balance-power-historical-perspective-180902084750811.html>.

⁴³ Galip Dalay, “Turkey, Europe, and the Eastern Mediterranean: Charting a Way out of the Current Deadlock,” *Brookings* (blog), January 28, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/turkey-europe-and-the-eastern-mediterranean-charting-a-way-out-of-the-current-deadlock/>; Gonul Tol, “Viewpoint: Why Turkey Is Flexing Its Muscles Abroad,” *BBC News*, October 16, 2020, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54547304>.

⁴⁴ Joshua Krasna, “Understanding the Wave of Normalization in the Middle East,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, January 13, 2021, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2021/01/understanding-the-wave-of-normalization-in-the-middle-east/>; Ryan, “Chapter 24: Alliances and Balance of Power,” 349.

the state of Israel!”⁴⁵ Most recently, Nawaf Obeid, a former advisor to the Saudi government, said in a May 2021 editorial published in the Palestinian newspaper *Al-Quds* that “Saudi recognition [of Israel] (if it occurs) will be conditional on the Palestinians obtaining a fully sovereign state.”⁴⁶ However, signs of diminishing Saudi enmity towards Israel are evident, beginning in 2018 with a historic flight by Air India from India to Israel that traversed Saudi airspace (a historic first), as well as the 2020 announcement that flights between the UAE and Israel will also be permitted to fly over the Kingdom.⁴⁷ Additionally, in early January 2021, days before the inauguration of President Joseph Biden in the United States, Saudi Arabia called off its four-year old blockade of Qatar, thus removing a major source of inter-Arab enmity, while not fully healing the rift that led to the blockade in the first place.⁴⁸ These changes both decrease durable patterns of inter-Arab enmity that have plagued the Persian Gulf’s regional security subcomplex over the last decade while also decreasing perceptions of Gulf Arab insecurity in relation to Israel—portending a potentially significant structural evolution of the region’s security patterns and ultimately its balance of power.

(3) The Role of Global Powers in the Persian Gulf

Global power penetration into regional security complexes is a critical mechanism that links local and regional dynamics with global ones.⁴⁹ As regional powers begin to make security alignments with both superpowers and great powers in order to secure their

⁴⁵ Nawaf Obeid, “Will We Soon See the Israeli Flag Flying in Riyadh?,” *Al-Quds* (blog), May 22, 2021, <https://alquds.com/2021/05/22/%d9%87%d9%84-%d8%b3%d9%86%d8%b1%d9%89-%d9%82%d8%b1%d9%8a%d8%a8%d8%a7%d9%8b-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b9%d9%84%d9%85-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a5%d8%b3%d8%b1%d8%a7%d8%a6%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%8a-%d9%8a%d8%b1%d9%81%d8%b1%d9%81/>.

⁴⁶ Obeid.

⁴⁷ Alexander Cornwell, “Saudi Arabia Grants Approval for UAE-Israel Flights to Use Its Airspace,” *Reuters*, September 2, 2020, sec. Emerging Markets, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-emirates-saudi-airlines-idUSKBN25T1OI>.

⁴⁸ “Ala Summit Statement Affirms Unity in the Face of Threats,” *Al-Arabiyya*, January 5, 2021, <https://www.alarabiya.net/saudi-today/2021/01/05/%D9%82%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86->.

⁴⁹ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 458.

own survival, patterns of security within a regional security complex can begin to take on the characteristics of global power rivalries. While the U.S.-USSR Cold War did indeed split the Arab world into “pro-U.S.” and “pro-USSR” blocs, this pattern largely disappeared at the end of the Cold War. The last decade, however, has shown an increase in global power penetration of the Persian Gulf regional security subcomplex—a region previously monopolized by the United States. Russia, seeking to blunt U.S. hegemony over the Middle East and frustrate U.S. policy objectives, intervened in Syria in 2015 in order to prop up the weakening government of Bashar al-Assad.⁵⁰ Chinese military forces do have an increasing presence in the Middle East too, however it is generally limited to the presence of peacekeeping forces, maritime escort fleets in the Gulf of Aden, naval technical service stops in regional ports, and military exercises with Iran as recent as last February.⁵¹ In March 2021, China and Iran also concluded a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (Iran’s first such agreement with a global power), which covers a wide variety of economic, transportation, and agricultural activities.⁵² Such an agreement, coming under the shadow of Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), increases speculation that China may only continue to expand its presence in the Persian Gulf in the years to come, making it a more central political player in the region’s security dynamics. Lastly, it’s worth mentioning that this uptick in Russian and Chinese involvement in the Middle East comes at a time when President Biden has reduced the priority of U.S. policy in the Middle East and has fully withdrawn U.S. combat forces from Afghanistan, potentially prompting U.S. partners like Saudi Arabia to continue to hedge against, and reduce their reliance on, a long-term U.S.-led security umbrella.⁵³

⁵⁰ Samuel Charap, Elina Treyger, and Edward Geist, “Understanding Russia’s Intervention in Syria” (RAND Corporation, October 31, 2019), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3180.html.

⁵¹ Degang Sun, “China’s Soft Military Presence in the Middle East,” Middle East Institute, March 11, 2015, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/chinas-soft-military-presence-middle-east>; Jared Szuba, “Iran, Russia, China to Conduct Joint Naval Exercise in Indian Ocean,” Al-Monitor, February 9, 2021, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/02/iran-russia-china-naval-drill.html>.

⁵² Shannon Tiezzi, “What’s in the China-Iran Strategic Cooperation Agreement?,” The Diplomat, March 30, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/whats-in-the-china-iran-strategic-cooperation-agreement/>.

⁵³ Peter Graff and Patricia Zengerle, “Era Ends, Uncertainty Looms as U.S. Forces Quit Main Afghanistan Base,” *Reuters*, July 2, 2021, sec. Asia Pacific, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-vacates-main-airbase-afghanistan-officials-2021-07-02/>.

3. Historic and Emerging Connectivity between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia

Still missing from contemporary scholarly literature is direct research into inter-Arab competition in Southeast Asia. While the historical ties between the Middle East and Southeast Asia suggest that there is potential for the region to become an arena of competing Gulf Arab interests, the slim literature in this field generally falls into two camps: traditional explorations of inter-regional competition for influence in Southeast Asia (relating to Saudi-Iranian religiopolitical competition for hegemony in the Islamic world between 1960 and 2001), or contemporary research of expanding political, economic, and social ties between the Middle East and Asia related to the rapid growth of Asian economies, the emergence of China and other Asian “great powers,” or the potential reduction of U.S. security commitments to the Persian Gulf.

Fred R. von der Mehden provides an excellent synopsis of the political, economic, and intellectual ties between the Middle East and Southeast Asia since 1945, to include the impact of Iran’s 1979 Islamic Revolution on the region.⁵⁴ Kim Ghattas’ book *Black Wave* provides an exceptional overview of the rigid, ideological competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran for regional hegemony that has dominated regional politics since 1979. This competition, while still occurring today, had a significant impact on the society and politics of Southeast Asia due in large part to the influx of Saudi and Iranian money and ideology to the region. The extensive religiopolitical infrastructure that Saudi Arabia created in order to cultivate and wield its influence across the Islamic world, and in Indonesia, is outlined in Krithika Varagur’s *The Call: Inside the Saudi Global Religious Project*.⁵⁵ Other similar works provide broad historical overviews of the ties between the two regions, targeted analyses of Saudi-Indonesian relations, or more anecdotal evidence

⁵⁴ von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam*, 64.

⁵⁵ Ghattas, *Black Wave*; Krithika Varagur, *The Call: Inside the Global Saudi Religious Project* (New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2020).

of inter-regional competition related to religion or political influence.⁵⁶ Two major works in this field of study are worth mentioning because they provide a thorough empirical foundation for assessing the expanding relationships between the Middle East and Asia. The first is a project published by the Asia Society Policy Institute titled “Asia’s New Pivot: Evolving Ties Between Asia and the Middle East” which offers a sweeping and well-resourced set of case studies highlighting the growing economic, diplomatic, defense, and societal ties between China, India, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (missing from their research is a case study on Qatar).⁵⁷ Similar to Arab political and economic intervention in East Africa, this study highlights similar key behaviors we expect Arab states to engage in in the event ties to the region became securitized. The second is Emma Sobrier’s 2020 publication titled “Gulf Security in a Multipolar World: Power Competition, Diversified Cooperation” that discusses the increasing diversification of Gulf countries’ external partnerships, especially in the realm of defense and security cooperation, including an assessment on the “changing underlying power strategies of the Gulf states.”⁵⁸ While these studies are thorough, the research gap on a methodologically-grounded assessment of inter-Arab competition in Southeast Asia remains.

4. Conclusion

The preceding literature review explored three major themes related to the understanding of inter-Arab competition in Southeast Asia: the mainstream theories of international relations that relate to the structure of international and regional security; contemporary research on inter-Arab cooperation and competition both inside the Persian

⁵⁶ Sean Foley, “Re-Orientalizing the Gulf: The GCC and Southeast Asia,” *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 4 (December 2012): 77–87, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.2012.00561.x>; Muhammad Zulfikar Rakhmat and Fuad Tingai, “Opportunities and Obstacles in Qatar-Indonesia Relations,” *Geopolitical Monitor*, *Opportunities and Obstacles in Qatar-Indonesia Relations* (blog), November 17, 2020, <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/opportunities-and-obstacles-in-qatar-indonesia-relations/>; Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks*; Jane Nakano and Frank Verrastro, “The Saudi ‘Pivot to Asia,’” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, March 27, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/energy-fact-opinion-saudi-pivot-asia>; von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam*.

⁵⁷ Sean Foley, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Asia,” Asia Society, accessed February 25, 2021, <https://asiasociety.org/asias-new-pivot/saudi-arabia>.

⁵⁸ Emma Soubrier, “Gulf Security in a Multipolar World: Power Competition, Diversified Cooperation,” *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*, March 24, 2020, <https://agsi.org/gulf-security-in-a-multipolar-world-power-competition-diversified-cooperation/>.

Gulf as well as outside of it; and a survey of the Persian Gulf's historic and its growing ties to Southeast Asia. This literature review has explored a body of scholarship on international relations and regional studies applicable to exploring the topic of inter-Arab competition. It has also identified relevant scholarship on related topics, such as the "securitization" of the Persian Gulf, its influence on both Arab cooperation and competition in adjacent regions, and expanding modes of connectivity between the Arab world and Southeast Asia. However, the research gap on inter-Arab competition in Southeast Asia remains. As the interconnectivity between the Arab world and Southeast Asia will only continue to accelerate, the relevance of this research will only increase, making this thesis increasingly relevant to today's pressing questions in the realm of international security affairs.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Through the analytical framework provided by RSCT and the concepts of "securitization" as defined by Buzan and Wæver, this thesis seeks to determine whether or not Southeast Asia is emerging either as a "competitive" or "cooperative" environment of geopolitical engagement between Gulf Arab states by identifying (or eliminating) the presence of conditions that seem to be driving inter-Arab competition in other regions of the world. These conditions, directly related to domestic threat perceptions and political cleavages of Gulf Arab states, are: the manifestations of collective threats to the GCC (such as the Saudi-Iranian proxy war), which suggests that inter-Arab cooperation is more likely; and the extension and degree of Gulf Arab enmity into the region.⁵⁹ See the depiction of our analytical framework in Figure 1 for more detail.

An example of this in recent history is the question over the composition of Egypt's government after the Arab Spring. Both Saudi Arabia and Qatar cared deeply about the post-revolutionary nature of Egypt's government after the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, but both states pursued different strategies with conflicting objectives. While Doha had thrown its lot in with the Muslim Brotherhood in an effort to gain influence with what it

⁵⁹ Meester, Van Den Berg, and Verhoeven, "Riyal Politik," 5.

saw as an emerging regional trend, Saudi Arabia saw the Muslim Brotherhood as an existential threat and led the counterrevolution that re-imposed Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's military dictatorship in Cairo.⁶⁰ In this case, the Saudi-Iran proxy conflict did not pose a significant threat because of the Sunni composition of Egyptian society, therefore a significant external threat to the GCC did not exist. However, enmity between Gulf Arab states did manifest enormously. From Riyadh and Abu Dhabi's perspective, the rise of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood presented an existential ideological threat to the ideology that their kingdoms are founded on.⁶¹ To Doha, the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood represented the potential beginning of a new wave of political Islam hitting the Middle East, and Qatar sought to invest early in this trend in order to curry favor within this movement and as a means of hedging against growing Saudi power.⁶²

1. H1: Gulf Arab Interaction is Competitive

If inter-Arab engagement with Southeast Asia is *competitive*, then based on the empirical evidence cited previously, we are likely to see conditions that minimize collective threats to the GCC and maximize the political cleavages (e.g., enmity) between Gulf Arab states. This suggests that either manifestations of collective threats to the GCC are not present in Southeast Asia, or at a minimum is outweighed by drivers of enmity between Gulf Arab states. An example of this may be Qatar's participation in the 2019 Kuala Lumpur Summit. While Iran was present at this summit, the Saudi-Iran competition for influence in Southeast Asia seems to have been reduced since its peak after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Additionally, while the Saudis viewed this summit "as an aspiring rival to the Organisation [sic] of Islamic Cooperation" which threatens their religious hegemony over the Muslim world, Qatar seems to have viewed this summit as an opportunity to continue its strategy of hedging its external support against Riyadh.⁶³

⁶⁰ Roberts, *Qatar*, 1.

⁶¹ Ulrichsen, *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis*, 43.

⁶² Roberts, *Qatar*, 139.

⁶³ Mehran Kamrava, "Qatari Foreign Policy and the Exercise of Subtle Power," *Middle East Insights*, October 2017, <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/1048298>; Waikar and Osman, "The 2019 Kuala Lumpur Summit."

2. H2: Gulf Arab Interaction is Cooperative

If inter-Arab engagement with Southeast Asia is cooperative, then based on the previous evidence, we are likely to see conditions that either maximize the collective perceived threats towards the GCC, or minimize enmity between Gulf Arab states. An example of this is the GCC's efforts to contain Iranian influence in East Africa, which has presented an emerging Iranian threat to the GCC along a new flank of the Arabian Peninsula because it would increase Iranian leverage against the Bab al-Mandeb maritime strait and thus against the GCC. This culminated with Sudan and Eritrea's ejection of Iranian diplomats in 2014 and discussions in 2019 between Arab and East African states about forming a "Red Sea security alliance" among themselves. Here, the reduction of Iranian pressure on the western edge of the Arabian Peninsula provides a positive security gain for all GCC states.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Gerald M. Feierstein, "The Impact of Middle East Regional Competition on Security and Stability in the Horn of Africa," Middle East Institute, August 18, 2020, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/impact-middle-east-regional-competition-security-and-stability-horn-africa>, 2.

		<i>Intra-Arab Enmity</i>	
		Low	High
<i>Collective Threat(s) to GCC</i>	Low	(i) Neither Cooperate nor Compete	(ii) Compete
	High	(iii) Cooperate	(iv) Neither Cooperate nor Compete

Figure 1. Analytical Framework

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis will be comprised of a comparative case study of Saudi Arabian and Qatari foreign policy towards Indonesia. The purpose of this study is to examine the nature and intensity of Saudi and Qatari political, military, social, and economic ties to Indonesia since the 1990s in order to identify significant trends or changes that may determine whether or not Southeast Asia is emerging as a zone of inter-Arab competition. Due to limitations in resources and time, this paper does not seek to directly affirm causality to what is driving strategic changes in the nature of Gulf Arab foreign policy, but does seek to identify potential causes as opportunities for future research.

Saudi Arabia and Indonesia were both selected because of their roles as rising or established regional powers in their particular regional security complexes, while Qatar was selected due to its contemporary role as an independent challenger to Saudi hegemony both in the Persian Gulf and broader Middle East. These states in particular are most likely to act as bellwethers to help identify emerging transregional trends. In order to test these hypotheses, special attention will be paid to bilateral engagements or unique agreements

between parties that either bar access to other states or state-affiliated entities, or where the benefits of an agreement overwhelmingly favor one actor over another, suggesting that the nature of engagements are either zero-sum, exploitative, and therefore potentially competitive, or positive-sum and potentially benign or cooperative. Similarly, multilateral agreements or engagements through intergovernmental organizations that produce positive-sum benefits that are not explicitly exclusionary support the case against inter-Arab competition.

To substantiate the concluding assessment, I will draw on a range of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources will include foreign government websites, statements, interviews, and propaganda, as well as social media and other relevant resources from both Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian outlets. These sources will offer the most nuanced understanding of the nature and intent of inter-state agreements, however our access to certain types of agreements may be limited. Therefore, this research will also rely on appropriate secondary sources, to include official government reports, reports from inter-governmental (IGO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO), journal articles, interviews, and books covering relevant topics which may shed light on the nature and intent of emerging policies. This research will be limited to works in or translated to English, Arabic, and Indonesian.

II. SAUDI FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS INDONESIA

A. OVERVIEW

In order to answer the question of whether or not Southeast Asia is emerging as a zone of competition between Gulf Arab states, we must first understand what generally causes intra-Arab cooperation or competition. While our review of the literature suggests that two critical variables are the presence and intensity of collective threats to GCC member states as well as the presence and intensity of intra-Arab cleavages, we must understand in more detail Saudi and Qatari domestic vulnerabilities, their subsequent threat perceptions, and linkages between domestic security interests and Southeast Asia. Such an understanding will help us identify specific cases where Saudi and Qatari interests may overlap, potentially providing an avenue for cooperation in their policies abroad as well as help identify areas where their interests diverge, providing potential indications of areas where Doha and Riyadh may compete if their core interests are threatened. We will then use these indicators as criteria for assessing the foreign policies pursued by, in this case, Saudi Arabia in order to assess whether or not intra-Arab competition in Southeast Asia is an emerging phenomenon.

Building on previous research of the structure of security and balance of power in the Persian Gulf, this case study will use the descriptive area studies framework provided by Buzan and Wæver to examine Saudi Arabia's domestically-generated vulnerabilities, state-to-state relations, inter-regional interactions, and the shifting role of global powers in the Persian Gulf in order to answer the question of whether or not Southeast Asia is emerging as a zone of inter-Arab competition. This chapter will begin with an investigation into state-level, domestically-generated vulnerabilities, threat perceptions, and linkages between these Saudi threats and subsequent foreign policies towards Indonesia.⁶⁵ This work will provide critical data to later assist in our concluding analysis of the regional security patterns of the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia in order to identify conditions that incentivize Gulf Arab cooperation or competition.

⁶⁵ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 51.

B. SAUDI-INDONESIAN RELATIONS FROM 1948–1990

While ties between the Arabian Peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago can be traced back to the period between 1000 and 1600, characterized by the growth of both religious migration from Southeast Asia to Mecca as well as the movement of Arab traders to Southeast Asia. Formal relations between the modern Saudi state and the government of Indonesia were not established until 1948, when a newly independent Indonesia first opened its embassy in Jeddah.⁶⁶ Formal visits between heads of state have been rare. Indonesian President Sukarno and King Saud Abdulaziz Al Saud first met in 1955 while Sukarno was on hajj, and that same year Prince Faisal ibn Abd al-Aziz visited Jakarta while attending the Bandung Conference in Indonesia.⁶⁷ King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz later made his first formal state visit to Jakarta in 1970 to visit President Suharto.⁶⁸ A Saudi king would not again visit Indonesia until King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud's 2017 trip to Jakarta.⁶⁹

International relations between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia have been marked by varying degrees of intensity, with the strongest ties taking place during periods of mutual insecurity shared by both Saudi and Indonesian rulers. According to Sumanto Al Qurtuby, in the 1950s and 1960s Saudi Arabia tried to forge a closer alliance with Indonesia in order to counteract the spread of socialism and communism across the Middle East and wider Muslim world, yet during Indonesia's Old Order, President Sukarno was unenthusiastic about such an alignment given his affinity for socialism.⁷⁰ In 1961, Saudi Arabia and

⁶⁶ von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam*, 2; "Saudi Relations with Indonesia," The Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Republic of Indonesia, accessed July 20, 2021, <https://embassies.mofa.gov.sa/sites/indonesia/AR/AboutHostingCountry/SaudiRelations/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁶⁷ Zachary Karabell, "Bandung Conference," Encyclopedia.com, May 21, 2018, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/asia-and-africa/southeast-asia-history/bandung-conference>; "King Salman Chats with Sukarno's Granddaughter Puan Maharani," The Jakarta Post, March 2, 2017, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/02/king-salman-chats-with-sukarnos-granddaughter-puan-maharani.html>.

⁶⁸ "Saudi King Visits Indonesia with 'Cars and Entourage,'" *BBC News*, March 1, 2017, sec. Asia, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39099988>.

⁶⁹ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, "Saudi Relations with Indonesia."

⁷⁰ Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks*, 28.

Indonesia both joined the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in an effort to remain neutral as the bipolar, U.S.-Soviet rivalry began to sway regional alignments too, however bilateral relations between these two states remained weak.⁷¹ In 1963, Indonesian police raided the residence of the Saudi ambassador Mohammed Abd Al-Qadr Muhtasib, purportedly without explanation, leading to his departure of the country until relations could be repaired in 1967 by Mohammad Natsir.⁷²

While Sukarno was generally uninterested in pursuing stronger ties with Saudi Arabia in the 1960s, Riyadh was certainly interested in increasing its influence in Indonesia through Islamic proselytization (*dawa*) and the spread of Salafism. In 1962, King Faisal established the Muslim World League (MWL) as the first of many state bureaucracies designed to help Saudi Arabia export its religious influence globally. In 1967, Natsir helped found the *Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (DDII) in Indonesia, a *dawa* council that served as “the chief conduit for [feeding] Saudi money into Indonesia.”⁷³ Saudi Arabia again expanded its religiopolitical institutions in 1972 with the creation of both the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), of which Indonesia is a member, as well as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY).⁷⁴ Only after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, when Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in Tehran on a wave of expansionist, Shia revolutionary fervor did Indonesia’s new President Suharto feel threatened and thus align Saudi and Indonesian interests in checking the spread of Islamism.⁷⁵ Paradoxically, due to the influx of Saudi petrodollars into Indonesia during this period and the related influence that the rising tide of Islamization globally was having on the domestic political fabric of Southeast Asia, President Suharto both embraced domestic Islamic political groups more closely than ever (at the cost of his Christian allies) in order to secure his political base, while also increasing state control over “those Islamic forces seen is detrimental to state

⁷¹ “Non-Aligned Movement,” Nuclear Threat Initiative, February 25, 2021, <https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/non-aligned-movement-nam/>.

⁷² Varagur, *The Call*, 56; “Names of Saudi State Officials,” King Saud bin Abdulaziz, 2012, <https://kingsaud.sa/ar/history/history-king-saud/king/489/2180/>.

⁷³ Varagur, *The Call*, 57.

⁷⁴ Varagur, 31.

⁷⁵ Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks*, 28.

policies,” which included the influx of Saudi money.⁷⁶ During the 1980s and 1990s, formal ties between Riyadh and Jakarta stalled, with few major bilateral compacts signed between one another, yet informal ties between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia strengthened, focusing largely on religion and migrant labor.⁷⁷

C. INDICATORS FOR POTENTIAL COOPERATION OR COMPETITION

1. Saudi Arabia’s Domestic Vulnerabilities and Threat Perceptions

As argued by Verhoeven, the Persian Gulf regional security complex is dominated by the “politics of state survival and regime survival,” with states internal to it facing an ever-present reality of state formation and decay where “the redrawing of borders is not just hypothetical but an empirical reality experienced in the recent past.”⁷⁸ Domestic security concerns of Gulf Arab regimes are linked directly to their foreign policies through “omnibalancing” strategies that seek to neutralize domestic threats by way of international assistance while also playing those external powers against one another.⁷⁹ However, when discussing threats to Gulf Arab national security, early debates about the definition of security rightly ask: “security for whom?”⁸⁰ In this case, our dominant referent object—the entity seen to be existentially threatened that has a legitimate claim to survival—is the Saudi state, which can mean both the survival and sovereignty of Saudi Arabia as a political institution, as well as the legitimacy and stability of the Al Saud monarchy, to include individual leaders like King Salman or his son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud.⁸¹ For Verhoeven describes this linkage between domestic and foreign policy interests as the “tendency of elites to see the success of their regional ambitions as

⁷⁶ Michael Vatikiotis, *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict in Modern Southeast Asia* (London: The Orion Publishing Group Ltd, 2017), 252; von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam*, 72; Liow, “The Arab Spring and Islamist Activism in Southeast Asia: Much Ado about Nothing?,” 190.

⁷⁷ Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks*, 50.

⁷⁸ Verhoeven, “The Gulf and the Horn,” 335.

⁷⁹ Verhoeven, 344.

⁸⁰ David A. Baldwin, “The Concept of Security,” *Review of International Studies*, no. 23 (1997): 13.

⁸¹ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security*, 36.

intimately linked to their ability to hold onto power domestically.”⁸² For simplicity’s sake, we will refer to all of these as the “Saudi state,” unless otherwise noted. What then are Saudi Arabia’s domestic vulnerabilities and threat perceptions? And what linkages exist between these and Southeast Asia, if any?

a. Political

Saudi Arabia’s reliance on oil, once its most powerful asset, now serves as the Kingdom’s Achilles heel, rendering one of the world’s few remaining absolute monarchies vulnerable to a variety of endogenous and exogenous threats. In the framework of securitization, the political vulnerabilities of the Saudi state, as well as their complementary threats, refer to those phenomena that undermine the sovereign Saudi state and the Al Saud monarchy that sits atop it, to include what Buzan calls the state’s constituent components: its ideas, physical base, and institutions.⁸³ Saudi Arabia’s composition as a Salafi, hereditary monarchy renders the Kingdom vulnerable to ideological challengers who question both the Kingdom’s religious credentials as well as the philosophy underpinning its style of government. Domestically, the Al Saud royal family relies on the religious legitimacy bestowed upon them by the state’s clerical class—an agreement that dates all the way back to the founding of the country.⁸⁴ The Saudi monarchy also faces challenges from external actors like Iran and Turkey, who, in addition to Riyadh, seek regional hegemony and see religion as an avenue to compete against Saudi influence.⁸⁵ There is little doubt that Saudi Arabia’s spread of Wahhabism over the last few decades, one of Islam’s most puritanical schools of thought, has left the Kingdom vulnerable to criticism about its role in the Muslim world. One of several emerging challengers in the realm of religious soft power is Indonesia and the Nahdlatul Ulama political party.⁸⁶ In addition to Saudi vulnerabilities related to its Islamic bona fides, the Kingdom also faces challenges

⁸² Verhoeven, “The Gulf and the Horn,” 335.

⁸³ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security*, 150.

⁸⁴ Rundell, *Vision or Mirage*, 95.

⁸⁵ James M. Dorsey, “The Battle for the Soul of Islam,” Hudson Institute, October 28, 2020, <http://www.hudson.org/research/16463-the-battle-for-the-soul-of-islam>.

⁸⁶ Dorsey.

from those who oppose the idea of absolute monarchies. While American neoconservatives circa 2003 called for the spread of democracy in the Middle East, directly undermining the foundation of the Saudi state, more threatening to the Saudi royal family was the outbreak of the Arab Spring and the grassroots push for sweeping governmental change across the Arab world.⁸⁷

Physical challenges to the territorial integrity of the Saudi state include the expanding influence of rapidly arming neighbors, ongoing wars on the Kingdom's borders, as well as unresolved border disputes with its neighbors. The war in Yemen against the Iran-backed *Ansar Allah*, commonly referred to as the Houthi movement, is the Kingdom's most threatening conflict to reach Saudi soil, however the swift rise of the Islamic State in Iraq following the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 2011 presented leaders in Riyadh with a wider regional challenge.⁸⁸ Riyadh also has several ongoing border disputes with Sunni neighbors like Kuwait, Yemen, and the UAE, adding to the cyclical ebb and flow of intra-GCC relations over the previous years.⁸⁹ Finally, the most pressing threat to Saudi Arabia's physical security comes from Iran, whose build-up of advanced conventional weapons like its ballistic missile program, unmanned weapons systems, and expansion of proxy militias across Iraq, Syria, and Yemen increasingly adds to GCC-wide anxiety. Case in point was the 2019 Iranian-sponsored attack on Saudi Arabia's Abqaiq and Khurais oil facilities that took half of the country's oil production offline.⁹⁰

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also faces a wide array of challenges to its ruling institutions, largely stemming from internal forces. According to former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, David Rundell, the leading challenges are religious intolerance, endemic corruption, and questions related to political participation. The modernization efforts

⁸⁷ Verhoeven, "The Gulf and the Horn," 338; Shadi Hamid, "The Struggle for Middle East Democracy," *Brookings* (blog), April 26, 2011, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-struggle-for-middle-east-democracy/>.

⁸⁸ Rundell, *Vision or Mirage*, 225.

⁸⁹ "Saudi Arabia," in *The World Factbook* (Central Intelligence Agency, July 28, 2021), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/saudi-arabia/#transnational-issues>.

⁹⁰ Lara Seligman, "Top U.S. General: It's 'Very Possible' Iran Will Attack Again," *Foreign Policy* (blog), November 23, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/23/very-possible-iran-will-attack-again-top-us-general-says/>.

pushed by Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 initiative create what Rundell describes as a "paradox."⁹¹ He argues that these reforms introduce "significantly disruptive social and economic change with the goal of preserving a traditional monarchy, yet it will also significantly alter the relationship between the Saudi [citizen] and their government."⁹² Rundell also warns that we are witnessing today in Saudi Arabia the emergence of "the same forces that historically led to change in other monarchies," to include "an end to social deference, the decline of religion, and the emergence of the individual."⁹³ Challenging this is institutionalized discrimination in Saudi society against religious minorities, especially Shia Muslims, and Riyadh's failure to "create a society in which the Shia community feels fully Saudi."⁹⁴ Corruption and rising authoritarianism also threaten to create political instability during this period of sweeping reforms. Corruption in Saudi politics was largely an accepted practice, fueled in by oil wealth, as a tool to placate the ever-growing number of Saudi royals who could challenge the authority of the monarchy's ruling cohort.⁹⁵ Now in a period of potential austerity and tightening budgets, corruption threatens not only Saudi coffers but also leads to inept governance and diminishing public trust. The securitization of this particular issue was apparent after the takeover of Mohammed bin Salman and his creation of the Supreme Committee for Combatting Corruption (SCCC).⁹⁶ Lastly, rising authoritarianism, characterized by the marginalization of the Majlis Al-Shura, increasing opaqueness of senior Saudi decision-making, increased domestic surveillance, and increased repression also threaten the stability of Saudi political institutions and the compact between the monarch and the citizen. While Rundell says that the "age-old system of individual access to senior leaders for personal matters has unraveled," he continues to

⁹¹ Rundell, *Vision or Mirage*, 239; "Vision 2030" (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016), <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/v2030/overview/>.

⁹² Rundell, *Vision or Mirage*, 239.

⁹³ Rundell, 248.

⁹⁴ Rundell, 242.

⁹⁵ Rundell, 107.

⁹⁶ Rundell, 243.

argue that, “for now, Saudis seem willing to trade social liberalization and anticipated economic opportunity for greater political participation—but for how long?”⁹⁷

(1) Political Linkages to Southeast Asia

The most obvious linkage between Saudi political vulnerabilities and Southeast Asia is a tacit ideological competition taking place between Saudi state Salafism, and the “humanitarian, pluralistic notion of Islam” propagated by Indonesia’s Nahdlatul Ulama.⁹⁸ While neither NU nor the Al Saud royal family are openly seeking to depose one another, both entities are using religious soft power tools in the pursuit of political objectives across the Muslim world that have potentially significant domestic consequences. Saudi acceleration of proselytization activities both domestically and abroad after 1979 has been motivated primarily by a desire to bolster its religious credibility at home following the seizure of the Grand Mosque seizure in Mecca by radical Saudi preacher Juhayman al-Otaybi and his followers.⁹⁹ The legitimacy of the Al Saud family as rulers of the Kingdom have always been tied to their Islamic credentials as recognized by the Salafi clerical class ever since the consolidation of Ibn Saud’s power at the 1928 Riyadh Conference.¹⁰⁰ While Saudi rulers have since been vigilant of potential internal challenges to their authority, only since 1979 have Saudi royals feared the emergence of external challenges to their Islamic influence.

Similarly, Nahdlatul Ulama’s propagation of Indonesia’s “Islam Nusantara”—a more moderate and pluralist alternative to Saudi-propagated Wahhabism—is intended to undermine the ideology of terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS. The mobilization of this ideology, according to general secretary to the NU supreme council Yahya Cholil Staquf, is a direct challenge to “the idea of ISIS, which wants Islam to be uniform, meaning that if there is any other idea of Islam that is not following their ideas, those people are

⁹⁷ Rundell, 247.

⁹⁸ Dorsey, “The Battle for the Soul of Islam.”

⁹⁹ Yaroslav Trofimov, *The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam’s Holiest Shrine and the Birth of Al Qaeda* (New York: Doubleday, 2007).

¹⁰⁰ Rundell, *Vision or Mirage*, 30.

infidels who must be killed...We will show that is not the case with Islam.”¹⁰¹ The problem is that Saudi clerics and ISIS ideologues alike is that they believe that Islam is uniform—in direct contrast to Yahya Cholil Staquf. While MBS has begun to restrict the influence of Saudi Arabia’s clerical class as he seeks to reform the state’s economic and political foundations, the major concern is that the permeation of a “pluralist” and “moderate” brand of Islam into Saudi society could upset the delicate balance between the Al Saud royal family and deeply conservative clerical class at a time when Saudi leaders are still vulnerable to their actions.¹⁰²

While Saudi fears of NU’s influence were somewhat assuaged in 2016, according to James Dorsey, after Widodo tabled a proposal by NU seeking to expand Indonesia’s religious soft power globally due to the damage it would cause to Indonesia’s relations with Gulf Arab states, in 2018 during a ceremony kicking off the construction of the Indonesian International Islamic University (UIII), Widodo declared that it was it was “natural and fitting that Indonesia should become the (authoritative) reference for the progress of Islamic civilization.”¹⁰³ In 2019, Ma’ruf Amin, the former supreme leader of NU, became Indonesia’s vice president, and in early 2020, the NU’s growing prominence led to the visit of the head of the Saudi-based Muslim World League, Muhammad bin Abdul Karim Al-Issa, to NU headquarters in Jakarta, according to Dorsey—the first of its kind in the 60-year history of the MWL.¹⁰⁴ Al-Issa had purportedly turned down a meeting in 2018 with a NU cleric because he “had ‘never heard’ of the Indonesian scholar and could not make time ‘due to an extremely previous busy schedule of meetings with international

¹⁰¹ Joe Cochrane, “From Indonesia, a Muslim Challenge to the Ideology of the Islamic State,” *The New York Times*, November 26, 2015, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/27/world/asia/indonesia-islam-nahdlatul-ulama.html>.

¹⁰² Rundell, *Vision or Mirage*, 95.

¹⁰³ Dorsey, “The Battle for the Soul of Islam”; Fabian Januarius Kuwado, “Harapan Jokowi pada Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia,” KOMPAS.com, June 5, 2018, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/06/05/12232491/harapan-jokowi-pada-universitas-islam-internasional-indonesia>.

¹⁰⁴ Marchio Irfan Gorbiano, “Vice President Ma’ruf Can ‘Do More’ to Develop Sharia Economy,” *The Jakarta Post*, September 17, 2020, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/09/16/vice-president-maruf-can-do-more-to-develop-sharia-economy.html>.

Islamic personalities.”¹⁰⁵ Regardless of recent developments, the potential institutionalization of NU as a soft power tool in Indonesia does present an indirect threat to Al Saud domestic legitimacy should the Saudi royal family be unable to restrain the power of their clerical class.

b. Economics and Energy

Economic vulnerabilities and threats overlap significantly with the political threats of the Saudi state, making it hard to delineate clearly between purely “political” or “economic” threats to the Saudi state. In fact, Saudi Arabia’s economic security is also deeply intertwined with its energy security given the role that Saudi oil has historically played in the world economy. In defining economic security as a concept, Buzan and Wæver, in their 1998 book “Security Analysis: A New Framework,” begin with a differentiation between mercantilist, liberal, and socialist perspectives of economies and the priority of relationship between the state and the market, i.e., in a mercantilist system, the state comes before the market; in a liberal system, the market comes first.¹⁰⁶ While one could argue that large facets of the Saudi economy are mercantilist, and that King Salman and crown prince Mohammed bin Salman are in the process of liberalizing certain aspects of the Saudi economy, specific categorization of the nature of the Saudi economy is beyond the focus of this paper. More important is the fact that the Saudi economy is highly dependent on, and therefore vulnerable to, oil.

Decades of cheap oil have allowed Saudi leaders to avoid addressing significant underlying vulnerabilities in its economy and society writ large. Cheap Saudi oil and high population growth has enabled a significant expansion of domestic energy consumption relative to Saudi exports, seriously threatening Saudi oil revenues.¹⁰⁷ It has also enabled Saudi energy use to get away with extremely inefficient use of fossil fuels. According to James Russell, Saudi Arabia already uses “an estimated nine times more electricity per

¹⁰⁵ Dorsey, “The Battle for the Soul of Islam.”

¹⁰⁶ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security*, 95.

¹⁰⁷ Rundell, *Vision or Mirage*, 211; “Population, Total - Saudi Arabia, Qatar,” The World Bank, 2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=SA-QA>.

capita than its neighbors” with projected domestic oil consumption to triple over the next 15 years.¹⁰⁸ While the World Energy Council’s Energy Trilemma Index gives an A grade to Saudi Arabia’s level of energy equity, it also gives it a B for energy security and a D for environmental sustainability.¹⁰⁹ Water desalinization is a highly expensive and energy-intensive process but is also critical to water-scarce climates like Saudi Arabia, who, according to the U.S.-Saudi Business Council, produces 7.6 million cubic-meters of desalinated water per day, amounting to 60% of the Kingdom’s total water supply.¹¹⁰

Lastly, reliance on oil has significantly distorted the Saudi labor market. Thanks to significant revenues beginning in the 1970s, the Saudi labor market largely shifted from private to state-sponsored employment underpinned by significant domestic subsidies.¹¹¹ By and large, the Saudi economy has been dominated by hydrocarbons and its derivative products ever since, and with few linkages to the wider economy, growth and income distribution is largely limited to within this industry.¹¹² According to the IMF, since the year 2000, in order to fund government spending the Saudi economy has required the average price-per-barrel of oil to fall no lower than \$80 USD—referred to as the fiscal breakeven price.¹¹³ However, since 2014, oil prices have plunged well below that threshold, sparking fears in Riyadh that the world’s demand for oil has peaked and prompting significant initiatives towards internal social and economic reforms.¹¹⁴ While

¹⁰⁸ James Russell, “Saudi Arabia: The Strategic Dimensions of Environmental Insecurity,” *Middle East Policy* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 51.

¹⁰⁹ “WEC Trilemma: Saudi Arabia,” World Energy Council, 2020, <https://trilemma.worldenergy.org/#!/country-profile?country=Saudi%20Arabia&year=2020>.

¹¹⁰ Lisa Barrington, “Inside the World’s Biggest Water Desalination Plants,” Reuters, October 13, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-water-desalination/inside-the-worlds-biggest-water-desalination-plants-idUSKBN26Y1HD>.

¹¹¹ Rundell, *Vision or Mirage*, 213.

¹¹² Ali Al-Sadiq, “Economic Convergence in Saudi Arabia” (Brookings, July 2016), 155, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/tt20-saudia-arabia-economic-convergence-al-sadiq.pdf>.

¹¹³ “Breakeven Oil Prices,” International Monetary Fund, 2019, <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=60214246>.

¹¹⁴ Robert Looney, “Saudi Arabia: Out of Options?,” Milken Institute Review, September 15, 2016, <https://www.milkenreview.org/articles/saudi-arabia-out-of-options>.

the price of Brent crude in July 2021 sits at \$78.20 per barrel, fears over the future economic viability of the Saudi state remain.

(1) Economic Linkages to Southeast Asia

Linkages between Saudi Arabia and Southeast Asia in the realm of trade and economics are limited but have been growing since the early 2000s following, among many things, U.S. efforts to reduce its reliance on Middle Eastern oil and King Abdullah's reaffirmation of the Saudi "Look East" trade policy which sought to "capitalize on the ascent of Asia's major emerging economies."¹¹⁵ According to Sean Foley, "Asian investment, pilgrimages, tourism, and trade—both with [Saudi Arabia] and the region that surrounds it—are vital to realizing the goals of Vision 2030."¹¹⁶ Economic linkages between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia are especially strong in the realm of foreign labor, religious tourism, investments, and energy. Yon Machmudi argues that commercial relations between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia are significant, although Saudi Arabia dominates: "Indonesia is highly dependent on petroleum and gas from Saudi Arabia, while Indonesia exports commodities such as woods, electronics, tyres [sic], cars, lubricants and electrical appliances" to Saudi Arabia.¹¹⁷

First off, the Saudi economy is highly reliant on foreign labor, with a large portion of this coming from South and Southeast Asia. Despite efforts by the government to reduce reliance on foreign labor and to increase Saudi participation in the workforce, as of 2020 over 78% of Saudi Arabia's workforce was still comprised of non-Saudi citizens, according to the Saudi Central Bank.¹¹⁸ According to the United Nations, the total number of migrants in Saudi Arabia in 2020 totaled 13,454,842 people, with Indonesia providing the second largest share of migrants at 1,709,318 people (or 13% of Saudi Arabia's total

¹¹⁵ Ankit Panda, "King Abdullah's Legacy in Asia," *The Diplomat* (blog), January 23, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/king-abdullahs-legacy-in-asia/>; Meghan O'Sullivan, *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Upends Global Politics and Strengthens America's Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2017), 249.

¹¹⁶ Foley, "Saudi Arabia's Relations with Asia."

¹¹⁷ Machmudi, "Saudi Arabia's Relations with Indonesia," 283.

¹¹⁸ "Yearly Statistics," Government, Saudi Central Bank, May 31, 2021, <https://www.sama.gov.sa/en-US/EconomicReports/Pages/YearlyStatistics.aspx>.

migrant population behind India).¹¹⁹ Indeed, Asian labor in Saudi Arabia has been a historic feature of the Kingdom's economy, thanks in part to deliberate policies put in place by Jakarta in the 1990s designed to tackle unemployment amid an economic downturn and increasing inflation. According to Sumanto Al Qurtuby, "Saudi became the main destination for Indonesian workers largely because earnings were substantially higher than another possible destination countries in Asia such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and Singapore."¹²⁰ Conversely, the Indonesian economy has enjoyed the receipt of remittances from Indonesians working abroad, which at their peak in 2005 totaled 1.86% of Indonesia's GDP.¹²¹ Between 1995 and 1999 alone, "remittances from Saudi Arabia totaled some 285.3 billion riyals—about US\$76 billion" over a four-year period, according to Al Qurtuby.¹²² In 2009, total remittances from Indonesian workers in Saudi Arabia totaled \$2.2 billion, and in 2018 the value dropped to \$984 million.¹²³ These ties have not come without controversy, however. While Indonesia provides a significant number of foreign workers for the Saudi economy, Jakarta has had a difficult time using this as leverage with Riyadh to improve the treatment of Indonesian workers in the Kingdom, who are all too often subject to abuse, human trafficking, or arrest and execution. The details of this will be discussed later in further detail.

It is clear that the economic linkages between Saudi Arabia and Asia exist and are growing, and that the future economic viability of the Kingdom is directly tied to the economies of East and Southeast Asia for the time being, both in terms of seeking market share for Saudi fossil fuels, as well as foreign labor. Managing major structural economic transformation of the Saudi state while improving bilateral economic cooperation with

¹¹⁹ "International Migrant Stock," United Nations Population Division, 2020, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock>.

¹²⁰ Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks*, 40.

¹²¹ "Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP) - Indonesia," The World Bank, 2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=ID>.

¹²² Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks*, 37.

¹²³ "Remittance Made by Indonesian Migrant Workers Abroad Reaches US\$ 2.711 Billion," IDNFinancials, 2021, <https://www.idnfinancials.com/archive/news/22191/Remittance-made-by-Indonesian-migrant-workers-abroad-reaches-US-2711-billion>; "International Migration and Migrant Workers' Remittances in Indonesia" (International Organization for Migration, 2010), 1, https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/indonesia_remittances.pdf.

Southeast Asian states is a monumental challenge for King Salman and MBS, one that is no doubt intimately linked to the peaks and troughs of Asian economies.

c. Environmental

Saudi Arabia environmental vulnerabilities and threats are numerous, given the fact that the Middle East as a region is already recognized as “the most water-stressed environment on the planet” and that Saudi Arabia is already experiencing “inexorable climate-change trends.”¹²⁴ In these circumstances, particular threats to Saudi society are both endogenous and exogenous to society. Endogenous threats can be population growth, migration and urbanization, unequal distribution of scarce resources, and depletion of resources. Exogenous threats are climate change and related phenomena like temperature changes, precipitation changes, sea level rise, desertification, and changes in frequency and intensity of ecological disasters such as storms, droughts, and heat waves.¹²⁵ These threats already exacerbate Saudi food and water insecurity. While these threats directly afflict the level of development achieved by the Saudi state in its 89 years of existence, Thomas Homer-Dixon argues that there is an indirect causal relationship between environmental scarcity caused by these phenomena, leading to changes in social and economic activity of a society that can weaken states and potentially lead to violent conflict.¹²⁶ The Saudi government, led by King Salman and crown prince Mohammed bin Salman, successfully securitized the issue of Saudi environmental security as a component of Vision 2030 government reforms. One indication of this is the move by the Ministry of Interior in August 2020 to establish a dedicated environmental security unit known as the Special Forces for Environmental Security (SFES).¹²⁷ According to Brigadier General Saher Al-Harbi, the newly appointed commander of the SFES, the duties of this unit are not just “limited to protecting wildlife and biodiversity...it penalizes activities that harm the

¹²⁴ Russell, “Saudi Arabia: The Strategic Dimensions of Environmental Insecurity,” 44–45.

¹²⁵ Thomas Homer-Dixon, “Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases,” *International Security* 19, no. 1 (Summer 1994): 5–40; Russell, “Saudi Arabia: The Strategic Dimensions of Environmental Insecurity.”

¹²⁶ Homer-Dixon, “Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases.”

¹²⁷ “Environmental Protection,” Government, Saudi National Portal for Government Services, July 7, 2021, <https://www.m.gov.sa/wps/portal/snp/aboutksa/environmentalProtection>.

environment such as illegal poaching and logging; prevents air, water and soil pollution; and prevents activities that could harm the natural ecosystems of mountainous, land and coastal areas.”¹²⁸

(1) Environmental Linkages to Southeast Asia

Linkages between Saudi and Indonesian environmental security issues, if they exist at all, are at best indirect. Most strategically, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia are both acutely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, especially as it relates to changing temperate, patterns of precipitation, and sea level rise, however national efforts to shore up these vulnerabilities do not overlap. Instead, linkages between Riyadh and Jakarta in terms of environmental security occur primarily in Saudi efforts to ensure the Kingdom’s food security. While Riyadh has been able to meet its water demand needs internally through desalinization, meeting the demand for food is a different challenge.¹²⁹ According to Madeleine Lovell, despite only having 2% arable land within its borders, Saudi Arabia is food secure because Riyadh’s “economic strength has enabled it to...create trade-based food security” through imports and investments.¹³⁰ Since its failed efforts at achieving food self-sufficiency in the 1990s, according to Machmudi, “food security [has been] a considerable concern to Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia is included in the Kingdom’s national food security strategy.”¹³¹ Saudi agricultural imports are not dependent on Indonesia nor to Asia, however. According to Chatham House, in 2019 Saudi Arabia’s top five partners for importing agricultural products were Brazil, India, the United States, Argentina, and the UAE.¹³²

¹²⁸ Mohammed Al-Sulami, “‘We Are Protecting Nature, Improving Quality of Life’: Head of Saudi Arabia’s New Environmental Security Force,” Arab News, December 26, 2020, <https://arab.news/vvjnq>.

¹²⁹ Madeleine Lovell, “Food and Water Security in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,” *Future Directions International* (blog), July 28, 2015, <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/food-and-water-security-in-the-kingdom-of-saudi-arabia/>.

¹³⁰ Lovell.

¹³¹ Yon Machmudi, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Indonesia,” in *Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: Conflict and Cooperation*, ed. Neil Partrick (New York: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016), 284.

¹³² “Saudi Arabia Agricultural Imports in 2019,” Resource Trade by Chatham House, 2020, <https://resourcetrade.earth/?year=2019&exporter=682&importer=360&category=4&units=value&autozoom=1>.

d. Military

While the vulnerabilities and threats outlined in this paper's section of physical threats to Saudi political security are nearly identical, there are additional military-centric vulnerabilities that help feed into Saudi insecurities. First and foremost, in line with the principle of RSCT that states are primarily concerned about their immediate neighbors because "threats travel more easily over short distances than long ones," Riyadh's most pressing military concerns stem from other large regional rivals who have traditionally maintained large, standing armies: Iraq, Iran, and now Turkey.¹³³ Saudi Arabia also faces lesser threats from proxy forces trained and equipped by these regional rivals, such as the Houthis in Yemen.¹³⁴

Other defense vulnerabilities exist, however. For example, since the withdrawal of British military forces from the Persian Gulf and the introduction of U.S. military forces in the region in the lead up to Operation Desert Storm, the Saudi government has relied on a U.S.-enabled security umbrella for protection from regional aggressors, which has also stymied the development of a lethal, Saudi-led fighting force capable of fighting against a regional adversary.¹³⁵ The 2011 announcement of America's "Pivot to Asia" and the calls of several U.S. presidential administrations to reduce its military footprint in the gulf has caused significant anxiety in Arab capitals at the prospect of the possible reduction or elimination of this security umbrella.¹³⁶ This policy continued forward in the major national security documents published by the Trump administration, to include the recently

¹³³ Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, 249; Stephen Cook and Hussein Ibish, "Turkey's Resurgence as a Regional Power Confronts a Fractured GCC," *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), December 18, 2019, <https://agsiw.org/turkeys-resurgence-as-a-regional-power-confronts-a-fractured-gcc/>.

¹³⁴ Rundell, *Vision or Mirage*, 234.

¹³⁵ Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, 102.

¹³⁶ Sanam Vakil, "Middle East Perceptions of an America Adrift," Hoover Institution, March 28, 2019, <https://www.hoover.org/research/middle-east-perceptions-america-adrift>.

declassified U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific.¹³⁷ While the GCC has maintained a semi-integrated military arm since the mid-1990s called the “Peninsula Shield Force,” the readiness of this force to operate in unison during a conflict remains questionable. To date, the defense of Saudi Arabia relies on both U.S. forces as well as U.S.-made weapons and equipment.¹³⁸ Among the many reforms implemented by Mohammed bin Salman since 2016, several focus on developing a domestic arms production industry as well as major reforms to the overall structure of the Saudi military, however success in these efforts remain stalled due in part to the low price of oil and the impact of COVID-19 on the Saudi economy.¹³⁹

(1) Military Linkages to Southeast Asia

Direct, tangible linkages between Saudi security vulnerabilities are tenuous and largely indirect at best. Saudi Arabia’s most concerning defense priorities are the military threats posed to the Kingdom by Iran, the diminished but resilient specter of Islamic terrorism, and the implications of increased economic integration between Persian Gulf and Asian economies. Saudi efforts to isolate Iran, in conjunction with the U.S.-led Maximum Pressure Campaign, hinged on isolating Tehran economically and diplomatically from international forums, markets, and institutions. Unfortunately for Riyadh and Washington, D.C., Jakarta has been historically reticent to engage in other states’ rivalries, according to Mohamad Rezky Utama, opting instead to remain neutral and friendly towards all nations in the Middle East.¹⁴⁰ Thankfully for Tehran, a friendly Indonesia has helped “counterbalance U.S. pressure by boosting its diplomatic and

¹³⁷ “National Security Strategy of the United States of America” (The White House, December 2017), <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>; “U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific” (The White House, 2021), <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IPS-Final-Declass.pdf>.

¹³⁸ Martini et al., “The Outlook for Arab Gulf Cooperation,” x.

¹³⁹ Deborah Amos, “Why Saudi Arabia Is Suddenly Shaking Up Its Military,” *NPR*, February 27, 2018, sec. Parallels, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/02/27/588326061/why-saudi-arabia-is-suddenly-shaking-up-its-military>; Neil Partrick, “Saudi Arabia’s Elusive Defense Reform,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 14, 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/80354>.

¹⁴⁰ Mohamad Rezky Utama, “The US-Iran Conflict and What It Means for Indonesia,” *News, The Conversation*, January 21, 2020, <http://theconversation.com/the-us-iran-conflict-and-what-it-means-for-indonesia-129621>.

economic relations with Southeast Asia,” according to Maxwell Lowe.¹⁴¹ Similarly, while both Saudi Arabia and Indonesia share an interest in countering jihadi terrorism globally, Indonesia has sometimes been leery of the methods that Riyadh has chosen in this effort—an issue discussed in further detail later.¹⁴² The clearest linkage between Saudi and Southeast Asian military vulnerabilities has to do with Islamic extremism and jihadi terrorism. Saudi Arabia sees jihadist terrorism as a threat that endangers Saudi rule, and Indonesia faces a similar threat, having had to deal with the emergence of domestic Islamist insurgencies such as *Darul Islam* in its post-independence period.¹⁴³ Saudi Arabia for the longest time, however, has actively participated in the export of a “rigid, bigoted, patriarchal, fundamentalist strain of Islam...[that] has fueled global extremism and contributed to terrorism,” according to Scott Shane. This paradoxical role of Saudi Arabia, acting as both the “arsonist” and the “firefighter” as described by Shane, has helped contributed to the erosion of more tolerant, pluralist Islamic communities.¹⁴⁴ Nowhere is this more apparent than in Indonesia.

The emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014 not only frightened governments across the Middle East, but also stirred deep anxieties in states like Indonesia and Malaysia due to their societies’ historic interactions with radical Islamic ideologies and a long history of jihadi terrorist attacks across Indonesia. Their top concern, according to Joseph Chinyong Liow, was that the Islamic State’s extremist ideology will “prove attractive to the region’s many Muslims, lure some of them to the Middle East to fight as part of the group, and ultimately be imported back to the region when these militants return home.”¹⁴⁵ Since at least 1979, both Indonesia and Saudi Arabia had dealt

¹⁴¹ Maxwell Lowe, “Khomeini in the Archipelago: Iranian Interests and Influence in Indonesia,” *The Diplomat*, February 15, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/khomeini-in-the-archipelago-iranian-interests-and-influence-in-indonesia/>.

¹⁴² Lowe.

¹⁴³ C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia* (Brill, 2014), 10, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004287259>.

¹⁴⁴ Scott Shane, “Saudis and Extremism: ‘Both the Arsonists and the Firefighters,’” *The New York Times*, August 25, 2016, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-islam.html>.

¹⁴⁵ Joseph Chinyong Liow, “ISIS Goes to Asia,” *Foreign Affairs*, September 19, 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/east-asia/2014-09-19/isis-goes-asia>.

with homegrown jihadi extremist groups recruiting or operating within their borders, and both have continued to experience terrorist attacks conducted by people affiliated with the Islamic State or related groups as recently as 2021 and 2017, respectively.¹⁴⁶ Afghanistan in the 1980s acted as an incubator for jihadi Salafism, spurred on by Saudi money, created spaces for young men to travel from their home countries and engage in jihad while receiving both weapons training and more radical indoctrination, before returning and potentially establishing terrorist cells in their home countries. In the 2010s, Syria played a similar role, with at least 80–90 Indonesian and Malaysian citizens fighting in Syria and Iraq alongside the Islamic State, according to Liow’s 2014 report in *Foreign Affairs*.¹⁴⁷ Both Saudi Arabia and Indonesia have been able to strengthen their grips at home since the emergence of radical jihadi terrorism in the 1980s and 1990s following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and have been better able to organize state-led responses to uncover, disrupt, and attack terrorist groups both at home and abroad.

Lastly, the expanding consumption of Middle Eastern fossil fuels by Asian economies also brings with it concerns about the security of access to these resources, linking future prospects of Asian economic growth directly to the stability of the Persian Gulf region. The prospect of a diminished U.S. military presence in the region may make Japan, South Korea, China, or India feel increasingly pressured to bear the burden of protecting energy shipping lanes in order to secure their access to energy resources. These expanding economic links between Gulf Arab energy producers and Asian economies directly impacts Indonesia, assuming that fossil fuel energy exports will continue to be shipped via maritime routes that traverse Indonesian sea choke points. This issue will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three.

¹⁴⁶ “Gunfire Breaks out at Indonesian National Police HQ in Jakarta,” Al-Jazeera, March 31, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/31/gunfire-heard-at-indonesian-national-police-hq-in-jakarta>; “Police Gun down ISIS Fighters on Streets of Saudi Arabia,” The Independent, January 8, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/isis-gunned-down-police-officers-shootout-riyadh-saudi-arabia-video-watch-a7515576.html>.

¹⁴⁷ Liow, “ISIS Goes to Asia.”

D. SAUDI FOREIGN POLICIES TOWARDS INDONESIA: 2000–2021

While Saudi Arabia faces a wide array of internal and external threats related to its political, economic, military, and environmental vulnerabilities (with significant linkages to Southeast Asia), none are more pressing on the minds of Saudi leaders than the future economic viability of the Kingdom. Indeed, economic reform has now surpassed most other policy priorities in the Kingdom as the most pressing, long-term national security issue, to include among other issues, Riyadh's historic role in mediating Israel-Palestinian peace. This re-prioritization of problems was on prominent display in an opinion editorial published in *Al-Quds* magazine by Nawaf Obeid, a former advisor to the Saudi government, responding to the question of potential Saudi normalization with Israel, in which he cautioned that "Arab rulers must pay attention to the importance of setting priorities towards developing and diversifying the economies of their countries, paying attention to development and not invoking the eternal conflict between the Palestinian and Israeli sides."¹⁴⁸ James Russell, in an article on Riyadh's strategic dilemmas summarizes the strategic objectives of the modern Saudi state as follows:

1. Build and pay for an infrastructure to accommodate its burgeoning population that includes the environmental mitigation and adaptation program.
2. Make the necessary investments and political commitments to diversify its economy away from domination by the public sector.
3. Transition from a carbon-based economy to one in which the Kingdom's energy needs are increasingly met by renewable and cleaner energy sources to help enable it to meet its carbon reduction commitments under the Paris Accord.
4. Continue to manage the politics of energy markets while simultaneously meeting its commitments to reduce carbon output in such a way that the Kingdom will maintain its relative power and influence around the world.

¹⁴⁸ Obeid, "Will We Soon See the Israeli Flag Flying in Riyadh?"

5. Preserve the shape and identity of the state and the ruling family's position as it manages all the above. (Russell, 2017)

With Vision 2030 serving as the Kingdom's chief program in the pursuit of economic modernization of Saudi Arabia, according to Sean Foley, "Asian investment, pilgrimages, tourism, and trade—both with [Saudi Arabia] and the region that surrounds it—are vital to realizing the goals of Vision 2030."¹⁴⁹ Under this premise, this section seeks to answer the question: since 2000, what types of foreign policies has Riyadh pursued vis-à-vis its state-to-state relations with Southeast Asia, and Indonesia in particular, in an effort to shore-up its domestic vulnerabilities or perceived threats? This section seeks to shed light on both Saudi bilateral policies with Indonesia, as well as interactions made through Saudi-dominated intergovernmental organizations such as the GCC, OIC, MWL, and related entities.

1. Strategic and Diplomatic Relations

Saudi outreach to Indonesia since 2000 has focused primarily on increasing cooperation in trade, energy, and counterterrorism, however Saudi interest in Asia has always prioritized expanding ties with major economies in China, India, Japan, and South Korea ahead of ties with Southeast Asian states like Indonesia and Malaysia. Modern diplomatic relations between Jakarta and Riyadh can be divided into two periods. The first period, from 2005 until 2015, overlapped with the reign of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and saw Saudi Arabia adopt a "Look East" trade policy that sought to capitalize on the projections of major economic growth across Asia generally.¹⁵⁰ During this period, no formal agreements were signed between Riyadh and Jakarta besides a memorandum of understanding between Indonesia and the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank in 2006 that implemented relief efforts for Aceh province following the devastating tsunami

¹⁴⁹ Foley, "Saudi Arabia's Relations with Asia."

¹⁵⁰ "Looking East," *The Economist*, December 11, 2010, <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2010/12/09/looking-east>.

that hit Indonesia in 2004, and a limited defense cooperation agreement in 2014.¹⁵¹ Limited state-to-state interactions did occur, although largely at the informal level through economic and business investments, as well as very early formalization of ties between the GCC and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).¹⁵² The second period, from 2015 until today, has seen a dramatic acceleration of formal Saudi political and economic ties to Asia, including Indonesia, following the 2014 crash in global oil prices.¹⁵³ Under the leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and his son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has inked several major diplomatic agreements with Jakarta and expanded its investments in the Indonesian economy, although still below Indonesian expectations.¹⁵⁴

a. *King Abdullah Looks East: 2005–2015*

King Abdullah rose to the Saudi throne in 2005 following the death of his half-brother, King Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.¹⁵⁵ Regarded as a reformist monarch, according to Ankit Panda, during his tenure, Abdullah “oversaw a major period of diplomatic

¹⁵¹ “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Islamic Development Bank Concerning the Supervision of the Implementation of Various Projects in Aceh on Behalf of the Saudi Charity Relief Campaign for Tsunami Victims in East Asia” (Islamic Development Bank, April 26, 2005); “US\$ 36 Million from IDB for University Reconstruction in Indonesia,” Islamic Development Bank, April 27, 2006, <https://www.isdb.org/news/us-36-million-from-idb-for-university-reconstruction-in-indonesia>; Novan Iman Santosa, “Saudi Arabia, RI Ink Defense Cooperation Agreement,” *The Jakarta Post*, January 24, 2014, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/01/24/saudi-arabia-ri-ink-defense-cooperation-agreement.html>.

¹⁵² “Overview of Relations between ASEAN and GCC,” Association of Southeast Asian Nations, May 21, 2012, https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:GKF5FdKZANUJ:https://asean.org/%3Fstatic_post%3Doverview-of-relations-between-asean-and-gcc+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&google_abuse=GOOGLE_ABUSE_EXEMPTION%3DID%3D7a7db7756ce01822:TM%3D1628896966:C%3Dr:IP%3D142.234.80.89-S%3DyVpLh2ee4Ia_HHT6AAZP080%3B+path%3D/%3B+domain%3Dgoogle.com%3B+expires%3DSat,+14-Aug-2021+02:22:46+GMT.

¹⁵³ Marc Stocker, John Baffes, and Dana Vorisek, “What Triggered the Oil Price Plunge of 2014–2016 and Why It Failed to Deliver an Economic Impetus in Eight Charts,” *The World Bank* (blog), January 18, 2018, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/what-triggered-oil-price-plunge-2014-2016-and-why-it-failed-deliver-economic-impetus-eight-charts>.

¹⁵⁴ Editorial Board, “Slow Money from Saudi Arabia,” *The Jakarta Post*, February 22, 2019, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2019/02/22/slow-money-from-saudi-arabia.html>.

¹⁵⁵ “Kings of Saudi Arabia,” Government, *House of Saud* (blog), 2021, <https://houseofsaud.com/king-abdullah-bin-abdilaziz-al-saud/>.

rapprochement between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and almost every major Asian country” which included the first ever state visit of a Saudi monarch to both China and India in 2006, as well as trips to Pakistan and Malaysia.¹⁵⁶ Motivated by the prospect of major economic growth in Asian economies, King Abdullah adopted a “Look East” trade policy and, due to Saudi reliance on hydrocarbon exports, established the economic goal of having “over half of all Saudi oil exports bound for Asia.”¹⁵⁷ By 2009, China overtook the U.S. as the number one buyer of Saudi oil.¹⁵⁸

Yet despite Indonesia’s ascension to the G20 in 2008 (and the only ASEAN member to date), direct diplomatic engagements with Saudi and Indonesian leaders during this period were limited, however, with the only major diplomatic agreement penned between Riyadh and Jakarta between 2005 and 2013 being a memorandum on disaster relief completed two years after a tsunami struck the province of Aceh.¹⁵⁹ Deputy and ministerial exchanges did take place, however, with the Saudi Interior Minister, Ahmad bin Mohammed Al-Salem visiting Indonesia in 2013, reciprocating a 2012 visit by a special envoy of the Indonesian president “who asked Al-Salem to ensure that the rights of all Indonesians living in the Kingdom were upheld.” However, according to Yom Machmudi, this visit brought no significant developments.¹⁶⁰ Despite this gap, Saudi interest in expanding its ties more broadly to Asia continued with the expanded Saudi investment in Malaysia’s Islamic financial markets in 2009 via the newly created regional office of the Al-Rajhi Bank, and the conclusion of a strategic partnership between Saudi Arabia and India in 2010, referred to as the “Riyadh Declaration” after the city in which it was signed,

¹⁵⁶ “Saudi King on Rare Visit to India,” *BBC News*, January 25, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4645836.stm; Foley, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Asia”; Panda, “King Abdullah’s Legacy in Asia.”

¹⁵⁷ Panda, “King Abdullah’s Legacy in Asia.”

¹⁵⁸ Panda.

¹⁵⁹ Adelaida Salikha, “Meet The Only Southeast Asia Representative Country In G20 (Group of Twenty) | Seasia.Co,” Good News from Southeast Asia, December 1, 2018, <https://seasia.co/2018/12/01/meet-the-only-southeast-asia-representative-country-in-g20-group-of-twenty>; “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Islamic Development Bank Concerning the Supervision of the Implementation of Various Projects in Aceh on Behalf of the Saudi Charity Relief Campaign for Tsunami Victims in East Asia.”

¹⁶⁰ Machmudi, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Indonesia,” 286.

upgrading its previous agreement from 2006 known as the “Delhi Declaration.”¹⁶¹ Abdullah refrained from concluding similar agreements with Beijing, however, due to the sensitivity of the emerging Sino-American rivalry and Riyadh’s dependence on American weapons. According to Foley, “should Riyadh sign a military treaty with Beijing or substantially increase its purchases of Chinese weapons, Washington would also likely limit Riyadh’s access to the spare parts needed to operate its U.S.-made weapons.”¹⁶² Yamada points out that “Riyadh does not need to take into consideration similar constraints in its development of defense cooperation ties with other major Asian states, whose projection of power into the Gulf would not alarm Washington.”¹⁶³ Such a defense agreement was concluded between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia in January 2014. Focusing on the issues of counterterrorism, training, and defense procurement, Saudi Deputy Defense Minister Prince Salman bin Sultan Abdul Aziz Al Saud made the first-ever visit of a Saudi deputy defense minister to Indonesia in order to sign the joint defense cooperation agreement (DCA), however the accord was not ratified by the Indonesian government until 2018.¹⁶⁴

Limited and indirect interaction between Saudi and Indonesian officials occurred during this period via various IGOs, including the GCC and their ASEAN counterparts. In fact, a 2010 ASEAN-GCC Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore that adopted a two-year action plan that identified “activities and measures for closer collaboration and cooperation to be jointly undertaken for the next two years [between ASEAN and GCC states] on the areas of trade and investment, economic and developmental cooperation, education and

¹⁶¹ Foley, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Asia”; “Riyadh Declaration,” Embassy of India, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2010, <https://www.eoiriyadh.gov.in/page/riyadh-declaration/>.

¹⁶² Foley, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Asia.”

¹⁶³ Makio Yamada, “Saudi Arabia’s Look-East Diplomacy: Ten Years On,” *Middle East Policy* 22, no. 4 (December 2015): 134, <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12163>.

¹⁶⁴ Prashanth Parameswaran, “New Pact Puts Indonesia-Saudi Arabia Military Ties in the Spotlight,” *The Diplomat*, October 10, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/new-pact-puts-indonesia-saudi-arabia-military-ties-in-the-spotlight/>; Ankit Panda, “Indonesia and Saudi Arabia Sign Defense Cooperation Agreement,” *The Diplomat*, January 25, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/01/indonesia-and-saudi-arabia-sign-defense-cooperation-agreement/>; Santosa, “Saudi Arabia, RI Ink Defense Cooperation Agreement.”

training, culture and information, and mutual consultation in international matters.”¹⁶⁵ These meetings helped spark additional Gulf Arab foreign direct investment into ASEAN and increased, but limited, GCC imports of ASEAN products. According to Mohd Fauzi bin Abu-Hussin, in 2011 “Saudi Arabia ranked fifth among Malaysia’s leading sources of investment, behind Japan, Korea, the United States and Singapore. Saudi investment in Malaysia rose to an estimated US\$865 million in 2012.”¹⁶⁶ Other investments during this period include Qatar Petroleum’s investment in a \$4 billion petrochemical complex in Vietnam, a Kuwait Petroleum Corporation partnership with Indonesian Pertamina to develop a refinery East Java, and Dubai’s Drydocks \$2.5 billion project to develop infrastructure in Indonesia required to serve the region’s petroleum and petrochemicals industries.¹⁶⁷ Trade between the GCC and ASEAN also saw a limited increases, with GCC exports to ASEAN rising from \$43 billion in 2009 to \$58.1 billion in 2012, and ASEAN exports to the GCC rising from \$2.8 billion to \$4.7 billion in 2009 and 2012, respectively.¹⁶⁸ By the end of King Abdullah’s reign, however, the Kingdom’s bilateral ties to Indonesia were no stronger than they were a decade beforehand when he first ascended to the throne.

b. King Salman Pursues Reform: 2015–2021

When King Abdullah died and his brother King Salman ascended to the throne in 2015, the Persian Gulf was arguably more unstable than at any point in recent history. By 2014, Iran had managed to consolidate political and quasi-territorial gains across Iraq and Syria due to its role in the Syrian civil war, Iraq witnessed the emergence and near take-over of ISIS, and simmering governance disputes in Yemen led to the capture of Sana’a by the Iranian-back Houthi forces.¹⁶⁹ Saudi Arabia also found itself leading a

¹⁶⁵ “Overview of Relations between ASEAN and GCC.”

¹⁶⁶ Mohd Fauzi Bin Abu-Hussin, “Gulf Arab Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): ASEAN Targets of Opportunity,” Middle East Institute, March 20, 2013, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/gulf-arab-foreign-direct-investment-fdi-asean-targets-opportunity>.

¹⁶⁷ Fauzi Bin Abu-Hussin.

¹⁶⁸ “GCC and ASEAN Exports,” Chatham House, 2020, <https://resourcetrade.earth/?year=2019&exporter=gcc&importer=asean&units=value&autozoom=1>.

¹⁶⁹ Panda, “King Abdullah’s Legacy in Asia.”

counterrevolution to the onset of the Arab Spring, which threatened the existence of Gulf Arab monarchies across the region, and faced down plunging oil prices (driven by a Saudi-led oil price war that sought to preserve its global energy market share and drive American shale producers into insolvency) that, by 2016, reduced its financial reserves by \$200 billion.¹⁷⁰ During this period, Saudi interest in expanding economic ties to Asia accelerated despite already being central to the late King Abdullah's strategic policies. Thanks to the 2014 oil price crash, the Al Saud royal family finally recognized that "the country's oil-centered economy is unsustainable and that Saudi Arabia needs to adapt to changing socioeconomic circumstances, in light of the persistence of violent Islamism and the eruption of the Arab Spring," according to Yamada.¹⁷¹ Thus, the security of the Al Saud family became inextricably linked to new markets for oil exports, the development of renewable energy capabilities, and wider economic diversification.¹⁷² Further details of economic ties, however, will be discussed in later sections.

According to the Indonesian Embassy in Saudi Arabia, bilateral relations between Jakarta and Riyadh entered a new phase of momentum in 2015 following the state visit of newly elected Indonesian president, Joko Widodo (commonly referred to as Jokowi).¹⁷³ The purpose, according to The Jakarta Post, was to "strengthen bilateral cooperation, with a focus on the economy, energy sustainability, protection for Indonesian citizens and strategic industries."¹⁷⁴ Protection of Indonesian workers in Saudi Arabia is a major policy priority for Jakarta, however, given the historic mistreatment of these labor migrants at the hands of not just employers and criminal elements, but by the Saudi government itself. In 2011, following the beheading of Ruyati binti Sapubi, an Indonesian maid working in Saudi Arabia who allegedly murdered her employer, Jakarta imposed a moratorium on workers

¹⁷⁰ O'Sullivan, *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Upends Global Politics and Strengthens America's Power*, 268; Marc Lynch, "Saudi Arabia's Counter-Revolution," *Foreign Policy* (blog), August 10, 2011, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/08/10/saudi-arabias-counter-revolution/>.

¹⁷¹ Yamada, "Saudi Arabia's Look-East Diplomacy: Ten Years On," 122.

¹⁷² Yamada, 122.

¹⁷³ "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Government, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018, <https://kemlu.go.id/riyadh/id>.

¹⁷⁴ "Jokowi Gets Busy in Saudi Arabia," News, The Jakarta Post, September 12, 2015, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/09/12/jokowi-gets-busy-saudi-arabia.html>.

traveling to Saudi Arabia “until Indonesia and Saudi Arabia can come to an agreement to give rights necessary for Indonesian workers,” according to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, then the president of Indonesia.¹⁷⁵ The moratorium was renewed in 2015 following the execution of Siti Zainab, which caught Jakarta off guard after neither Indonesian embassy officials nor Zainab’s family were given prior notice, according to Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi.¹⁷⁶ A nearly identical case took place again in 2018 when Saudi Arabia executed Tuti Tursilawati, prompting yet another government review of a scheme that the Jakarta had setup with Saudi Arabia to try to monitor worker conditions and improve their quality of treatment.¹⁷⁷

During this same 2015 trip, Indonesia also concluded a joint Declaration of Intent with the GCC, establishing a strategic dialogue between the two entities towards the pursuit of closer multilateral cooperation.¹⁷⁸ Upon return home, Jokowi secured an agreement with Riyadh to “double their bilateral trade value by 2020, as the two countries believe they have a lot of potential for expansion.”¹⁷⁹ By 2019, however, the value of Saudi imports from Indonesia had dropped from \$2.59 billion to \$2.26 billion, according to the OEC. Indonesia’s import value did increase in the same period from \$3.02 billion to \$3.1 billion, still \$5.24 billion short of its stated goal.¹⁸⁰ Saudi Arabia initially reciprocated Jokowi’s high-level visit a month later in October by sending the Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adel al-Jubeir, to Indonesia to discuss opportunities for cooperation in the fields

¹⁷⁵ “Indonesian Ban on Workers to Saudi Arabia,” Al-Jazeera, June 23, 2011, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2011/6/23/indonesian-ban-on-workers-to-saudi-arabia>.

¹⁷⁶ “Indonesia Protests at Execution of Maid in Saudi Arabia,” *BBC News*, April 15, 2015, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32318131>.

¹⁷⁷ Dian Septiari, “Indonesia to Review New Deal with Saudi Arabia,” *News, The Jakarta Post*, November 1, 2018, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/11/01/indonesia-to-review-new-deal-with-saudi-arabia.html>.

¹⁷⁸ “Declaration of Intent Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf” (Republic of Indonesia-Gulf Cooperation Council, September 12, 2015).

¹⁷⁹ Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks*, 47.

¹⁸⁰ “Saudi Arabia Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners,” The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2019, <https://app-ant.oec.world/en/profile/country/sau>; “Indonesia Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners,” The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2019, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/idn?yearSelector2=importGrowthYear11>.

of “political consultation and coordination, military, security, economic, investment, cultural, oil and petrochemical industries, among others.”¹⁸¹ The stated aim of this expanding cooperation was to create a “qualitative leap in relations between the two countries in the services of mutual concern as well as the service of the Islamic nation.”¹⁸²

In 2017, a year after the unveiling of Vision 2030 by MBS, Saudi Arabia’s ambitious domestic and economic reform initiative, King Salman conducted a sweeping tour of Asian states with a goal to “identify and expand markets for non-oil exports,” according to Kristian Ulrichsen.¹⁸³ Indonesia was on the agenda, however Saudi-Indonesian relations had begun to cool due to Jakarta’s anger over the repeated execution of Indonesian workers inside the Kingdom, its decision to be neutral in the Saudi-led war in Yemen, its call for dialogue between GCC states following Riyadh’s blockade of Qatar, and its refusal to join the Saudi-led Islamic Military Counterterrorism Coalition (IMCTC).¹⁸⁴ Given Indonesia’s long history of non-alignment in other nations’ rivalries (most especially during the Cold War), Jokowi saw the creation of the IMCTC “as closely associated with...the Saudi-led GCC effort to isolate Iran in the Arab and Islamic world,” according to Maxwell Lowe.¹⁸⁵ These moves prompted King Salman to “make the first visit by a Saudi monarch to Indonesia since 1970. While he did not address concerns about the treatment of Indonesian workers in Saudi Arabia, he announced significant investments, attended interfaith meetings, and exchanged handshakes and took pictures with women.”¹⁸⁶ During this state visit, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia concluded five major diplomatic agreements, including a bilateral trade agreement, a cooperation agreement on research and education, a cooperation agreement on education and cultural affairs, an

¹⁸¹ Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks*, 46.

¹⁸² Al Qurtuby, 46.

¹⁸³ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, “King Salman’s Outreach to Asia,” *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), March 3, 2017, <https://agsiw.org/king-salmans-outreach-asia/>.

¹⁸⁴ Foley, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Asia.”

¹⁸⁵ Ulrichsen, “King Salman’s Outreach to Asia”; Lowe, “Khomeini in the Archipelago.”

¹⁸⁶ Foley, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Asia.”

agreement on small-medium business development, as well as an agreement to upgrade the headship of joint committee.¹⁸⁷

This period between 2015 and 2021 also saw a broadening of opportunities for Jakarta to become more involved in events across the Middle East, albeit cautiously. In 2015, Riyadh initiated a largely unpopular war in Yemen against the Houthi-led militia, triggering a call by the OIC for Indonesia to use an already scheduled, five-day Asia-Africa conference as a venue to broker peace talks between the warring parties.¹⁸⁸ In 2016, following the execution of dissident Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr in Saudi Arabia, subsequent attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Tehran and Mashhad by Iranian protesters, and the severing of diplomatic relations between Riyadh and Tehran, Jokowi sent Foreign Minister Marsudi to the Persian Gulf in an attempt to de-escalate rising tensions between the two states.¹⁸⁹ Marsudi also took the opportunity to hold related talks with her counterparts in the UAE and Oman during the same trip.¹⁹⁰ Indonesia's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Agus Maftuh Abegebriel, appointed in 2016 by President Widodo, also initiated a program called "SAUNESIA," designed to strengthen bilateral ties

¹⁸⁷ "Cooperation Program Between the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of the Republic of Indonesia and Small and Medium Enterprises Authority of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Concerning Small and Medium Enterprises Development" (Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017); "Cooperation Program Between the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Scientific and Higher Educational Cooperation" (Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017); "Cooperation Program in the Field of Commerce Between the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Commerce and Investment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" (Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017); "Joint Declaration by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Upgrading the Headship Level in the Work of the Joint Committee" (Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017); "Memorandum of Understanding of Cultural Cooperation Between the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" (Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017).

¹⁸⁸ "Indonesia Urged to 'Resolve Problem in Yemen,'" News, Al Arabiya News, April 16, 2015, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2015/04/16/OIC-asks-Indonesia-to-broker-Yemen-talks>.

¹⁸⁹ Yenni Kwok, "Could This Man Become the Middle East's New Mediator?," Time, January 20, 2016, <https://time.com/4186427/indonesia-saudi-arabia-iran-diplomacy-sunni-shia/>.

¹⁹⁰ "Peace Message from the President of the Republic of Indonesia to Iran and Saudi Arabia," Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, January 19, 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160120191644/http://www.kemlu.go.id/id/berita/Pages/pesan-damai-indonesia-arab-saudi.aspx>.

between the two nations.¹⁹¹ In 2018–19, following this as well as a series of ISIS-inspired terrorist attacks in Indonesia, Riyadh and Jakarta signed three diplomatic agreements covering cooperation on religious affairs and extremism, a health agreement for hajj and umrah pilgrims, as well as a cultural cooperation agreement.¹⁹²

Saudi Arabia's relations with Southeast Asian states began to weaken between 2015–2021. In Malaysia, for instance, the close relationship that Saudi leaders had cultivated with Najib Tun Razak during his tenure as prime minister, according to Sean Foley, “became a burden when Mahathir Mohamad defeated Najib in the 2018 elections—thanks in part to the accusations of corruption tied to [the 2015] 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), a development bank that allegedly received contributions from prominent members of the Saudi royal family.”¹⁹³ In 2018, following the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, President Widodo called for a “transparent and thorough” investigation into the death of the Saudi Arabian journalist, and in response, Riyadh dispatched Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir to Jakarta to convey “a ‘statement and explanation’ to Widodo about the case,” according to a statement by Foreign Minister Marsudi.¹⁹⁴

Religio-political organizations in Indonesia have also emerged as a potential flashpoint between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, with Saudi officials closely tied to Islamist organizations in the archipelago like the Islamic Defenders Front and apprehensive of more moderate organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama. In December 2018, Osama bin Mohammed Abdullah al-Shuaib, then serving as the Saudi ambassador to Indonesia, purportedly

¹⁹¹ Samsul Huda, “SAUNESIA Axis Strengthens Relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia,” *NU Online*, February 14, 2020, <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/116643/poros-saunesia-perkokoh-hubungan-indonesia-saudi-arabia->.

¹⁹² “Implementing Arrangement Between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Cooperation in the Field of Health Services for Indonesian hajj and umrah Pilgrims” (Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 4, 2019); “Memorandum of Understanding of Cultural Cooperation Between the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”; “Executive Program on Cultural Cooperation for the Years 2019–2022 Between the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia” (Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, December 22, 2018).

¹⁹³ Foley, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Asia.”

¹⁹⁴ Augustinus Beo Da Costa, “Indonesia Calls for ‘transparent and Thorough’ Probe of Khashoggi Killing,” *News, Reuters*, October 22, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-khashoggi-indonesia-idUSKCN1MW0XM>.

tweeted out pictures of a rally of supporters of the Islamic Defenders Front with a caption that suggested that its rival, Nahdlatul Ulama, was “a heretical organization.”¹⁹⁵ Shihab was quickly replaced by Esam Althagafi as ambassador.¹⁹⁶ Despite these embarrassing diplomatic gaffs, Jokowi did make a minor hajj to Saudi Arabia in April 2019, just before his re-election, however critics argue that this was likely intended more as a measure to bolster his Islamic credentials at home more so that it was to mend Saudi-Indonesian ties.¹⁹⁷

Finally, tension between Gulf Arab states and Southeast Asia emerged in 2020 in relation to the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the recent move by the UAE and Bahrain to normalize ties with Israel—an especially sensitive topic in Muslim-majority Southeast Asia. While by August 2020, according to Amy Chew, neither Indonesian nor Malaysian government officials had commented on the Abraham Accords, both former Malaysian prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, and Nahdlatul Ulama criticized the agreement, warning that it could “trigger terror attacks in the Southeast Asian nation and the Middle East” and “divide the Muslim world into warring factions.”¹⁹⁸ To add to the simmering geopolitical tension emerging between rising powers in Asia and the Persian Gulf, in 2021 Iran concluded a strategic cooperation agreement with China, potentially giving Riyadh’s biggest regional rival broader access to Chinese weaponry and economic assistance.¹⁹⁹

2. Economic and Energy Ties

As addressed in previous discussions about King Abdullah’s “Look East” policy, Saudi economic policies over the last decade have focused on mitigating major economic

¹⁹⁵ Foley, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Asia.”

¹⁹⁶ Foley.

¹⁹⁷ Tassia Sipahutar, “Jokowi Heads to Mecca for Pilgrimage as Indonesia Vote Nears,” News, BNN Bloomberg, April 14, 2019, <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/jokowi-heads-to-mecca-for-pilgrimage-as-indonesia-vote-nears-1.1244189>.

¹⁹⁸ Amy Chew, “Mahathir: UAE-Israel Deal Divides Muslim World into ‘Warring Factions,’” South China Morning Post, August 14, 2020, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3097450/malaysias-mahathir-uae-israel-deal-divides-muslim-world-warring>.

¹⁹⁹ Lucille Greer and Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj, “Last Among Equals: The China-Iran Partnership in a Regional Context,” Wilson Center, September 30, 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/last-among-equals-china-iran-partnership-regional-context>.

vulnerabilities of a rentier oil economy.²⁰⁰ Saudi outreach to Southeast Asia and Indonesia has largely occurred in the fields of expanding trade and investments, energy, foreign labor, and religious tourism. While engaging in major domestic programs to diversify the Saudi state, tackle unemployment, and ween the nation off of a dependence on oil, Saudi foreign policy has focused on expanding its energy market share abroad with a goal of attracting Asian consumers, reducing its domestic oil consumption through the development of renewable energy options in order to secure its export power, and both directing investments into key economic sectors abroad while also courting foreign investment in the Kingdom in order to transition its domestic economy away from reliance on the public sector.²⁰¹ Oil is still Saudi's chief lever abroad, and as Makio Yamada points out, "demand security [in the field of oil exports] has been the major concern of the Saudi decision makers because of the nature of Saudi Arabia being a rentier state."²⁰²

In terms of trade relations, as mentioned previously by Yom Machmudi, ties between Indonesia and Saudi Arabi remain significant, although Saudi Arabia tends to dominate.²⁰³ By the time King Abdullah ascended to the throne in 2005, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia exchanged only \$2.4 billion and \$708 million worth of goods, respectively, and had signed a bilateral investment treaty two years prior in 2003.²⁰⁴ According to the Observatory of Economic Complexity, that year Indonesia imported a total of \$68.4 billion worth of goods, with only 3.51% of that being Saudi goods.²⁰⁵ By 2015, Jakarta's imports jumped to a value of \$144 billion, with Saudi Arabia increasing their exports to Indonesia by over \$2.3 billion to a total value of \$3.02 billion. By 2019, Indonesia imported \$3.1 billion worth of goods from Saudi Arabia, yet Saudi imports from Indonesia dropped from the 2015 value of \$2.59 billion to \$2.26 billion worth of goods, highlighting a major

²⁰⁰ Panda, "King Abdullah's Legacy in Asia."

²⁰¹ James Russell, "In the Furnace: Saudi Arabia and the Dynamics of Global Climate Change," in *Handbook of Transitions to Energy and Climate Security*, ed. Robert Looney (New York: Routledge, 2017), 111.

²⁰² Yamada, "Saudi Arabia's Look-East Diplomacy: Ten Years On," 134.

²⁰³ Machmudi, "Saudi Arabia's Relations with Indonesia," 283.

²⁰⁵ "Indonesia Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners."

frustration of Indonesian politicians that Riyadh seems to be less invested in the bilateral partnership than Jakarta is.²⁰⁶ While the value of Indonesia's imports from Saudi Arabia would appear to grow somewhat, actual tonnage of these imports remained relatively steady over the course of the last 20 years, gravitating between a trough of 4.8 million tons of goods in 2002, to a peak of 6.8 million tons in 2014, according to Chatham House.²⁰⁷ The discrepancy between price and weight can be attributed to fluctuations in the price of oil. Between 2009 and 2016, according to Machmudi, Riyadh did provide significant investments in Indonesian telecom and agriculture, with Saudi companies targeting helping develop "new farms in eastern Indonesia covering an area of two million hectares" at the value of \$1.3 billion in addition to targeting \$1.2 billion towards Indonesian telecom and related businesses.²⁰⁸ According to the Saudi embassy in Jakarta, Indonesian investments in the Kingdom are "limited to food processing and construction only."²⁰⁹

Following the unveiling of Vision 2030 and the rapid acceleration of Riyadh's campaign to court foreign investors abroad, King Salman visited Indonesia in 2017—the first Saudi ruler to visit in 47 years—and brought with him a royal delegation comprised of 620 people as part of his entourage, 800 delegates, 10 ministers, and 25 princes, according to the BBC.²¹⁰ In addition to seeking to expand diplomatic ties with Jakarta, King Salman's visit at this point in time was also "connected to the Kingdom's plan of the Initial Public Offering (IPO) of 5 percent of Saudi Aramco, the national giant oil company, which is expected to reach a US\$2 trillion value, making it the largest IPO ever."²¹¹

Saudi energy outreach to East and Southeast Asia since 2005 has largely focused on courting China first, and then expanding into other major markets like Japan and India. Despite Indonesia's promising growth, Jakarta has remained peripheral to Saudi energy

²⁰⁶ "Saudi Arabia Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners"; "Slow Money from Saudi Arabia."

²⁰⁷ "Indonesia Imports from Saudi Arabia," Chatham House, 2020, <https://resourcetrade.earth/?year=2019&exporter=682&importer=360&units=weight&autozoom=1>.

²⁰⁸ Foley, "Saudi Arabia's Relations with Asia"; Machmudi, "Saudi Arabia's Relations with Indonesia," 284.

²⁰⁹ "Saudi Relations with Indonesia."

²¹⁰ "Saudi King Visits Indonesia with 'Cars and Entourage.'"

²¹¹ Al Qurtuby, *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks*, 26.

interests in the region. Saudi Arabia had already concluded a strategic energy cooperation agreement with Beijing in 1999 even before Abdullah's "Look East" policy had taken shape. According to Lindsey Ford and Max Hill, "between 2000 and 2009, Chinese imports from Saudi Arabia increased sevenfold."²¹² By 2009, China overtook the United States as the top buyer of Saudi oil.²¹³ In the effort to restructure its energy sector in order to reduce oil dependence and "adopt a more commercial approach to its business operations," according to Diane Munro, Saudi energy investments abroad have focused largely on increasing foreign refining capacity in order to "secure markets for its crude oil production."²¹⁴ King Salman's trip to Indonesia in 2017 sought to do just that, with Saudi Aramco concluding joint venture agreements for "refineries and petrochemical plants in Indonesia and Malaysia worth approximately \$13 billion."²¹⁵

Easier said than done, however. By 2014, in Indonesia more than 30 budding joint ventures related to refinery projects have failed, including agreements with major corporations like ExxonMobil, BP and Shell who were forced to drop out from these ventures because they were politically motivated but not commercially viable. According to an unnamed expert cited by Damon Evans, "it is far cheaper to import finished oil products than import the crude oil and refine it in Indonesia."²¹⁶ By 2020, the Aramco-Pertamina project collapsed too, after discussions dragged on for four years. The Saudis withdrew, according to Evans, after a disagreement emerged on the valuation of an existing refinery in Cilacap. "Aramco had raised its refinery valuation from \$2.5 billion to \$5.1 billion. But Pertamina insisted the cost of developing the entire Cilacap refinery would be

²¹² Lindsey Ford and Max Hill, "China," Asia Society, August 8, 2019, <https://asiasociety.org/asias-new-pivot/china>.

²¹³ Panda, "King Abdullah's Legacy in Asia."

²¹⁴ Diane Munro, "Restructuring of Saudi Arabia's Energy Industry Gathers Pace," *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), March 2, 2017, <https://agsiw.org/restructuring-saudi-arabias-energy-industry-gathers-pace/>.

²¹⁵ Munro.

²¹⁶ Damon Evans, "Politics Muddy Indonesia's \$48 Billion Refinery Expansion Plan after Aramco Walks - News for the Energy Sector," *Energy Voice* (blog), July 15, 2020, <https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/asia/252182/politics-muddy-indonesias-48-billion-refinery-expansion-plan-after-aramco-walks/>.

at least \$5.7 billion,” Evans points out.²¹⁷ While Saudi investments, among other states, in Indonesian refineries have flopped thus far, other investors still seem willing to jump into the Indonesian market, with “Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Russia’s Rosneft and Abu Dhabi’s Mubadala are still actively considering potential refining joint ventures with Pertamina.”²¹⁸ The uncertain market outlook driven by COVID-19’s impact on energy demand and the subsequent drop in oil prices, however, has also impacted Aramco’s identical ventures with other Asian powers too. Despite also concluding an investment deal with Beijing in 2017 to build refinery and petrochemical facilities in the northeastern Chinese province of Liaoning as part of King Salman’s tour across Asia, Saudi Aramco has been forced to suspend the \$10 billion deal “as the company slashes spending to cope with low oil prices,” according to Alfred Cang.²¹⁹

Saudi Arabia’s breakeven oil price to fund government spending has fluctuated between \$75 to \$80 per barrel between 2018–21 projections according to the International Monetary Fund, however oil prices as of August 10, 2021, according to *The Economist*, have only recovered to \$70.80 a barrel following the pandemic-driven collapse of prices to their historic low of \$9.12 per barrel in the spring of 2020.²²⁰ While Saudi reform efforts stagnate because of the slumping energy economy, in terms of demand security, Riyadh is also leery of a potentially emerging Sino-U.S. rivalry, which has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic and, according to Foley, “risks drawing Riyadh into a dangerous global conflict, where Beijing could, in a crisis, replace Saudi oil imports with Russian or other oil imports.”²²¹

²¹⁷ Evans.

²¹⁸ Evans.

²¹⁹ Chen Aizhu, Rania El Gamal, and Meng, “Saudi Aramco to Sign China Refinery Deals as Crown Prince Visits: Sources,” *Reuters*, February 20, 2019, sec. Commodities News, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-asia-saudi-china-xi-idUSKCN1QA0OE>; Alfred Cang, “Saudi Aramco Suspends \$10 Billion China Oil Refinery Venture,” *Bloomberg*, August 21, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-21/saudi-aramco-suspends-10-billion-china-oil-refinery-venture>.

²²⁰ “Brent Crude Oil Prices - 10 Year Daily Chart,” Macrotrends, 2021, <https://www.macrotrends.net/2480/brent-crude-oil-prices-10-year-daily-chart>; “Breakeven Oil Prices”; “Economic & Financial Indicators,” *The Economist*, August 14, 2021.

²²¹ Foley, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Asia.”

The last two areas of Saudi economic interaction with Indonesia related to foreign labor and (largely religious) tourism. Since 2000, the total number of Indonesian migrants in Saudi Arabia has consistently increased, from 668,666 in 2000 to 1,709,318 as of last year, according to the United Nations Population Division, despite Indonesian government efforts to restrict migrant travel.²²² This number has also not significantly decreased after the unveiling of Riyadh's Vision 2030 program that sought to reduce the Kingdom's unemployment rate from 11.6% to 7% over the next decade by increasing the employment of Saudi nationals in the private sector and reducing dependence on foreign laborers. The potential elimination of Indonesian workers in Saudi Arabia will have a broad impact on the total value of remittances coming into Indonesia. According to a 2009 report by the International Organization for Migration, Indonesian remittances from Saudi Arabia were valued at \$2.2 billion, or 33% of the country's total remittances overall for that year.²²³ Near the end of 2018, this number would increase to \$ 2.711 billion.²²⁴ While these numbers are relatively small compared to Indonesia's GDP of \$1.058 trillion, employment opportunities in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere have been key in helping Indonesia reduce its overall unemployment rate.²²⁵

Religious tourism is probably the largest people-to-people linkage between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia sending 212,730 pilgrims to Mecca in 2019.²²⁶ The economic windfall of annual hajj and umrah pilgrimages each year for Saudi Arabia is staggering, adding roughly \$12 billion annually to the Saudi economy.²²⁷ Saudi Arabia has recognized the potential revenue that increased tourism can provide the Kingdom, adding an additional National Tourism Strategy to its Vision 2030 portfolio, with the

²²² "International Migrant Stock."

²²³ "International Migration and Migrant Workers' Remittances in Indonesia," 23.

²²⁴ "Remittance Made by Indonesian Migrant Workers Abroad Reaches US\$ 2.711 Billion."

²²⁵ "GDP (Current US\$) - Indonesia," The World Bank, 2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=ID>.

²²⁶ "Indonesia Gets hajj Quota of 221,000 This Year," Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, January 22, 2019, <https://setkab.go.id/en/indonesia-gets-hajj-quota-of-221000-this-year/>.

²²⁷ Gilang Nur Alam et al., "The Impacts of Covid-19 To Saudi Arabia's Economic Sector and Hajj Pilgrimage Policy of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education* 12, no. 8 (2021): 463.

objective of increasing the contribution of its tourism sector to Saudi GDP to more than 10%.²²⁸

3. Environmental Security and Cooperation

Saudi Arabia and the broader Persian Gulf's environmental vulnerabilities are numerous, given the fact that the region is acutely vulnerable to climate change and its impacts, to include rising temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, coastal erosion and the pollution of freshwater sources, and related impacts. Riyadh's cooperation on this issue, however, is largely limited to two levels: globally, as part of its international commitments to agreements like the Paris Climate Accord, and regionally, in actions related to the GCC and neighboring states. As mentioned in previous sections, Saudi environmental cooperation with Southeast Asia is at best indirect, conducted largely through markets or through its changing energy policies. Climate change is the biggest environmental threat to Saudi Arabia. Yet despite having been seen as "one of the biggest impediments to a global deal to limit carbon output" during the 2014 negotiations in Copenhagen (where Saudi officials were reportedly responsible for 40% of all committee objections), Riyadh did eventually sign on to the 2015 Paris Climate Accord. According to Russell, Saudi Arabia has committed to reducing its carbon emissions "by 130 tons annually by 2030."²²⁹ Riyadh's biggest actions taken to limit its carbon output, while having an environmental impact, are largely related to reform of its energy sector. Munro points out that, through Al Saud-led restructuring in 2017, Aramco had planned to "double natural gas production over the next decade, invest as much as \$50 billion in renewable energy projects, and launch the country's first nuclear power plants," not for the sake of reducing carbon emissions, but instead to meet surging domestic demand for energy related to Saudi population growth and rapid industrialization.²³⁰

²²⁸ "Visa & Tourism," Government, GOV.SA, July 29, 2021, <https://www.my.gov.sa/wps/portal/snp/aboutksa/tourism>.

²²⁹ Russell, "In the Furnace: Saudi Arabia and the Dynamics of Global Climate Change," 114.

²³⁰ Munro, "Restructuring of Saudi Arabia's Energy Industry Gathers Pace."

In Asia, South Korea has been critical to Saudi renewable energy development through cooperation in the field of nuclear energy. According to Hae Won Jeong, “South Korea officially expressed an interest in becoming a nuclear energy technology exporter” beginning in 2009 with the first export of nuclear technology to the UAE and Jordan.²³¹ As recently as January 2020, Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KA-CARE) and South Korea’s Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) have completed a revised “pre-project engineering contract” to establish a joint entity for the commercialization and eventual construction of small, Korean-designed nuclear reactor in Saudi Arabia.²³²

Specific cooperation with Indonesia, however, has been limited to Saudi-based efforts to achieve food security with minuscule arable land on the Arabian Peninsula. Through its economic strength, Riyadh has been able to achieve food security via a market-based strategy that guarantees *access* to a diverse array of food suppliers rather than pursuing security through production at home.²³³ Part of this includes Saudi investments in agriculture abroad. According to Machmudi, in 2013 alone, “Saudi investment in Indonesia in both the agricultural and technological sectors was nearly US\$8.65 billion.”²³⁴ Between 2009 and 2016, Saudi investments in new farms across eastern Indonesia reached \$1.3 billion and covered an area of roughly two million hectares, according to Machmudi.²³⁵ Moreover, in 2019, Saudi Arabia imported from Indonesia over \$73.3 million worth of animal product, \$191 million in foodstuffs, \$403 million worth of animal and vegetable byproducts, and \$41.9 million worth of vegetable products,

²³¹ Hae Won Jeong, “South Korea,” Asia Society, July 28, 2020, <https://asiasociety.org/asias-new-pivot/south-korea>.

²³² “Korea, Saudi Arabia Progress with SMART Collaboration : New Nuclear - World Nuclear News,” World Nuclear News, January 7, 2020, <https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Korea-Saudi-Arabia-progress-with-SMART-collaborati>.

²³³ Lovell, “Food and Water Security in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”

²³⁴ Machmudi, “Saudi Arabia’s Relations with Indonesia,” 284.

²³⁵ Machmudi, 284.

totaling \$709.2 million—a relatively small figure given the fact that Indonesia exported \$31.1 billion worth of agricultural products that year.²³⁶

4. Security and Military Cooperation

Historically, Saudi defense cooperation with foreign partners since 2000 has focused on addressing growing dual threats posed to the Kingdom by rising regional hegemony, such as Iran, as well as countering jihadi terrorist groups seeking to undermine the stability of the Al Saud royal family or their Gulf Arab allies, all while maintaining friendly relations with a global power capable of providing a security umbrella to the Saudi state—in this case, the United States. Defense and military cooperation with Indonesia has only recently become a serious issue for both Jakarta and Riyadh since 2014. Engagement between these two Islamic powers were driven in part by their shared Islamic character, as both nations found themselves both victims of jihadi terrorist attacks while also being pressured to take a firmer stance against radical Islamist ideologies. Oddly enough, modern ties between Jakarta and Riyadh have only been somewhat related to the growth of energy and economic ties between the Asia-Pacific and the Persian Gulf. In his 2015 assessment of Riyadh’s “Look East” policy, Makio Yamada points out that Saudi-Asian relations have shown some signs of growing interest in bilateral defense ties: “These may be only marginal today, but they appear to be forward-looking.”²³⁷

In terms of supporting Saudi-led efforts to deter regional adversaries and isolate Iran, Indonesia has played no part in this largely due to Jakarta’s firm adherence to its norm of non-alignment—a policy readily extended to Indonesia’s international relations within the Persian Gulf.²³⁸ This reality played out during the 2017–21 Saudi-led blockade of Qatar when Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia all refused to participate, rejecting to subscribe to what Giorgio Cafiero described as “the Saudi/UAE-led bloc’s narrative of

²³⁶ “Saudi Arabia Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners.”

²³⁷ Yamada, “Saudi Arabia’s Look-East Diplomacy: Ten Years On,” 122.

²³⁸ Nithin Coca, “Indonesia’s Nonalignment Problem,” December 30, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/indonesias-nonalignment-problem>.

Qatar as a state sponsor of terrorism.”²³⁹ This neutrality on the part of Jakarta to embed itself in the security structures of the Persian Gulf even extended to its non-participation in the Saudi-led war in Yemen (a campaign that even Malaysia withdrew its forces from) as well as the Islamic Military Counterterrorism Coalition, a project established by MBS but seen by some as “a part of the Saudi-led GCC effort to isolate Iran in the Arab and Islamic world,” according to Kristian Ulrichsen.²⁴⁰

In 2014, Saudi Deputy Defense Minister Salman bin Sultan Abdul Aziz Al Saud visited Indonesia and signed the first-ever defense cooperation agreement between the Kingdom and Indonesia, however while the agreement was also signed by Salman’s counterpart, Lt. Gen. (ret.) Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, the DCA would not be ratified by the Indonesian government until 2018 when the People’s Consultative Assembly of Indonesia gave their formal approval (oddly enough, this bilateral Saudi-Indonesian defense agreement is not listed in the database of international treaties managed by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an active defense agreement, while a recent 2021 defense agreement between Indonesia and Qatar is listed).²⁴¹ This agreement focused largely on expanding Saudi-Indonesian cooperation in the field of training and education, counter-terrorism efforts, and expanded Saudi ties to the Indonesian defense industry.²⁴²

Given the context of Saudi policy in the Asia-Pacific between 2014–2021, however, this DCA is not unique. While it was one of the first expanded defense agreements that Riyadh signed with Asian powers, Saudi officials would sign a similar agreement with India only a month later.²⁴³ In 2016, Japan’s Prime Minister Abe concluded a

²³⁹ Giorgio Cafiero, “ASEAN and the Qatar Crisis,” *Atlantic Council* (blog), November 3, 2017, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/asean-and-the-qatar-crisis/>.

²⁴⁰ “Malaysia to Withdraw Troops Stationed in Saudi Arabia,” News, Al-Jazeera, June 28, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/6/28/malaysia-to-withdraw-troops-stationed-in-saudi-arabia>; Prashanth Parameswaran, “Will Malaysia End Its Military Presence in Saudi Arabia?,” News, The Diplomat, June 26, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/will-malaysia-end-its-military-presence-in-saudi-arabia/>; Ulrichsen, “King Salman’s Outreach to Asia.”

²⁴² Santosa, “Saudi Arabia, RI Ink Defense Cooperation Agreement.”

²⁴³ Ankit Panda, “India and Saudi Arabia Sign Defense Cooperation Pact,” *The Diplomat*, February 27, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/02/india-and-saudi-arabia-sign-defense-cooperation-pact/>.

memorandum on defense exchange with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who was then making an official visit to Japan.²⁴⁴ Saudi officials also concluded several defense-related agreements with South Korea in 2019, although while Seoul's military has participated in security activities in the Persian Gulf region, it has gone to great lengths to distance itself from U.S.-led or other politically-sensitive operations, "signaling the South Korean government's hesitance to be seen as getting too involved in Middle East conflicts," according to Hae Won Jeong.²⁴⁵ In Southeast Asia, Riyadh's most effective partner has been Malaysia, who has both actively participated in Saudi-led military exercises, the IMCTC, and up until recently, in Riyadh's war in Yemen.²⁴⁶ Saudi Arabia has not needed Indonesian assistance in addressing any of its strategic security problems over the last decade, suggesting that at least in the near term, Saudi-Indonesian cooperation on defense-related issues will continue to revolve around modest counterterrorism cooperation and little else. Broader engagement will continue to hit obstacles, however. Cultural barriers remain between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia that foster tension rather than cooperation. These include overly dogmatic Saudi religious discourse in Indonesia as well as a lack of appreciation of religious differences between the respective societies. According to Yon Machmudi, "Saudi Arabia's religious exclusivity is in marked contrast to Iran and Turkey, who collaborate with universities and cultural organisations [sic] in Indonesia. Both are perceived in Indonesia as more moderate states, and in particular more accommodating and respectful of Indonesian religious traditions and culture."²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ "Meeting of Prime Minister Abe and Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman," Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, September 1, 2016, https://www.mofa.go.jp/me_a/me2/sa/page4e_000511.html.

²⁴⁵ Jeong, "South Korea."

²⁴⁶ "Malaysia to Withdraw Troops Stationed in Saudi Arabia"; Shaul Shay, "Boosting Regional Cooperation: Behind Gulf Shield 1," Israel Defense, April 22, 2018, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/33912>; Prashanth Parameswaran, "Why Is Malaysia in Saudi-Led War Games in the Middle East?," The Diplomat, February 18, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/02/why-is-malaysia-in-saudi-led-war-games-in-the-middle-east/>.

E. CONCLUSION

The intent of this chapter was to provide the necessary data collection and analysis required to help us determine in our final conclusion as to whether or not Southeast Asia is emerging as a zone of inter-Arab competition. By way investigating contemporary Saudi-Indonesian relations, we sought out to identify specific trends in Saudi Arabia's foreign policies that may indicate diverging or converging interests with Qatar, and whether or not these policies provide any indications as to the presence (or not) of collective threats to the GCC as well as the extension (or not) of intra-Arab enmity to the Southeast Asian regional security subcomplex. By identifying potentially converging and diverging policies, we can then determine whether or not Riyadh's foreign policies are designed in a way that is cooperative with the interests of its Gulf Arab neighbors, or competitive and created despite them.

Based on this research, we have concluded that Saudi Arabia's most pressing domestic vulnerabilities relates to its reliance on oil as the primary driver of its economy, as well as the implications that an oil-based economy have had on impeding the emergence of a diverse and complex domestic economy. The primary threats to Saudi Arabia, therefore, is a future where the price of oil is destined to remain below a price that prevents Riyadh from successfully reforming both its economy and society in order to ensure the Kingdom's future solvency. The strongest links between Saudi vulnerabilities and Southeast Asia include the increasing economic integration of Saudi Arabia and Asia writ large, although major emerging powers in South and East Asia tend to dominate Saudi attention more so than any single ASEAN state. Additionally, there exists an indirect, but not inconsequential, link between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia as it relates to each states efforts to counter jihadi terrorism as well as the implications these policies have on domestic security and stability in both Riyadh and Jakarta.

Between 2000–2021, Saudi Arabia has pursued a variety of economic, political, and security-related policies designed to mitigate its domestic vulnerabilities and defuse the subsequent threats. Riyadh's most successful policies include King Abdallah's "Look East" economic policies and investments, especially as it related to the Kingdom's energy exports. While Saudi Arabia's biggest investment targets have been the economies of

China, Japan, South Korea, and India, the broader expansion of Saudi and Gulf Arab economic activity across Asia promises to trickle into ASEAN as well, albeit at a rate less satisfying than what Indonesian leaders had hoped for. Conversely, Saudi Arabia's weakest policies have been those efforts designed to consolidate its wider political influence both in the Persian Gulf and across the Muslim world. This not only includes its failed blockade of Qatar—which Indonesia and Malaysia rebuffed, but also its rollout of the IMCTC as a pan-Islamic military alliance (that only succeeded in recruiting one Southeast Asian member state). Saudi Arabia's most promising but yet-to-be determined is its expanding tourism industry, founded on the already-strong people-to-people ties between Saudi Arabia and Indonesian pilgrims—assuming that COVID-19 eventually disappears and global and regional economies are able to recover. Given this summary, it is difficult to characterize Saudi foreign policy towards Southeast Asia and Indonesia as anything close to cooperative relative to its neighbors in Doha.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

III. QATARI FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS INDONESIA: 2000–2021

A. OVERVIEW

In order to determine whether or not Southeast Asia is emerging as a zone of competition between Gulf Arab states, we must first understand what generally causes intra-Arab cooperation or competition. While our earlier literature review suggests that two critical variables are the presence and intensity of collective threats to GCC member states, as well as the presence and intensity of intra-Arab cleavages, we must understand in more detail Qatar's domestic vulnerabilities, subsequent threat perceptions, and linkages between these and Southeast Asia. Doing so will help us identify specific cases where Qatar's interests may overlap with those of Saudi Arabia, potentially providing an avenue for cooperation in their policies abroad; as well as help us to identify areas where interests may diverge, providing indications of areas where Doha and Riyadh may compete if their core interests are threatened. We will then use these indicators as criteria for assessing the foreign policies pursued by, in this case, Qatar in order to assess whether or not intra-Arab competition in Southeast Asia is an emerging phenomenon.

This section will begin with an investigation into state-level, domestically-generated vulnerabilities, threat perceptions, and linkages between these threats to Qatar and subsequent foreign policies toward Indonesia. This work will assist in our analysis of the regional security patterns of the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia in order to identify conditions that incentivize Gulf Arab cooperation or competition. We will assess whether or not the policies pursued by Qatar are convergent or divergent with the interests or policies enacted by Saudi Arabia in our effort to determine whether or not Southeast Asia is indeed emerging as a zone of inter-Arab competition.

B. QATARI-INDONESIAN RELATIONS FROM 1971–1999

While Qatar and Indonesia established formal relations in 1976, embassies between the two nations were only opened in Jakarta and Doha in 1996 and 1999, respectively.²⁴⁸ This twenty-year gap can be attributed first to ongoing consolidation of political power in Qatar.²⁴⁹ In 1916, Qatar became a British protectorate following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire.²⁵⁰ The ruling Al Thani family would never exercise full sovereignty over their state's affairs until 1971 when it declared independence from the British.²⁵¹ A year later, emir Khalifah bin Hamad, seized power from Ahmad bin Ali via coup ushering in what he called "The Era of Reform" and significantly expanded Qatar's diplomatic relations with the world.²⁵² Formal relations with Indonesia followed four years later in 1976.²⁵³

As a small, Sunni-led monarchy in the Persian Gulf, Qatar has historically relied on Saudi Arabia for protection from external threats.²⁵⁴ Both Saudi Arabia and Qatar emerged as nation-states from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, and both territories engaged in significant trade and people-to-people exchanges, including shared religious and cultural practices, prior to the imposition of artificial borders following both Saudi and Qatari independence.²⁵⁵ While state-to-state relations were generally fraternal, in the early 1990s, two factors changed the way Qatar sought to engage with the world: Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and the overthrow of emir Khalifah bin Hamad in 1995 by his son and crown prince, Hamad bin Khalifa.²⁵⁶ The significance of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, "a small, intrinsically defenceless [sic], hydrocarbon-rich country surrounded by larger

²⁴⁸ "Qatar - Indonesia Relations," Qatar Embassy in Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, 2018, <https://jakarta.embassy.qa/en/indonesia/qatar---indonesia-relations>.

²⁴⁹ Roberts, *Qatar*, 19.

²⁵⁰ Roberts, 17.

²⁵¹ Roberts, 19.

²⁵² Roberts, 20; Michael Herb, *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution, and Democracy in the Middle Eastern Monarchies* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 114.

²⁵³ "Qatar - Indonesia Relations," 2018.

²⁵⁴ Roberts, 28.

²⁵⁵ Roberts, *Qatar*, 17.

²⁵⁶ Roberts, 21.

states with whom it had sporadically antagonistic relationships—was plainly not lost on the Qatari elite,” according to Roberts.²⁵⁷ Doha’s relationship with the United States expanded during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, with Qatar permitting the staging of U.S. forces in the country.²⁵⁸ Indeed, this reliance on an external power—let alone a superpower—to help guarantee Qatar’s security from other Persian Gulf powers gave Doha a freer hand vis-à-vis the policies it pursued both at home and abroad. This led to the first major exchange of diplomats between Doha and Jakarta when, in the spring of 1995, Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasssem Bin Jabor Al Thani, Qatar’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Indonesia.²⁵⁹ Two years later, in March, 1997, Ali Alatas, the Indonesia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, traveled to Doha and helped formalize a joint statement between Qatar and Indonesia on the development of bilateral relations—the first agreement between Indonesia and Qatar.²⁶⁰ A year later, Indonesia’s government collapsed after protests across the country demanding President Suharto’s resignation ended up forcing the three-decade president from office.²⁶¹

C. INDICATORS FOR POTENTIAL COOPERATION OR COMPETITION

1. Qatar’s Domestic Vulnerabilities and Threat Perceptions

Identical to the premise provided in the Saudi case study, this chapter recalls that the Persian Gulf’s regional security complex is subject to the “politics of state survival and regime survival,” due in part to the polarity of the region and the changing nature of great power penetration.²⁶² With regional dynamics taking the dominant role, states in the gulf face an ever-present reality of state formation and decay. Verhoeven describes this as a reality where “the redrawing of borders is not just hypothetical but an empirical reality

²⁵⁷ Roberts, 21.

²⁵⁸ Roberts, 21.

²⁵⁹ “Qatar - Indonesia Relations,” 2018.

²⁶⁰ “Qatar - Indonesia Relations.”

²⁶¹ Seth Mydans, “The Fall of Suharto,” *The New York Times*, May 21, 1998, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/21/world/fall-suharto-overview-suharto-besieged-steps-down-after-32-year-rule-indonesia.html>.

²⁶² Verhoeven, “The Gulf and the Horn,” 335

experienced in the recent past.”²⁶³ In our approach towards understanding issues related to Gulf Arab national security, we again reaffirm David Baldwin’s critical question: “security for whom?”²⁶⁴ Our dominant referent object again in this case is the Qatari state apparatus, which includes both the survival and sovereignty of Qatar as a political institution, as well as the legitimacy and stability of the Al Thani monarchy and its individual leaders.²⁶⁵ We will continue to refer to all of these components, directly or indirectly, as the “Qatari state,” unless otherwise noted. Securitizing actors differ based the type of vulnerability and threat, which will be discussed in detail in the subsequent pages. What then are Qatar’s domestic vulnerabilities and threat perceptions? And what linkages exist between these and Southeast Asia, if any? Like our Saudi case study, Qatar’s threats can be categorized into a range of economic, political, environmental, and military threats.

a. Political

Political vulnerabilities of Qatar, as well as their complementary threats, refer to those phenomena that undermine our primary referent object, the sovereign Qatari state, including its constituent components such as its national ideas, physical base, and institutions.²⁶⁶ Due to Qatar’s status as a hereditary monarchy, much like Saudi Arabia, the stable rule of the Al Thani tribe is also a critical factor in the fabric of state institutions. Qatar as a nation is still undergoing the process of state formation, with a history of coups toppling the ruling emir in both 1972 and again in 1995, and an attempted coup in 1996.²⁶⁷ The degree of effective political consolidation of power in Qatar has historically served as a vulnerability that has left ruling emirs more focused on their domestic stability than their interests abroad. However, since coming to power in 1995, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa has crafted a widening state bureaucracy-quasi-royal-patronage system that has led to a period of significant domestic stability for the Al Thani royal family, culminating in 2013 with

²⁶³ Verhoeven, 335.

²⁶⁴ Baldwin, “The Concept of Security,” 13.

²⁶⁵ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security*, 36.

²⁶⁶ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, 150.

²⁶⁷ Mehran Kamrava, *Qatar: Small State, Big Politics* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2015), 106.

the monarchy's first peaceful transfer of power between Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and his son (and Qatar's current ruler), Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.²⁶⁸ According to Mehran Kamrava, thanks in large part to Qatar's energy wealth, the Qatari state apparatus has reached "a comfortable degree of political consolidation" reliant on several pillars: the role that Al Thani family members exert across state bureaucracies, the power of the systems of domestic patronage and clientelism, and the balancing of countervailing internal and external forces against one another.²⁶⁹

This degree of relative domestic political stability reduces Qatar's major political vulnerabilities to two factors: Qatar's relative size, both in terms of geography and its population, as well as its geographic location. While Doha's economy has thrived thanks in no small part to the significant energy deposits in Qatari territory, the limited size of the state's population restricts the number of troops that Qatar can mobilize into its armed forces at any given point, and renders the state more vulnerable to larger neighbors like Saudi Arabia and Iran. Its geographic location especially, located in between two would-be regional hegemony, renders Qatar vulnerable to becoming pulled into a conflict should one ever occur. Historically, Qatari foreign policy has sought to shore up these vulnerabilities through an increased reliance on soft power in the pursuit of state objectives abroad, as well as the expansion of its security partnerships with powers outside the region, namely the United States, in order to secure its survival against regional competitors.²⁷⁰

(1) Political Linkages to Southeast Asia

Doha's most sensitive political vulnerabilities relate to its size, both in terms of territory and population, as well as its geographic location. The limited population size of the nation restricts economic potential given the limited production citizens are capable of producing, as well as limits the number of personnel who could theoretically be mobilized into military service. Gifted with a largely homogenous society and well-integrated minority groups (relative to Qatar's neighbors) equating to a degree of domestic stability,

²⁶⁸ Roberts, *Qatar*, 13.

²⁶⁹ Kamrava, *Qatar*, 106, 130.

²⁷⁰ Roberts, *Qatar*, 45; Kamrava, *Qatar*, 46.

this leaves exogenous actors as the most likely actor to threaten Doha and the ruling Al Thani royal family's political stability.²⁷¹ In order to shore up these vulnerabilities, Qatar has adopted an atypical policy of going abroad in search of security.²⁷² The most obvious linkage between Qatari political vulnerabilities and Southeast Asia is indirect, and lies at the heart of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa's original strategy which he enacted following his rise to power in the mid-nineties, seeking to entangle Qatar's political security in a web of overlapping (and sometimes contradictory) alliances with nations beyond the Persian Gulf.²⁷³ Traditionally, this role was held by historic colonial overseers, including Great Britain and the United States. However, while Qatar's formal strategic partnerships with Asian powers have only started to solidify over the last decade, Qatar's political survival has historically relied on its ability to wield its unique brand of *soft power*, underpinned foremost by its economic power and energy dominance. Qatar's economic itself has relied on Asian labor and, more recently, on Asian markets. Should the U.S. reduce its force posture in the Middle East, to include a near-complete withdrawal of land-based forces as proposed by U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Christine McVann, there is speculation by some scholars that Qatar's security, and thus political future, may become increasingly reliant on the Indo-Pacific.²⁷⁴

b. Economics and Energy

As in our Saudi case study, there remains significant overlap between political security and all other categories, none more apparent than in the realm of economics and energy. The referent object for our analysis is the sovereign Qatari state. The power of Qatar both at home and abroad is reliant on the revenues provided to the Al Thani family by their oil and natural gas resources. Kamrava rightly points out that, in the emerging post-oil era, the system of patronage and clientelism that underpins Al Thani rule must now

²⁷¹ "Qatar Government and Society," Encyclopedia Britannica, August 14, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Qatar>.

²⁷² Kamrava, *Qatar*, 72.

²⁷³ Kamrava, 71.

²⁷⁴ Christine McVann, "Reshaping U.S. Force Posture in the Middle East," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 10, 2021, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/reshaping-us-force-posture-middle-east>.

be called into question.²⁷⁵ Moreover, while the Saudi-led blockade of Qatar, which began in 2017, has since been rescinded, it revealed structural weaknesses apparent across every state in the GCC, according to Karen Young.²⁷⁶ In addition to the state's reliance on oil and gas exports, Qatar, alongside their Gulf Arab neighbors, does not produce its own food. Its geography renders the state's economy vulnerable to basic access to external markets. Its only land border is shared with Saudi Arabia, a vulnerability that Riyadh clearly exploited during the 2017 blockade.²⁷⁷ Doha is heavily reliant on its air and seaports to maintain its economic viability, and its economy is largely dependent on foreigners.²⁷⁸ Qatar is also heavily dependent on reliable electricity generation for both power and water desalination.²⁷⁹ Despite these numerous vulnerabilities, according to the World Energy Council, Qatar is self-sufficient in terms of its energy resources, and is capable of meeting all its domestic demand.²⁸⁰ With one of the highest levels of urbanization in the world, Qatar is also ranked as one of the most "energy equitable" nations on earth, meaning that not only are domestic energy prices extremely affordable, but Qatar's population also has broad and robust access to power.²⁸¹ However, the lack of domestic investment in renewable resources means that the overall economy is still reliant on fossil fuels.²⁸²

(1) Economic Linkages to Southeast Asia

The primary driver behind Qatar's contemporary global influence is the state's economic power, funded almost entirely by the revenues generated from its energy exports. This enables both systems of clientelism at home, helping ensure domestic stability during

²⁷⁵ Kamrava, 113.

²⁷⁶ Karen Young, "Isolating Qatar Reveals Economic Vulnerabilities of the GCC," *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), June 6, 2017, <https://agsiw.org/isolating-qatar-reveals-economic-vulnerabilities-of-the-gcc/>.

²⁷⁷ Ulrichsen, *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis*, 135.

²⁷⁸ Young, "Isolating Qatar Reveals Economic Vulnerabilities of the GCC."

²⁷⁹ "WEC Trilemma: Qatar," World Energy Council, 2020, <https://trilemma.worldenergy.org/#!/country-profile?country=Qatar&year=2020>.

²⁸⁰ World Energy Council.

²⁸¹ "Energy Trilemma Index Tool," World Energy Council, 2020, <https://trilemma.worldenergy.org/#!/energy-index>.

²⁸² "WEC Trilemma: Qatar."

periods of uncertainty, and also underpins Qatar's soft power abroad, whether it's the state's sovereign wealth fund, foreign investments, international branding strategy, or purchase of European football teams. Qatar's economic power, however, is entirely reliant on fossil fuels and foreign labor, both of which are heavily integrated with Qatar's Asian neighbors. Giorgio Cafiero puts it succinctly, pointing out that "demand from oil and gas-thirsty economies in Asia...accounts for 90 percent of Qatar's exports, [and] has been directly connected to the emirate's prosperity."²⁸³ Therefore, so long as the world seeks ways to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, Qatar's future economic viability will remain uncertain, despite the positive, long-term prospects of natural gas. Until Qatar is able to thoroughly restructure and diversify its economy, or carve out enough of a corner of the fossil fuel market in a potential post-fossil fuel world, trade in hydrocarbons will continue to form what John Calabrese calls "the backbone of Gulf-Asia energy relations."²⁸⁴

c. Environmental

While Qatar's environmental vulnerabilities are almost identical to that of Saudi Arabia, the impacts that trends like climate change and environmental degradation have on Qatar are magnified due to its small geographic size. Qatar faces the same endogenous and exogenous threats afflicting its larger neighbor, Saudi Arabia: population growth, migration and urbanization, unequal distribution of scarce resources, depletion of water resources, minimal arable land, pollution, rising average temperatures related to global warming, and sea level rise that threatens coastal urban development.²⁸⁵ According to Homer-Dixon, these changes threaten the social and political stability of the Qatari state, with potential to create conflict and civil strife in the future.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Cafiero, "ASEAN and the Qatar Crisis."

²⁸⁴ John Calabrese, "The Consolidation of Gulf-Asia Relations: Washington Tuned In or Out of Touch?," Middle East Institute, June 2009, <https://mei.edu/publications/consolidation-gulf-asia-relations-washington-tuned-or-out-touch>.

²⁸⁵ Lowlah R. Al-Khater, "Small States and Climate Change: The Case of Qatar," Wilson Center, September 30, 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/small-states-and-climate-change-case-qatar>.

²⁸⁶ Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases."

Qatar is especially vulnerable to sea level rise, water scarcity, and extreme temperatures. With 99.2% of Qatar's population living in urban areas in and around Doha.²⁸⁷ As sea levels rise, Doha will become increasingly threatened by coastal erosion, land degradation, and potentially significant flooding.²⁸⁸ The Qatari economy, reliant on sea ports for its cheapest imports, could drastically suffer if its infrastructure becomes unusable.²⁸⁹ Sea level rise also threatens one of Qatar's most scarce resources: water. Already one of the world's most water-stressed nations, according to the World Resources Institute, the limited domestic aquifers that Qatar's population and economy relies on threaten to become contaminated by sea water, adding additional stress on the state's desalinization plants.²⁹⁰ Water scarcity and rising temperatures also threaten Qatar's limited arable land, despite the fact that Doha is already heavily reliant on food imports to sustain its economy.²⁹¹

(1) Environmental Linkages to Southeast Asia

Much like our case study on Saudi Arabia, any significant linkages between Qatari and Southeast Asian environmental security issues, if they exist at all, are at best indirect. Qatar and Indonesia are both acutely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and related phenomena, including increasing temperatures, coastal erosion, potential pollution of water resources, and changing precipitation patterns, among others. Like the linkages between Saudi and Indonesian efforts to address climate-related issues, Doha and Jakarta's national initiatives to mitigate these vulnerabilities do not overlap. The most direct tie-in between Qatar, the Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia pertains to food security. According

²⁸⁷ "Urban Population (% of Total Population) - Qatar," The World Bank, 2018, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=QA>.

²⁸⁸ James Russell, "The Persian Gulf: Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman," in *Climate Change and National Security: A Country-Level Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2011).

²⁸⁹ Russell.

²⁹⁰ "RELEASE: Updated Global Water Risk Atlas Reveals Top Water-Stressed Countries and States," *World Resources Institute* (blog), August 6, 2019, <https://www.wri.org/news/release-updated-global-water-risk-atlas-reveals-top-water-stressed-countries-and-states>.

²⁹¹ Natalie Koch, "Food as a Weapon? The Geopolitics of Food and the Qatar–Gulf Rift," *Security Dialogue* 52, no. 2 (April 2021): 118–34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010620912353>.

to Sara Fouad Almohamadi, in 2008, Qatar alongside other GCC countries developed an interest in achieving food self-sufficiency following the 2008 global commodity crisis due to fears of “future disruptions in food supply.”²⁹²

In 2009, Doha created the Qatar National Food Security Program (QNFSP) and established the goal of “increasing self-sufficiency from 10% to 70% by 2023.” Failing to meet those expectations, Doha then lowered expectations to 40–60% before abolishing the QNFSP altogether.²⁹³ Qatar, like Saudi Arabia, instead has been forced to rely on the global food market access strategy to meet domestic demands, which includes agriculture imports from South and Southeast Asia. Between 2009 and 2019, Qatari imports of agricultural products from ASEAN member states quadrupled from \$28 million worth of goods to \$129 million, according to Chatham House.²⁹⁴

d. Military

Similar to the discussion surrounding political vulnerabilities, Qatar’s most stark military vulnerabilities are its small size, physical location in between two would-be regional hegemons, and small relative population size which results in both constrained economic capacity (especially as it related to the development of a domestic defense industry) as well as a limited pool of manpower capable of being mobilized into uniform in the event of a national crises.

Historically, Qatar has attempted to mitigate its geographic vulnerabilities by hosting a variety of foreign military powers in its territory. For example, the United States’ largest airbase in the Middle East, Al-Udeid Airbase, is located 45 minutes outside of Doha and is comprised of not only American, but a variety of coalition forces to include British, Australian, French, and other nations’ forces. In 2015, Turkey also expanded its small military presence in Qatar after the Saudi-led blockade was imposed, with the expansion of the Qatar-Turkey Combined Joint Force Command from 300 to upwards of 2,000

²⁹² Sara Fouad Almohamadi, “Qatar Dispute Exposes Regional Food-Security Failures,” IISS, August 21, 2017, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2017/08/qatar-food-insecurity>.

²⁹³ Almohamadi.

²⁹⁴ “Qatar Agricultural Imports 2019,” Resource Trade, 2020, <https://resourcetrade.earth/>.

personnel, according to Metin Gurcan.²⁹⁵ These forces have helped Doha distance itself from Riyadh and Tehran both in terms of its domestic and foreign policies, enabling Qatar to engage in a more interventionist foreign policy abroad in places like Libya.²⁹⁶

Additionally, due in part to the threat posed by an externally-imposed blockade against Qatar and a regional arms race sparked by the modernization efforts other states like Iran and Saudi Arabia, Doha has pursued “one of the most ambitious armament programmes [sic] seen in the Middle East in recent times,” according to Alex Gatopoulos.²⁹⁷ Unfortunately, Qatar’s underdeveloped domestic defense sector forces it to rely on foreign “original equipment manufacturers” in order to enhance its defense capabilities, according to Business Wire, making Doha heavily reliant on external cooperation with both Europe and the United States.²⁹⁸

The last major vulnerability of the Qatari military vis-à-vis its regional neighbors is its small population, which limits the total number of recruits that Doha can mobilize into its military ranks in the event of a national crisis, and therefor constrains the role that Qatari hard power can play in its foreign policy.²⁹⁹ Zoltan Barany points out the unique position that contract soldiers play in the armed forces of GCC nations, stating that “Qatar’s armed forces are staffed overwhelmingly (up to 85 percent) with contract soldiers, many from Pakistan and Sudan and, more recently, also from Colombia.”³⁰⁰ A classic example of “small state politics,” this constraint has manifested itself in Qatar’s foreign policy by increasing Doha’s reliance on soft power (funded by its energy wealth), foreign

²⁹⁵ Metin Gurcan, “Turkey’s Military Base in Qatar to Expand with Air, Naval Elements,” *Al-Monitor*, August 20, 2019, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/08/turkey-qatar-military-cooperation-expand-with-air-naval.html>.

²⁹⁶ Roberts, *Qatar*, 35.

²⁹⁷ Alex Gatopoulos, “How the Gulf Crisis Spurred Qatar to Expand Its Military,” *Al-Jazeera*, January 5, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/5/the-dramatic-expansion-of-qatars-military>.

²⁹⁸ “Future of the Qatari Defense Industry - Market Attractiveness, Competitive Landscape and Forecasts to 2024,” *Businesswire*, May 20, 2019, <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20190520005546/en/Future-of-the-Qatari-Defense-Industry---Market-Attractiveness-Competitive-Landscape-and-Forecasts-to-2024---ResearchAndMarkets.com>.

²⁹⁹ “Population, Total - Saudi Arabia, Qatar.”

³⁰⁰ Zoltan Barany, “Foreign Contract Soldiers in the Gulf,” *Carnegie Middle East Center*, 2020, <https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/02/05/foreign-contract-soldiers-in-gulf-pub-80979>.

investments, a reliance on external protectors, and a deliberate pursuit to brand itself as an international “mediator” between warring parties—all aspects of Qatari foreign policy to be discussed in more detail later in this paper.³⁰¹

(1) Military Linkages to Southeast Asia

There are very few direct, defense-related ties between Qatar’s domestic vulnerabilities and Southeast Asia. Qatar’s geographic vulnerabilities are mitigated largely through ties to foreign powers, none of whom are located in Southeast Asia. While Doha’s economic ties with the Indo-Pacific are booming, its defense industry and procurement strategies have partnered almost exclusively with U.S. defense companies.³⁰² While the Qatari economy relies on foreign labor, its foreign contracted military forces largely come from Pakistan, Sudan, Colombia, and Somalia and are trained by U.S. contractors, according to Barnay.³⁰³ In fact, the linkages that do exist are tenuous and indirect, relating to phenomena that transcend both regions, such as jihadi terrorism, or security implications relating to the broader economic integration of the Persian Gulf and Indo-Pacific.

Like Saudi Arabia and other GCC partners, Qatar is extremely interested in the evolution of, and its vulnerability to, jihadi terrorism, and remains especially concerned about groups who advocate for the destruction of gulf monarchies. Indonesia, itself a victim of multiple, horrendous terrorist attacks linked to both Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, is equally concerned about the evolution and proliferation of jihadi groups across the Islamic world. However, Qatar’s foreign policy strategies of both “hedging” against the Persian Gulf’s traditional hegemony, and “conflict mediation” resulting in Doha’s cultivation of close ties to groups like Hamas, the Taliban, and Al-Qaeda, has drawn significant criticism from both states inside the region as well as outside.³⁰⁴ Regardless of strategy, the

³⁰¹ Roberts, *Qatar*, 59.

³⁰² “Qatar Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners,” The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2019, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/qat>.

³⁰³ Zoltan Barnay, “Foreign Contract Soldiers in the Gulf,” Carnegie Middle East Center, 2020, <https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/02/05/foreign-contract-soldiers-in-gulf-pub-80979>.

³⁰⁴ “Qatar: Extremism and Terrorism,” Counter Extremism Project, 2021, <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/qatar>.

changing nature of jihadi terrorism across the world impacts both the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia, indirectly linking the security interests of both regions with one another.

A second tenuous link between Southeast Asian and Persian Gulf security relates to the security implications of their broader transregional economic integration. While the U.S. has historically served as a security guarantor of the Persian Gulf since 1980 and the formulation of the Carter Doctrine, safeguarding the world's fossil fuel supply lines from Soviet disruption, the future of this system is now in question.³⁰⁵ In 1980, the U.S. led the world in global fossil fuel consumption with 19,126 terawatt-hour of energy uses, according to Our World in Data.³⁰⁶ Today that spot is held by China, who in 2019 consumed 33,512 terawatt-hours of fossil energy, up 614% from its 1980 level. In 2019, China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia all ranked in the top 12 of global fossil fuel consumers, indicative of a growing shift towards Asia in the world fossil fuel consumption. For Jakarta, this means that a growing share of the world's energy exports are now passing through three strategic maritime straits that intersect Indonesian territory.³⁰⁷ For the U.S., who has steadily reduced its fossil fuel energy consumption since 1970 while also boosting domestic oil production, this means that the cost of policing strategic energy shipping lanes in the Persian Gulf is slowly outweighing its strategic benefits.³⁰⁸ This burden may soon fall on the militaries of major Asian oil consumers, such as India or China, creating a new transregional energy security dynamic linking the Persian Gulf, Indonesia, and East Asian powers.

³⁰⁵ "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980, Volume XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula," Government, Department of State, accessed September 7, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/d45>.

³⁰⁶ "Fossil Fuel Consumption," Our World in Data, 2019, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/fossil-fuel-primary-energy>.

³⁰⁷ Villar Lejla and Mason Hamilton, "The Strait of Malacca, a Key Oil Trade Chokepoint, Links the Indian and Pacific Oceans," Government, U.S. Energy Information Administration, August 11, 2017, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=32452>.

³⁰⁸ "Fossil Fuel Energy Consumption (% of Total) - United States," The World Bank, 2015, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.USE.COMM.FO.ZS?locations=US>.

D. QATARI FOREIGN POLICIES TOWARDS INDONESIA: 2000–2021

In a 2014 speech at the Paris-based Science Po, Qatari foreign minister Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah reaffirmed that his country's foreign policy is based on two fundamental principles: independence and "a commitment to supporting the rights of peoples to self-determination, justice and freedom."³⁰⁹ While the latter commitment helps describe part of the strategy that Doha employs to protect itself from its neighbors, given the serious geographic vulnerabilities and political threats facing Qatar, wedged in-between two increasingly hostile, polarizing, would-be regional hegemonies, it is more accurate to say that Doha's foreign policies over the last two decades have specifically pursued two objectives: 1) preserve Qatar's sovereignty and independence over its domestic and political affairs, and 2) maintain the rule of the Al Thani royal family. Being highly aware of its limits in traditional aspects of hard power, Doha has often pursued these objectives through somewhat creative or non-traditional means.³¹⁰ Qatar is uniquely endowed with both a small and relatively homogenous population with minimal sectarian fissures making it politically stable relative to its neighbors, and large energy deposits that give it financial security at home and the ability to wield serious geopolitical power abroad despite its small size. Doha's most glaring vulnerability continues to be its size, location, and limited population size, yet it has been successful thus far in shoring up its perceived vulnerabilities by doubling down on its strengths. In his 2017 study of Qatar's foreign policy, Faisal Mukhyat Abu Sulaib points out that Doha lacks a fully institutionalized foreign policy-making bureaucracy like its Saudi or Iranian neighbors. He continues, saying that this "gives [Doha] flexibility, but at the same time makes it ambiguous."³¹¹

Qatar's foreign policy outreach towards Southeast Asia can be categorized by two distinct phases. The first, from 2000 until 2017, highlights Doha's expanding diplomatic

³⁰⁹ Islam Khalid Hassan, "GCC's 2014 Crisis: Causes, Issues and Solutions," News, Al Jazeera Center for Studies, March 31, 2015, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/dossiers/2015/03/201533172623652531.html>.

³¹⁰ "Principles of Qatar's Foreign Policy and International Cooperation," *Bangkok Post*, accessed August 18, 2021, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2037583/principles-of-qatars-foreign-policy-and-international-cooperation>.

³¹¹ Faisal Mukhyat Abu Sulaib, "Understanding Qatar's Foreign Policy, 1995–2017," *Middle East Policy* XXIV, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 32.

and economic presence across Asia following the ascension of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa only five years prior, and the onset of the Arab Spring as well as the rapid onset of political instability across the Middle East.³¹² The second phase, from 2017 until 2021, marks a period of increasing intra-Arab animosities between the Saudi-led bloc of Arab states against an emerging revisionist led to some degree by Qatar, and climaxing with the blockade of Qatar, and concluding in 2021 at the 41st GCC Summit held in Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia.³¹³ During these periods, what foreign policies did Qatar pursue with regard to Indonesia in order to ensure its sovereignty and independence vis-à-vis its neighbors? As we will see in the coming section, Qatar was able to maintain its political sovereignty against an onslaught of Gulf Arab coercion thanks largely to its economic ties to Southeast Asia.³¹⁴

1. Strategic and Diplomatic Relations

Between 2000 and 2021, Qatar's diplomatic engagement with Indonesia and Southeast Asia writ large coalesced around two themes. Prior to 2017, Doha's outreach centered on expanding opportunities for economic investment across the region in support of the ongoing diversification of the Qatari economy. After 2017, Qatar's efforts accelerated the expansion of political, economic, and security agreements with other nations with the intent of denying the successful isolation of Qatar by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE.

³¹² Muhammad Zulfikar Rakhmat, "Doha Looks to Southeast Asia," News, The Diplomat, May 21, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/05/doha-looks-to-southeast-asia/>.

³¹³ "GCC Summit 41," Government, Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, January 5, 2021, <https://gcc41.org/>; Ana Jacobs, "Qatar's Regional Relations and Foreign Policy After Al Ula," *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), April 14, 2021, <https://agsiw.org/qatars-regional-relations-and-foreign-policy-after-al-ula/>.

³¹⁴ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen and Theodore Karasik, "How Asian and European Countries Helped Qatar Maintain Sovereignty," *Gulf State Analytics* (blog), April 22, 2018, <https://gulfstateanalytics.com/how-asian-and-european-countries-helped-qatar-maintain-sovereignty/>.

a. Doha Solidifies Diplomatic Ties with ASEAN: 2000–2017

In October 2008, Doha launched its Qatar National Vision 2030 modernization project.³¹⁵ Five years later, Doha rolled out a formal “Look East” strategy that sought to foster closer economic and political engagement between Qatar and ASEAN. Such ties had only occurred informally during the years prior, such as the Qatar Investment Authority’s interest in developing joint Qatar-ASEAN investment funds in 2012, according to Felix Sharief.³¹⁶ This strategy accelerated in earnest five years later after the ascension of Emir Tamim bin Hamad to the Qatari throne in 2013. Shortly thereafter, Qatar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussed its intent to open a dedicated unit to explore expanding ties with ASEAN member states, according to the Gulf Times.³¹⁷ This came five years after the GCC established a GCC-ASEAN Economic Centre (GAEC) in Kuala Lumpur in August 2008.³¹⁸ As we will see in later sections, prior to 2013, Qatar’s ties to ASEAN had already been expanding, and were largely limited to complementary economic interests, according to Zachary Keck.³¹⁹

Formal high-level engagements between Qatari and Indonesian officials occurred regularly and focused on either bolstering economic ties or were generic meetings on the sidelines of larger forums. In April 2006, Indonesia’s then president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, visited Qatar to discuss a number of issues aimed at fostering economic and investment cooperation between the two nations. By December 2007, the Qatar Investment Authority announced an agreement with Indonesia establish a \$1 billion firm to “invest in natural resources and infrastructure in Southeast Asia’s biggest economy,” according to

³¹⁵ “Qatar National Vision 2030,” State of Qatar Government Communications Office, 2021, <https://www.gco.gov.qa/en/about-qatar/national-vision2030/>.

³¹⁶ Felix Sharief, “Story From Doha: The Start of Middle-Eastern Look East Policy - International Affairs Forum,” International Affairs Forum, August 13, 2013, https://www.ia-forum.org/Content/ViewInternal_Document.cfm?contenttype_id=1&ContentID=8041.

³¹⁷ Joey Aguilar, “Foreign Ministry to Set up ‘Dedicated Unit’ for Qatar-Asean Concerns,” News, Gulf Times, July 25, 2013, <https://gulf-times.com/story/360698>; Zachary Keck, “Qatar and ASEAN: Opposites Attract?,” The Diplomat, July 27, 2013, <https://thediplomat.com/2013/07/qatar-and-asean-opposites-attract/>.

³¹⁸ Calabrese, “The Consolidation of Gulf-Asia Relations.”

³¹⁹ Keck, “Qatar and ASEAN.”

Muhamad al-Azhari and James Cordahi.³²⁰ In 2009, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani visited Jakarta in May of that year on a trip made in return for Yudhoyono's previous visit to Qatar in order to sign a formal economic agreement between the two countries.³²¹ In 2011, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al Thani met with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Jakarta while visiting Bali in order to participate in the opening session of the 4th Bali Democracy Forum.³²² According to his speech, Hamad bin Jasseem announced that Qatar had sought to "expand the base of [political] participation [in Qatar] as an outgrowth of the reform project initiated by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani."³²³ While it is highly unlikely that the foreign minister of a Gulf Arab absolute monarchy had chosen Indonesia as the prime location to announce his government's intention to democratize, this forum had convened in the early days of the Arab Spring after the overthrow of rulers in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. It was more likely that Qatar's intent, in keeping with its broader hedging strategy, was intended to curry favor with the wider democratic wave sweeping the region, should it ever reach Qatar's shores. The visit itself had nothing to do with improving Qatar-Indonesia relations.

In May 2015, Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi, visited Doha as a prelude to the first official state visit to Qatar of President Joko Widodo, who visited Doha in September.³²⁴ During this meeting, Marsudi briefed Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on "the efforts and endeavours [sic] of Indonesia and Malaysia to tackle the issue of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh," to which the Emir

³²⁰ Muhamad al-Azhari and James Cordahi, "UPDATE 1-Qatar to Invest \$850 Mln in Indonesia Infrastructure," *Reuters*, December 6, 2007, sec. Private Equity, <https://www.reuters.com/article/economy-indonesia-qatar-idUSL0671782120071206>.

³²¹ Muhammad Zulfikar Rakhmat, "Doha Looks to Southeast Asia," *News, The Diplomat*, May 21, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/05/doha-looks-to-southeast-asia/>; Erwida Maulia, "Qatari Emir to Visit Indonesia to Enhance Ties," *News, The Jakarta Post*, May 19, 2009, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/05/19/qatari-emir-visit-indonesia-enhance-ties.html>.

³²² "Qatar - Indonesia Relations," Qatar Embassy in Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, 2018, <https://jakarta.embassy.qa/en/indonesia/qatar---indonesia-relations>; "Hamad Bin Jassim Participates in Bali Democracy Forum," *News, Arabs Today*, December 8, 2011, <https://www.arabstoday.net/en/39/hamad-bin-jassim-participates-in-bali-democracy-forum>.

³²³ "Hamad Bin Jassim Participates in Bali Democracy Forum."

³²⁴ "Qatar - Indonesia Relations," accessed July 22, 2021, <https://jakarta.embassy.qa/en/indonesia/qatar---indonesia-relations>.

pledged \$50 million in support of Indonesia's efforts.³²⁵ By in large, it appears that at least during this period, Indonesian outreach to Qatar was more important to officials in Jakarta than was Doha's outreach to Indonesia, with Indonesian officials courting Qatari financial support for economic investments or conflict resolution efforts. Qatar, while receptive to these overtures, was more focused on its footing in the Middle East's fluid political environment.

b. The Arab Spring, the Exacerbation of Intra-GCC Cleavages, and the Beginning of the Gulf Crisis: 2017–2021

The onset of the Arab Spring in 2011 and diverging Gulf Arab intervention in Egypt, Syria, and Libya exacerbated intra-Arab cleavages based on opposing government perceptions of how to respond to emerging trends in the Middle East, most notably with the resurgence of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist political forces in the region.³²⁶ Qatar, always leery of its neighbors' intentions, soon found itself being increasingly coerced by an emerging "Anti-Terror Quartet" (ATQ) composed of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, and the UAE, which Doha feared was maneuvering to limit Qatar's sovereignty, and outsource its foreign policy, according to Kristian Ulrichsen.³²⁷

After the blockade was imposed against Qatar in June 2017, Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani kicked off a series of official foreign visits in an effort to counter GCC-led isolation of the Gulf state. While relations with states in Southeast Asia were relevant to Doha's economic and investment strategies prior to 2017, it is clear that the region only played a small part in Qatar's overall counter-blockade strategy. In September 2017, Tamim made official visits to Turkey, Germany, France, and the United Nations General

³²⁵ "HH The Amir Receives Indonesian Foreign Minister," Government, Amiri Diwan State of Qatar, May 28, 2015, <https://www.diwan.gov.qa/en/briefing-room/news/receiving-guests/news-2015/may/28/hh-the-amir-receives-indonesian-fm>.

³²⁶ Ulrichsen, *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis*, 17.

³²⁷ Ulrichsen, 107.

Assembly in New York.³²⁸ A month later in October, Tamim visited state leaders in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.³²⁹ In January of 2019, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani returned to Asia, this time in a whirlwind trip to South Korea, Japan, and China.³³⁰ In addition to these clusters of visits, Tamim concluded a number of diplomatic agreements, including with the United States in July 2017 and with the UK's Prime Minister Theresa May a year later.³³¹ In addition, in 2019 he also held talks with several of his international counterparts to discuss strengthening of relations, including India's Prime Minister on the sidelines of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly, and President Donald Trump during an official visit to the White House.³³² Between June 5th, 2017 when the blockade began, and January 5th, 2021 when it was rescinded at Al-Ula, the Qatari emir visited Southeast Asia only once. Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi, would visit Qatar only twice during this period. The first visit was days after the blockade was imposed, and Marsudi reportedly only met with Indonesia's Ambassador to Qatar, Muhamad Basri Sidehabi, in order to get "a report on

³²⁸ "Qatar," Government, Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères, 2021, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/qatar/>; DW, "Qatari Emir Meets with Angela Merkel in First Trip Abroad since Crisis," News, DW, September 15, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/qatari-emir-meets-with-angela-merkel-in-first-trip-abroad-since-crisis/a-40525189>; "Qatar's Emir to Meet Turkey's President Erdogan," Al-Jazeera, September 14, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/9/14/qatars-emir-to-meet-turkeys-president-erdogan>.

³²⁹ Nur Asyiqin Mohamad Salleh, "Qatar Emir on Two-Day State Visit to Singapore," *The Straits Times*, October 16, 2017, <https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/qatar-emir-on-two-day-state-visit-to-singapore>.

³³⁰ Peter Alagos, "Amir Arrives in Seoul on Start of 3-Nation Asia Tour," News, Gulf Times, January 27, 2019, <https://gulf-times.com/story/620476>; "Japan and Qatar Agree to Launch Strategic Ministerial Talks," The Japan Times, January 29, 2019, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/01/29/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-qatar-agree-launch-strategic-ministerial-talks/>; Ben Blanchard, "China Calls for Harmony as It Welcomes Qatar Emir amid Gulf Dispute," *Reuters*, January 31, 2019, sec. Emerging Markets, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-qatar-idUSKCN1PP1EV>.

³³¹ "HH The Amir, UK Prime Minister Witness Signing of Cooperation Letter on Combatting Terrorism," Government, Amiri Diwan State of Qatar, July 24, 2018, <https://www.diwan.gov.qa/en/briefing-room/news/foreign-visits/2018/july/24/hh-the-amir-and-uk-pm-counter-terrorism>.

³³² "Amir Meets Indian Prime Minister - The Peninsula Qatar," News, The Peninsula, September 24, 2019, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/24/09/2019/Amir-meets-Indian-Prime-Minister>; Deb Riechmann, "Trump Gives Warm Welcome to Qatar amid Persian Gulf Disputes," AP News, July 9, 2019, <https://apnews.com/article/c40f9f48608c4e9f8f372689e1dcd9ca>.

the current situation and the circumstances of Indonesian citizens in Qatar.”³³³ Marsudi’s second visit took place on February 29th, 2020, during a “working visit” to attend the signing of the peace agreement between the United States and the Taliban in Afghanistan, of which Indonesia played a key facilitating role.³³⁴ Oddly enough, while President Widodo never visited Doha during the gulf crisis, he did visit Saudi Arabia in 2019 for an umrah pilgrimage and again in 2020 to attend the Arab Islamic American Summit, and also made a trip to Abu Dhabi in 2020 to reciprocate a 2019 visit to Indonesia by UAE Emir Mohammed bin Zayed.³³⁵ In addition to this, Indonesian Foreign Minister Marsudi also made a formal visit to Bahrain September 2019 to discuss opportunities for broader economic cooperation between Jakarta and Manama.³³⁶ Between June 2017, when the initial blockade against Qatar was announced, and January 2021 when Saudi Arabia brought the blockade to a close at the 41st GCC Summit at Al-Ula, , it is clear that Qatari foreign policy had prioritized outreach to Southeast Asian states in an effort to prevent its isolation, but only as a smaller piece of their overall global strategy. Meanwhile, while politicians and envoys dispatched by Jakarta to the region did play a role in mediating dialogue between Qatar and the Anti-Terror Quartet, it is also apparent that official state visits to Qatar by Indonesian officials dropped off between 2017–2021, yet official delegations continued to be dispatched to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE, either to serve domestic political interests (such as Jokowi’s umrah to Mecca just prior to his re-election bid in 2019), or to court Gulf Arab investment in Indonesia (such as Retno

³³³ Reiny Dwinanda, “After Visiting Nigeria, Retno Marsudi Stops by in Qatar,” News, Republika Online, June 8, 2017, <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/or6qwj414/after-visiting-nigeria-retno-marsudi-stops-by-in-qatar>.

³³⁴ Fardah Aria Cindya, “Retno Marsudi holds six bilateral meetings in Doha,” News, Antara News, March 1, 2020, <https://en.antaranews.com/news/142566/retno-marsudi-holds-six-bilateral-meetings-in-doha>.

³³⁵ Sipahutar, “Jokowi Heads to Mecca for Pilgrimage as Indonesia Vote Nears”; Heru Purwanto, “Jokowi to Attend Arab Islamic American Summit,” News, Antara News, May 18, 2017, <https://en.antaranews.com/news/110990/jokowi-to-attend-arab-islamic-american-summit>; a Loasana, “UAE Set to Name Mosque after Jokowi,” News, The Jakarta Post, October 21, 2020, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/10/21/uae-set-to-name-mosque-after-jokowi.html>.

³³⁶ “Indonesia And Bahrain Agree To Improve Economic Cooperation,” Government, Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 4, 2019, <https://kemlu.go.id/portal/id/read/574/berita/indonesia-bahrain-sepakat-tingkatkan-kerjasama-ekonomi>.

Marsudi's aforementioned Bahrain trip).³³⁷ Guy Burton also points to an implicit rebalance away from Qatar and towards Saudi Arabia and the UAE by Indian and Chinese business and political leaders during this period, citing the fact that “politically and economically, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were—and are—far more important in the region than Qatar.”³³⁸

2. Economic and Energy Ties

How did Qatar's economic ties to East and Southeast Asia help mitigate its most pressing domestic vulnerabilities? Arguably, Qatar's economic prowess is central to both its “soft” and “smart” power, without which Doha would find itself quickly pulled under Saudi control. Kristian Ulrichsen and Theodore Karasik argue that Qatar's economic ties to Asia, established and expanded well before 2017, were at the forefront of preventing the successful isolation and subordination of Doha to its more powerful neighbors. Ulrichsen and Karasik argue that “oil- and gas-thirsty countries in Asia with vibrant, fast-growing, and dynamic economies [placed] much value on their relations with Qatar, the world's top producer and exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG). In addition to the economic importance that major Asian countries have placed on Qatar, governments in China, Japan, South Korea, and elsewhere in Asia have never perceived the threat that Doha allegedly poses.” They continue, adding that “Within this context, the ATQ countries [composed of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE] found no sympathy for their anti-Qatar campaign in Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul, and virtually all other Asian capitals. On the contrary, these Asian actors see the GCC crisis as a threat to their own interests, for numerous reasons, and have joined the international community in backing the Kuwaiti emir's efforts

³³⁷ Sheany, “UAE Sends Special Envoy to Discuss Qatar-Gulf Crisis With FM Retno,” News, Jakarta Globe, June 15, 2017, <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/uae-sends-special-envoy-discuss-qatar-gulf-crisis-fm-retno/>; “Indonesia And Bahrain Agree To Improve Economic Cooperation”; Loasana, “UAE Set to Name Mosque after Jokowi”; Sipahutar, “Jokowi Heads to Mecca for Pilgrimage as Indonesia Vote Nears.”

³³⁸ Guy Burton, “China and India's Stakes in the Qatar Conflict,” News, The Diplomat, January 12, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/01/china-and-indias-stakes-in-the-qatar-conflict/>.

to mediate a settlement to the Gulf dispute.”³³⁹ Complementing this, David Roberts argues:

LNG policies were crucial in facilitating the state’s escape from Saudi Arabia’s ‘gravitational pull’...in two ways. Firstly, they allowed Qatar financially to engage in a range of policies through which it sought to expand beyond its previously Saudi-dominated external relations to the wider international community. Pursuing these policies helped Qatar become a meaningful international actor rather than merely a small-scale regional player. Secondly, they deliberately intertwined Qatar with a number of key international countries in an inextricable and crucial energy-economic nexus. Qatar was diversifying its international alliances and no longer needed to toe Saudi Arabia’s line. (Roberts, pg. 54, 2017)

Prior to 2017, Qatar was already equipped with a growing economy based on “strong fundamentals” that translated into a “decade of budget surpluses by 2014 and resulted in one of the highest levels of GDP per capita in the world.”³⁴⁰ The discovery in 1971 of a large gas field that transcended Qatari and Iranian borders, and subsequent Japanese investment in developing this field in the mid-1990s helped usher Qatari LNG into the Asian market, linking the national security concerns of major Asian powers like South Korea, Japan, China, and India directly to the stability of the Qatari economy.³⁴¹ Roberts also points to strong economic growth of ASEAN and East Asian economies between 1980–1992, leading directly to increased energy demands, thereby pulling Qatari energy resources further into the Asian market.³⁴² From 2008 onward, economic development at this point was focused on “sustainable development” in line with the state’s Vision 2030 plan. Likely driven by Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa’s 1995 philosophy of seeking ways to distance Qatar from Saudi Arabia, Hamad sought to diversify Qatar’s trading partners in order to reduce his dependence on the GCC as a whole. According to Ulrichsen, “the diversification of trade routes and the productive base were in line with Qatar’s longer-

³³⁹ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen and Theodore Karasik, “How Asian and European Countries Helped Qatar Maintain Sovereignty,” *Gulf State Analytics* (blog), April 22, 2018, <https://gulfstateanalytics.com/how-asian-and-european-countries-helped-qatar-maintain-sovereignty/>.

³⁴⁰ Ulrichsen, *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis*, 137.

³⁴¹ Roberts, *Qatar*, 49.

³⁴² Roberts, 55.

term National Vision 2030 but were accelerated and brought forward by the blockade.”³⁴³ This would prove to be a brilliant move.

By the outbreak of the Gulf Crisis in 2017, “trade with East Asian partners rose significantly in the first year of the blockade, particularly with China but also with Japan and South Korea, and more than replaced the falloff in GCC trade, with the figure for trade with Asia (including Turkey) rising from 61 per cent to 69.5 per cent of total trade,” according to Kristian Ulrichsen.³⁴⁴ Giorgio Cafiero also points out that while Japan, China, India, and South Korea remain Asia’s top buyers of Qatari liquefied natural gas, ASEAN members had become increasingly valuable partners of Qatar in recent years, “collectively holding a share of half of Qatar’s market. Doha’s top ASEAN export partner is Singapore, rising from the number five export partner last year, receiving 5.3 percent of the emirate’s exports.”³⁴⁵

In addition to Doha’s expanding energy and trade ties to Asia, investments became a major tool for Qatari smart power. In 2005, Qatar’s emir established the Qatar Investment Authority, the state’s sovereign wealth fund (SWF) that not only targeted investment in particular sectors in order to facilitate the transfer of intellectual property and technology back into Qatar in order to feed its National Vision 2030 economic diversification program, but alongside the Qatar National Bank and other major financial hubs, the QIA also helped provide “internationally influential states with higher stakes in Qatar remaining an independent and sovereign country,” according to a conversation between a renowned Qatari journalist and Kristian Ulrichsen which took place in 2016.³⁴⁶ An arm of Qatari smart power, the broad investments made by QIA and other national entities took place “in a dynamic context within which mutually reinforcing relationships are forged with the three other aspects of the country’s foreign policy—military security, hedging, and

³⁴³ Ulrichsen, *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis*, 146.

³⁴⁴ Ulrichsen, 149.

³⁴⁵ Cafiero, “ASEAN and the Qatar Crisis.”

³⁴⁶ Kamrava, *Qatar*, 96; Ulrichsen and Karasik, “How Asian and European Countries Helped Qatar Maintain Sovereignty.”

especially branding.”³⁴⁷ The intent of these investments, according to the unnamed journalist, was indeed intended to “prevent Qatar from being ‘another Crimea.’”³⁴⁸

Not all investments were successful, however. While Qatari investments in Indonesia have focused particularly on sector on their communications sector through Indosat Ooredoo, financial and banking investments through the QNB, and energy investments via Nebras Power, according to Qatar’s Ambassador to Indonesia, Fawziya Edrees Salman Al Sulaiti, Doha’s investments in tourism via QIA fell flat. The much-celebrated visit of Emir Tamin bin Hamid Al Thani to Indonesia in October 2017 did not encourage the level of Qatari investment in Indonesia that Jakarta had hoped for, ending in what The Jakarta Post described in 2021 as “the miserable failure of Qatar’s plans to invest \$500 million in Indonesian tourist destinations.”³⁴⁹ The positive side of trade relations between Indonesia and Qatar, however, is the fact that they keep increasing. Trade between Indonesia and the Persian Gulf “has climbed by 40%, from US\$8.68 billion in 2016 to U.S. \$12.15 billion in 2018. Similarly, two-way investments between Indonesia and the Gulf rose by 26%, from US\$60.3 million in 2016, to US\$76.1 million in 2018.”³⁵⁰ Despite the COVID-19 global pandemic, the total value of trade between Doha and Jakarta already rebounded back up to \$825 million in the first eleven months of 2020, nearly reaching its pre-pandemic level of \$1.1 billion set in 2019.³⁵¹

3. Environmental Security Issues and Cooperation

In both the lead up and execution of a blockade against Qatar imposed by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE, Doha’s efforts to shore up its environmental vulnerabilities with partners in Southeast Asia were minimal. Despite Zachary Keck pointing out in 2013

³⁴⁷ Kamrava, *Qatar*, 97.

³⁴⁸ Ulrichsen and Karasik, “How Asian and European Countries Helped Qatar Maintain Sovereignty.”

³⁴⁹ Lani Rose Dizon, “Qatar-Indonesia Trade Volume Nears \$1bn,” News, The Peninsula, January 27, 2021, [https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/27/01/2021/Qatar-Indonesia-trade-volume-nears-\\$1bn](https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/27/01/2021/Qatar-Indonesia-trade-volume-nears-$1bn); Dede Rifai, “Saudi-Qatari Reconciliation Could Be a Boon to Indonesia’s SWF,” News, The Jakarta Post, January 15, 2021, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2021/01/15/saudi-qatari-reconciliation-could-be-a-boon-to-indonesias-swf.html>.

³⁵⁰ Rakhmat and Tingai, “Opportunities and Obstacles in Qatar-Indonesia Relations.”

³⁵¹ Dizon, “Qatar-Indonesia Trade Volume Nears \$1bn.”

that Qatar and ASEAN states have complementary insecurities relating to food and energy respectively, direct Qatari cooperation between 2000–2021 with Indonesia or other Southeast Asian states on issues related to Qatar’s environmental vulnerabilities appears to be largely non-existent, with only a modicum of engagement occurring indirectly on issues relating to Qatar’s overall approach to food security.³⁵² Even then, Qatari investments in farms and agriculture in Indonesia remain a mere prospect for future investment following the lifting of the Saudi-imposed blockade on Qatar, rather than a reality.³⁵³ While Doha does import agricultural products and foodstuffs from ASEAN member states (\$60.3 million in 2010, \$92.5 million in 2015, and \$129 million in 2019 according to Chatham House), the total value of these imports overall has never exceeded 5% of Qatar’s total agricultural imports. In 2019 alone, Qatar imported its highest value of agricultural products from Indonesia yet, totaling \$5.3 million but only equating to .4% of Doha’s \$2.3 billion total agricultural imports that year.³⁵⁴ In fact, according to Chatham House, Qatar’s largest non-GCC sources for food imports over the last decade has consistently been Australia, India, and Brazil.³⁵⁵

In 2015, two years prior to the implementation of a blockade, Piroon Laismit, Thailand’s ambassador to the state of Qatar, offered his country’s “expertise in the fields of agriculture and aquaculture, including hydroponics, to support Qatar’s food security programme [sic],” according to Peter Alagos of the Gulf Times.³⁵⁶ However, the strongest tie-in between Qatari foreign policy related to its food security and Southeast Asia is exemplified by the role that Hassad Food, a subsidiary of the Qatar Investment Authority, played in alleviating the impact that the 2017 blockade had on Qatar’s food supply.³⁵⁷ A key component of the organizational and logistical infrastructure that Hassad Food had in

³⁵² Keck, “Qatar and ASEAN.”

³⁵³ Rifai, “Saudi-Qatari Reconciliation Could Be a Boon to Indonesia’s SWF.”

³⁵⁴ “Qatar Agricultural Imports 2019.”

³⁵⁵ “Qatar Agricultural Imports 2019.”

³⁵⁶ Peter Alagos, “Thailand Offers to Share Agriculture Expertise with Qatar,” Gulf Times, September 19, 2015, <https://gulf-times.com/story/455595>.

³⁵⁷ Ulrichsen, *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis*, 112.

place was Hassad Australia. According to Kristian Ulrichsen, Hassad Australia was founded in 2009 “as Hassad Food’s first overseas venture, which at its peak owned nearly 300,000 hectares of prime farmland across Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia.”³⁵⁸ While the QIA has expanded investments into regional neighbors, injecting \$5 billion in 1Malaysia Development Berhad in 2017, as of 2021, Indonesia continues to remain hopeful about the prospect for future Qatari investment in its sovereign wealth fund.³⁵⁹

4. Security and Military Cooperation

Qatar’s approach to shoring up its domestic military and security vulnerabilities followed the same pattern as the rest of its foreign policies since the ascension of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa in 1995: reduce Doha’s dependence on Riyadh while increasing the interest that external powers have in a free and independent Qatar. It did this through two primary avenues. First, by allowing the limited basing of the armed forces of foreign military powers on its territory to both enhance Qatar’s ties with those powers while also using them as a deterrent from Saudi (or other nations) direct military intervention. Arguably, the reason Saudi Arabia and other Sunni regional powers were limited in their ability to coerce Doha into subservience through military force in both the 2014 and 2017 gulf crises was due in large part to the presence of U.S. military (and Turkish) forces on the peninsula. Second, Qatar continued to expand the number of bilateral security and defense agreements it had with foreign states. While few of these agreements directly mentioned that the party would come to Doha’s aid in the event of invasion, the conclusion of said agreements represented a form of military-diplomatic soft power that enabled Doha to communicate the fact that it was not isolated, and that it still had friends abroad. It is also worth noting that between 2012–2021, Qatar did not shy away from using its hard power assets to secure its vital national interests, most notably in a limited military

³⁵⁸ Ulrichsen, 112.

³⁵⁹ Rifai, “Saudi-Qatari Reconciliation Could Be a Boon to Indonesia’s SWF.”

intervention in Libya in 2011.³⁶⁰ However Doha also participated in several international and GCC-led military campaigns, including the U.S.-led intervention in Libya in 2011, during the activation of the Peninsula Shield Force to intervene in Bahrain in 2011, as well as in the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen following the Houthi takeover in 2014.³⁶¹

However, beyond welcoming the presence of foreign military forces into its territory and engaging with the regions' multilateral institutions (both in terms of bilateral Qatari-ASEAN outreach as well as part of broader GCC-ASEAN efforts), what policies did Qatar pursue with both Indonesia and Southeast Asia between 2000–2021 that helped Doha shore up the state's domestic security vulnerabilities? The answer is underwhelming. While Qatar made significant overtures to expand its bilateral military cooperation agreements with Asian powers, none of them ever translated into comprehensive strategic partnerships let alone serious defense agreements. In fact, the only power across all of Asia that maintains a strategic partnership with Qatar is China, according to Guy Burton in 2021:

The disparity between the Saudis and the UAE on one side and Qatar on the other was...evident in the nature of the Gulf states' political cooperation with India and China as well. By 2018 China had established comprehensive strategic partnerships with Saudi Arabia and the UAE – the highest form of engagement it can offer another country. In contrast, China's relationship with Qatar was only a strategic partnership, which it had agreed in 2014 and showed no interest in upgrading when Sheikh Tamim Al Thani visited Beijing in 2019. India has similarly expansive arrangements with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It established a Strategic Partnership Council with Riyadh and has also sought to cultivate closer security ties with the two. In recent years that has been expressed in its efforts to bring Riyadh and Abu Dhabi onboard in India's rivalry with Pakistan. (Burton 2021)

During Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad's visit to Indonesia in 2017, Jakarta was purportedly only interested in expanding economic, investment, and trade relations between the two states. Indonesia would eventually conclude a limited bilateral defense cooperation agreement with Qatar twenty-three days after the Al-Ula conference ended the blockade.

³⁶⁰ David Roberts, "Behind Qatar's Intervention In Libya," *Foreign Affairs*, September 28, 2011, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/libya/2011-09-28/behind-qatars-intervention-libya>.

³⁶¹ Ulrichsen, Qatar and the Gulf Crisis, 46–49.

On 28 January 2021, Qatari and Indonesian delegates signed a letter of intent on bilateral defense cooperation in Jakarta that called for the exchange of high level officials, promotion of education and training cooperation, promotion of each state's defense industries, while leaving the relationship open-ended for other opportunities to cooperate.³⁶² Malaysia, however, was willing to move forward in expanding defense relations with Doha a bit sooner, and in 2017 envoys from Doha and Kuala Lumpur signed a Letter of Intent in 2017 establishing a High Level Committee to explore potential opportunities for cooperation "in defence capabilities, as well as intensify cooperation in exchanging intelligence information related to fighting terrorism."³⁶³ Malaysia, according to a subsequent white paper published by its Ministry of Defense, "will continue to play a leading role in promoting more credible partnerships among Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Qatar and Turkey, by focusing on defence [sic], science, technology and industry."³⁶⁴ Regardless, Qatar's ability to strengthen its military and defense weaknesses against the potential encroachment of Saudi Arabia and Iran rested more squarely on its economic power, trade links, and while the military played a small role, it was generally within established avenues of military diplomacy, not confrontation.

E. CONCLUSION

The intent of this chapter was to provide the necessary data collection and analysis required to help us determine in our concluding analysis as to whether or not Southeast Asia is emerging as a zone of inter-Arab competition. By way examining Qatar-Indonesia relations, we sought to identify specific trends in Qatari foreign policies that may indicate diverging or converging interests with its Saudi neighbor, and whether or not these policies provide any indications as to the presence (or not) of collective threats to the GCC as well

³⁶² "Letter of Intent Between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Defence of the State of Qatar on Bilateral Defence Cooperation" (Republic of Indonesia and the State of Qatar, January 28, 2021), https://treaty.kemlu.go.id/search#accordion_7158.

³⁶³ "Malaysia, Qatar Agree on High Level Committee on Defence," News, The Star, March 19, 2017, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/03/19/malaysia-qatar-establish-high-level-committee-on-defence>.

³⁶⁴ Defence White Paper: A Secure, Sovereign, and Prosperous Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Ministry of Defence, 2020), 73.

as the extension (or not) of intra-Arab enmity into Southeast Asia. By identifying potentially converging and diverging policies, we can then determine whether or not Qatar's foreign policies are designed in a way that is cooperative with the interests of its Gulf Arab neighbors, or competitive and operating despite them.

Based on this research, we have determined that Qatar's most pressing domestic vulnerabilities relate to its small size, both in terms of territory, food production capabilities, as well as population. These vulnerabilities generate a litany of threats to Doha's political sovereignty, to include direct military invasion, coercion related to the cutoff of external food imports, and wider isolation from global markets. While links between these vulnerabilities and Southeast Asia did nominally exist, they were largely indirect or were merely a smaller component of a wider global phenomenon.

In an effort to mitigate these threats, between 2000–2017, Qatar first pursued a deliberately strategy to reduce its economic and political reliance on Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC while also maintaining a degree of participation within regional institutions to placate potential critics. These efforts accelerated after 2017 and the imposition of a wider blockade against Qatar by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE. Second, before 2017, Qatari officials sought to enmesh the state in a wide array of foreign economic and political relationships to the point that numerous external powers maintained an interest in a free and independent Qatar. Doha found its most successful efforts in its economic outreach to other nations, largely due to its dominance of the global LNG market. During the blockade, Qatar found receptive ears in numerous places, but especially in Jakarta where Indonesian officials not only refused to participate in the Saudi-led blockade of Qatar, but actively took a role in mediating an end to the conflict.

Based on this summary of Qatari outreach to Indonesia in the shadow of Doha's wider domestic vulnerabilities, can we conclusively determine whether or not Qatari foreign policy was designed to compete against the interests of its Saudi neighbors? The results are less clear. Given the fact that so much of Saudi efforts over the last decade have, to varying degrees, sought to coerce Qatari behavior into certain bounds, we can safely say that Qatari policy at least was not designed to compete against Saudi policies so much as it was designed to deny Saudi goals.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

IV. CONCLUSION

A. OVERVIEW

In this study, we set out to understand whether or not Southeast Asia is emerging as a zone of competition between Gulf Arab states who themselves are vying for regional hegemony in the Middle East. This question was initially sparked by the research conducted by Harry Verhoeven, Jos Meester, and Willem van den Berg on this very phenomenon emerging in East Africa between 2015 and 2018.³⁶⁵ To answer this question, we sought to understand under what conditions Gulf Arab states cooperated with one another in their foreign policies, and when they instead chose to compete against one another. In our review of the literature available, we identified two structural variables that factored heavily in determining whether or not Gulf Arab powers chose to compete or cooperate with one another: the presence and intensity of collective threats to Gulf Cooperation Council member states, and the presence and intensity of intra-Arab cleavages. These two variables directly affected the domestic threat perceptions of Gulf monarchs as well as their policymaking mechanisms and, through state strategies of “omnibalancing” and “managed multi-dependence” which sought to neutralize domestic threats through international assistance while limiting the influence of international powers had over Gulf regimes, manifesting in the nature of their foreign policies towards states outside of the Persian Gulf regional security subcomplex.³⁶⁶ Using this as an analytical framework, this research concludes that Southeast Asia is not emerging as a zone of competition between Gulf Arab powers due to several reasons: the lack of a collective threat to the GCC emerging from within the Southeast Asian regional security subcomplex, and the lack of conditions present in the same region that could exacerbate intra-Gulf Arab cleavages.

³⁶⁵ Verhoeven, “The Gulf and the Horn”; Meester, Van Den Berg, and Verhoeven, “Riyal Politik.”

³⁶⁶ Yamada, “Saudi Arabia’s Look-East Diplomacy: Ten Years On,” 121.

B. DISCUSSION

Based on our previous research, we determined that two conditions had to be present within the Persian Gulf-Southeast Asia transregional relationship in order to generate conditions that incentivize competition between Gulf Arab states: collective threats to GCC states had to be minimal or non-existent, and intra-Arab cleavages had to be maximized. Based on our comparative analysis of both Saudi and Qatari foreign policies towards Indonesia since 2000, we can conclude that neither of these conditions were met in regards to the structure of international security in Southeast Asia during this period.

First, we determined that neither Qatari or Saudi domestic vulnerabilities between 2000–2021 were tied significantly to potential threats emerging from, or related to, Southeast Asia, satisfying the first condition of minimizing collective GCC threats. Saudi Arabia’s most salient domestic vulnerability is its reliance on oil, which threatens to render the Kingdom insolvent in a matter of years should the world begin to wean itself off of fossil fuels. Qatar’s chief vulnerability stems from its size and geographic location, creating a serious threat for political and economic isolation. Far from enabling intra-Arab competition, however, Southeast Asia may be instead emerging as a lifeline to Gulf Arab regimes who are undertaking significant political and economic reforms to diversify their economies and adapt their oil-dependent economies to be more globally competitive. Paradoxically, increasing energy consumption on the part of major Asian economies appears key helping states like Qatar and Saudi Arabia manage this transition as Western economies begin to either produce more energy at home (such as in the case of the U.S.), or switch to alternative sources of energy (such as France and Germany).³⁶⁷

Second, while the Arab Spring triggered a wave of inter-Gulf Arab enmity which culminated in the Saudi-led blockade of Qatar, this rivalry was not reflected in any meaningful way towards the GCC by ASEAN member states, despite the efforts of both Riyadh and Doha to recruit support for their actions during the height of the blockade. Gone are the days of the 1970s and 80s where the oil boom and 1979 Iranian Revolution

³⁶⁷ “Energy Trilemma Index Tool,” World Energy Council, 2020, <https://trilemma.worldenergy.org/#!/energy-index>.

kicked off a competition for ideological influence between Riyadh and Tehran on the streets of Malaysia and Indonesia.³⁶⁸ Instead, in state-to-state relations today, Asian powers chose to remain neutral in the Saudi-Qatar rivalry or actively served as mediators throughout the conflict, such as in the case of Indonesia, whose foreign minister shuttled between Persian Gulf capitals as a neutral peacemaker. The inter-Arab enmity that was present in the Persian Gulf in 2017 has also abated to some extent, potentially related to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, an increasingly confrontational Iran, Gulf Arab normalization with Israel, and the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, all of which have a significant impact on GCC perceptions regarding the nature of collective threats.³⁶⁹ A deeper dive into these issues, however, is beyond the scope of this paper. Despite the signing of a reconciliation agreement between Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and other Persian Gulf states in January 2021, trust between Riyadh and Doha may never be fully repaired.

C. IMPLICATIONS

Using an analytical framework derived from the research conducted by Harry Verhoeven, Jos Meester, and Willem van den Berg on intra-Arab competition in East Africa (now represented in Figure 2), this thesis was able to successfully apply this framework to assess the nature of intra-Arab foreign policy towards Southeast Asia. This research uncovers several significant implications for academics and policymakers who focus on the Persian Gulf to pay attention to. The first implication of this study is that Qatar's ability to operate independently of Saudi Arabia and other GCC states was bankrolled entirely by its strong, LNG economy. Should the world begin to wean itself off of fossil fuels in favor of renewable or alternative energies, then Doha's leverage against its neighbors may weaken and its stature on the world stage diminish, drawing further into the Saudi sphere of influence. Secondly, with regards to Saudi foreign policy, it is clear that beyond revenues generated by the Saudi energy sector, the ability of Riyadh to project serious soft power both inside the Persian Gulf and abroad is limited. Despite enacting

³⁶⁸ Varagur, *The Call*, 53.

³⁶⁹ Emma Soubrier, "The Gulf Cooperation Council at 40: Finally Ripe for a Regional Security System?," *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), May 27, 2021, <https://agsiw.org/the-gulf-cooperation-council-at-40-finally-ripe-for-a-regional-security-system/>.

strict sanctions against Qatar in the form of a blockade, Saudi Arabia was unable to corral significant support for this measure within the Persian Gulf (Oman and Kuwait remained neutral), within the Islamic world (Malaysia and Indonesia, among others, remained neutral), or beyond. These findings should act as a warning bell to Saudi policymakers who, in the event of a significant change in world energy demands, must invest heavily in repairing their image abroad, bolstering their soft power capabilities, and reducing their reliance on coercive measures to achieve national objectives.

		<i>Intra-Arab Enmity</i>	
		Low	High
<i>Collective Threat(s) to GCC</i>	Low	(i) Neither Cooperate nor Compete <u><i>Indonesia's case</i></u>	(ii) Compete
	High	(iii) Cooperate	(iv) Neither Cooperate nor Compete

Figure 2. Revisiting Our Analytical Framework

D. OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While this thesis was successful in developing and applying an analytical framework to help us better understand how the structure of regional security patterns between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia determines their ultimate foreign policy decisions, gaps in this framework remain that are worth investigating. The first gap relates to the edges of our identified analytical framework. The research conducted by Verhoeven,

Meester, and van den Berg was successful in validating the relationship between our identified variables and outcomes of Gulf Arab cooperation or competition (quadrants two and three in the previous figure). However, this research identified a case of Gulf Arab outreach to another region of the world that did not fit cleanly into either of these categories, instead occupying a space where neither cooperation nor competition was the projected outcome—an ambiguous gray area. Further research into the nature of Gulf Arab state behavior in these scenarios (quadrants one and four) is worth exploring, especially to better understand how Gulf Arab states may behave in circumstances where both collective threats to the GCC are high in addition to a high degree of intra-Arab cleavages.

The second gap relates to the variables of our framework themselves. Chiefly, are there other variables that hold more explanatory power in terms understanding Gulf Arab foreign policy outcomes than those identified by Verhoeven, Meester, and van den Berg? One variable critical to the concept of RSCT is that of distance, as Buzan and Wæver previously pointed out that “most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones,” greatly effecting the nature of security interdependence the emergence of regionally-based security patterns.³⁷⁰ This research certainly identified a case where we were neither able to classify Saudi or Qatari foreign policies as either competitive or cooperative. Is this a clear result determining that cooperation and competition are not the only clear categories for state behavior? Or is this an indication that our ambiguous results were due to a focus on the wrong variables? Further research into this question is highly warranted both to help validate the efficacy of this analytical framework or to propose an alternative.

³⁷⁰ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 3.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Aizhu, Chen, Rania El Gamal, and Meng. "Saudi Aramco to Sign China Refinery Deals as Crown Prince Visits: Sources." *Reuters*. February 20, 2019, sec. Commodities News. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-asia-saudi-china-xi-idUSKCN1QA0OE>.
- Al Arabiya News*. "Indonesia Urged to 'Resolve Problem in Yemen.'" News. April 16, 2015. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2015/04/16/OIC-asks-Indonesia-to-broker-Yemen-talks>.
- . "Ala Summit Statement Affirms Unity in the Face of Threats," January 5, 2021. <https://www.alarabiya.net/saudi-today/2021/01/05/%D9%82%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86->.
- Al-Azhari, Muhamad, and James Cordahi. "UPDATE 1-Qatar to Invest \$850 Mln in Indonesia Infrastructure." *Reuters*. December 6, 2007, sec. Private Equity. <https://www.reuters.com/article/economy-indonesia-qatar-idUSL0671782120071206>.
- Al Jazeera*. "Gunfire Breaks out at Indonesian National Police HQ in Jakarta." March 31, 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/31/gunfire-heard-at-indonesian-national-police-hq-in-jakarta>.
- . "Indonesian Ban on Workers to Saudi Arabia." *Al Jazeera*, June 23, 2011. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2011/6/23/indonesian-ban-on-workers-to-saudi-arabia>.
- . "Malaysia to Withdraw Troops Stationed in Saudi Arabia." News. *Al Jazeera*, June 28, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/6/28/malaysia-to-withdraw-troops-stationed-in-saudi-arabia>.
- Al-Khalifa, Talal Mohammed. "The Gulf and Southeast Asia: Regional Security Complex and Regional Security Community." University of Exeter, March 2012. <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10036/3625>.
- Al Qurtuby, Sumanto. *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks: Migration, Education, and Islam*. New York: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2020.
- Al-Sadiq, Ali. "Economic Convergence in Saudi Arabia." Brookings, July 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/tt20-saudia-arabia-economic-convergence-al-sadiq.pdf>.

- Al-Sulami, Mohammed. “‘We Are Protecting Nature, Improving Quality of Life’: Head of Saudi Arabia’s New Environmental Security Force.” *Arab News*, December 26, 2020. <https://arab.news/vvjnq>.
- Amiri Diwan State of Qatar. “HH The Amir Receives Indonesian Foreign Minister.” Government. May 28, 2015. <https://www.diwan.gov.qa/en/briefing-room/news/receiving-guests/news-2015/may/28/hh-the-amir-receives-indonesian-fm>.
- Amos, Deborah. “Why Saudi Arabia Is Suddenly Shaking Up Its Military.” *NPR*, February 27, 2018, sec. Parallels. <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/02/27/588326061/why-saudi-arabia-is-suddenly-shaking-up-its-military>.
- Arabs Today*. “Hamad Bin Jassim Participates in Bali Democracy Forum.” News. December 8, 2011. <https://www.arabstoday.net/en/39/hamad-bin-jassim-participates-in-bali-democracy-forum>.
- ASEAN. “Overview of Relations between ASEAN and GCC.” May 21, 2012. https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:GKF5FdKZANUJ:https://asean.org/%3Fstatic_post%3Doverview-of-relations-between-asean-and-gcc+%&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&google_abuse=GOOGLE_ABUSE_EXEMPTION%3DID%3D7a7db7756ce01822:TM%3D1628896966:C%3DIP%3D142.234.80.89-S%3DyVpLh2ee4Ia_HHT6AAZP080%3B+path%3D/%3B+domain%3Dgoogle.com%3B+expires%3DSat,+14-Aug-2021+02:22:46+GMT.
- Baldwin, David A. “The Concept of Security.” *Review of International Studies*, no. 23 (1997): 5–26.
- Barany, Zoltan. “Foreign Contract Soldiers in the Gulf.” Carnegie Middle East Center, 2020. <https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/02/05/foreign-contract-soldiers-in-gulf-pub-80979>.
- Barrington, Lisa. “Inside the World’s Biggest Water Desalination Plants.” *Reuters*, October 13, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-water-desalination/inside-the-worlds-biggest-water-desalination-plants-idUSKBN26Y1HD>.
- BBC News*. “Indonesia Protests at Execution of Maid in Saudi Arabia.” April 15, 2015, sec. Middle East. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32318131>.
- . “Saudi King on Rare Visit to India.” January 25, 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4645836.stm.
- . “Saudi King Visits Indonesia with ‘Cars and Entourage.’” March 1, 2017, sec. Asia. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39099988>.

- Beo Da Costa, Augustinus. "Indonesia Calls for 'transparent and Thorough' Probe of Khashoggi Killing." *News. Reuters*, October 22, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-khashoggi-indonesia-idUSKCN1MW0XM>.
- Businesswire*. "Future of the Qatari Defense Industry - Market Attractiveness, Competitive Landscape and Forecasts to 2024," May 20, 2019. <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20190520005546/en/Future-of-the-Qatari-Defense-Industry---Market-Attractiveness-Competitive-Landscape-and-Forecasts-to-2024---ResearchAndMarkets.com>.
- Buzan, Barry, and Ole Wæver. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=221064>.
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1998.
- Cafiero, Giorgio. "ASEAN and the Qatar Crisis." *Atlantic Council*, November 3, 2017. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/asean-and-the-qatar-crisis/>.
- Cang, Alfred. "Saudi Aramco Suspends \$10 Billion China Oil Refinery Venture." *Bloomberg*. August 21, 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-21/saudi-aramco-suspends-10-billion-china-oil-refinery-venture>.
- Central Intelligence Agency. "Saudi Arabia." In *The World Factbook*. July 28, 2021. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/saudi-arabia/#transnational-issues>.
- Charap, Samuel, Elina Treyger, and Edward Geist. "Understanding Russia's Intervention in Syria." RAND Corporation, October 31, 2019. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3180.html.
- Chew, Amy. "Mahathir: UAE-Israel Deal Divides Muslim World into 'Warring Factions.'" *South China Morning Post*, August 14, 2020. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3097450/malaysias-mahathir-uae-israel-deal-divides-muslim-world-warring>.
- Coca, Nithin. "Indonesia's Nonalignment Problem," December 30, 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/indonesias-nonalignment-problem>.
- Cochrane, Joe. "From Indonesia, a Muslim Challenge to the Ideology of the Islamic State." *The New York Times*. November 26, 2015, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/27/world/asia/indonesia-islam-nahdlatul-ulama.html>.

- Cook, Stephen, and Hussein Ibish. "Turkey's Resurgence as a Regional Power Confronts a Fractured GCC." *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), December 18, 2019. <https://agsiw.org/turkeys-resurgence-as-a-regional-power-confronts-a-fractured-gcc/>.
- Cornwell, Alexander. "Saudi Arabia Grants Approval for UAE-Israel Flights to Use Its Airspace." *Reuters*. September 2, 2020, sec. Emerging Markets. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-emirates-saudi-airlines-idUSKBN25T1OI>.
- Dalay, Galip. "Turkey, Europe, and the Eastern Mediterranean: Charting a Way out of the Current Deadlock." *Brookings* (blog), January 28, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/turkey-europe-and-the-eastern-mediterranean-charting-a-way-out-of-the-current-deadlock/>.
- Davidson, Christopher M. *The Persian Gulf and Pacific Asia: From Indifference to Interdependence*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
- Department of State. "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980, Volume XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula." Government. Accessed September 7, 2021. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/d45>.
- Dijk, C. van. *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*. Brill, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004287259>.
- Dorsey, James M. "The Battle for the Soul of Islam." Hudson Institute, October 28, 2020. <http://www.hudson.org/research/16463-the-battle-for-the-soul-of-islam>.
- The Economist*. "Economic & Financial Indicators." August 14, 2021.
- . "Looking East." December 11, 2010. <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2010/12/09/looking-east>.
- . "The Battle for China's Backyard." February 27, 2021. <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/02/27/the-rivalry-between-america-and-china-will-hinge-on-south-east-asia>.
- Editorial Board. "Slow Money from Saudi Arabia." *The Jakarta Post*, February 22, 2019. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2019/02/22/slow-money-from-saudi-arabia.html>.
- Embassy of India, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. "Riyadh Declaration." 2010. <https://www.eoiriyadh.gov.in/page/riyadh-declaration/>.
- Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia. "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Government. 2018. <https://kemlu.go.id/riyadh/id>.

- Evans, Damon. "Politics Muddy Indonesia's \$48 Billion Refinery Expansion Plan after Aramco Walks - News for the Energy Sector." *Energy Voice* (blog), July 15, 2020. <https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/asia/252182/politics-muddy-indonesias-48-billion-refinery-expansion-plan-after-aramco-walks/>.
- Fakkar, Galal. "Story behind the King's Title." Arab News, January 27, 2015. <https://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/695351>.
- Fauzi Bin Abu-Hussin, Mohd. "Gulf Arab Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): ASEAN Targets of Opportunity." Middle East Institute, March 20, 2013. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/gulf-arab-foreign-direct-investment-fdi-asean-targets-opportunity>.
- Feierstein, Gerald M. "The Impact of Middle East Regional Competition on Security and Stability in the Horn of Africa." *Middle East Institute*, August 18, 2020. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/impact-middle-east-regional-competition-security-and-stability-horn-africa>.
- Foley, Sean. "Re-Orientalizing the Gulf: The GCC and Southeast Asia." *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 4 (December 2012): 77–87. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.2012.00561.x>.
- . "Saudi Arabia's Relations with Asia." Asia Society. Accessed February 25, 2021. <https://asiasociety.org/asias-new-pivot/saudi-arabia>.
- Ford, Lindsey, and Max Hill. "China." Asia Society, August 8, 2019. <https://asiasociety.org/asias-new-pivot/china>.
- Fürtig, Henner. "Conflict and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf: The Interregional Order and U.S. Policy." *Middle East Journal* 61, no. 4 (2007): 627–40.
- Gause, F. Gregory. *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Ghattas, Kim. *Black Wave: Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Forty-Year Rivalry That Unraveled Culture, Religion, and Collective Memory in the Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2020.
- Gorbiano, Marchio Irfan. "Vice President Ma'ruf Can 'Do More' to Develop Sharia Economy." The Jakarta Post, September 17, 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/09/16/vice-president-maruf-can-do-more-to-develop-sharia-economy.html>.
- Graff, Peter, and Patricia Zengerle. "Era Ends, Uncertainty Looms as U.S. Forces Quit Main Afghanistan Base." *Reuters*. July 2, 2021, sec. Asia Pacific. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-vacates-main-airbase-afghanistan-officials-2021-07-02/>.

- Greer, Lucille, and Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj. "Last Among Equals: The China-Iran Partnership in a Regional Context." Wilson Center, September 30, 2020. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/last-among-equals-china-iran-partnership-regional-context>.
- Hamid, Shadi. "The Struggle for Middle East Democracy." *Brookings* (blog), April 26, 2011. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-struggle-for-middle-east-democracy/>.
- Han, Jianwei, and Hassan Hakimian. "The Regional Security Complex in the Persian Gulf: The Contours of Iran's GCC Policy." *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 13, no. 4 (October 2, 2019): 493–508. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2019.1682300>.
- Harrison, Ross. "Shifts in the Middle East Balance of Power: An Historical Perspective." Al Jazeera Center for Studies, September 2, 2018. <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2018/09/shifts-middle-east-balance-power-historical-perspective-180902084750811.html>.
- Hasan, Noorhaidi, and Robert W. Hefner. "Salafism in Indonesia: Transnational Islam, Violent Activism, and Cultural Resistance." In *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia*, 246–56. Routledge, 2018. <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315628837-20>.
- Hollis, Martin, and Steve Smith. *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Homer-Dixon, Thomas. "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases." *International Security* 19, no. 1 (Summer 1994): 5–40.
- House of Saud. "Kings of Saudi Arabia." Government. 2021. <https://houseofsaud.com/king-abdullah-bin-abdilaziz-al-saud/>.
- Huda, Samsul. "SAUNESIA Axis Strengthens Relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia." *NU Online*. February 14, 2020. <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/116643/poros-saunesia-perkokoh-hubungan-indonesia-saudi-arabia->.
- The Independent*. "Police Gun down ISIS Fighters on Streets of Saudi Arabia." January 8, 2017. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/isis-gunned-down-police-officers-shootout-riyadh-saudi-arabia-video-watch-a7515576.html>.
- IDNFinancials*. "Remittance Made by Indonesian Migrant Workers Abroad Reaches US\$ 2.711 Billion." 2021. <https://www.idnfinancials.com/archive/news/22191/Remittance-made-by-Indonesian-migrant-workers-abroad-reaches-US-2711-billion>.

- International Monetary Fund. "Breakeven Oil Prices." 2019. <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=60214246>.
- International Organization for Migration. "International Migration and Migrant Workers' Remittances in Indonesia." 2010. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/indonesia_remittances.pdf.
- Islamic Development Bank. "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Islamic Development Bank Concerning the Supervision of the Implementation of Various Projects in Aceh on Behalf of the Saudi Charity Relief Campaign for Tsunami Victims in East Asia." April 26, 2005.
- . "US\$ 36 Million from IDB for University Reconstruction in Indonesia." April 27, 2006. <https://www.isdb.org/news/us-36-million-from-idb-for-university-reconstruction-in-indonesia>.
- The Jakarta Post*. "Jokowi Gets Busy in Saudi Arabia." News. September 12, 2015. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/09/12/jokowi-gets-busy-saudi-arabia.html>.
- . "King Salman Chats with Sukarno's Granddaughter Puan Maharani." March 2, 2017. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/02/king-salman-chats-with-sukarnos-granddaughter-puan-maharani.html>.
- Jeong, Hae Won. "South Korea." Asia Society, July 28, 2020. <https://asiasociety.org/asias-new-pivot/south-korea>.
- Kamrava, Mehran. "Qatari Foreign Policy and the Exercise of Subtle Power." *Middle East Insights*, October 2017. <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/1048298>.
- Karabell, Zachary. "Bandung Conference." Encyclopedia.com, May 21, 2018. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/asia-and-africa/southeast-asia-history/bandung-conference>.
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. "Environmental Protection." Government. Saudi National Portal for Government Services, July 7, 2021. <https://www.my.gov.sa/wps/portal/snp/aboutksa/environmentalProtection>.
- . "Names of Saudi State Officials." King Saud bin Abdulaziz, 2012. <https://kingsaud.sa/ar/history/history-king-saud/king/489/2180/>.
- . "Saudi Relations with Indonesia." The Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Republic of Indonesia. Accessed July 20, 2021. <https://embassies.mofa.gov.sa/sites/indonesia/AR/AboutHostingCountry/SaudiRelations/Pages/default.aspx>.

- . “Visa & Tourism.” Government. GOV.SA, July 29, 2021. <https://www.my.gov.sa/wps/portal/snp/aboutksa/tourism>.
- . “Vision 2030.” 2016. <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/v2030/overview/>.
- Krasna, Joshua. “Understanding the Wave of Normalization in the Middle East.” Foreign Policy Research Institute, January 13, 2021. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2021/01/understanding-the-wave-of-normalization-in-the-middle-east/>.
- Kuwado, Fabian Januarius. “Harapan Jokowi pada Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia.” KOMPAS.com, June 5, 2018. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/06/05/12232491/harapan-jokowi-pada-universitas-islam-internasional-indonesia>.
- Kwok, Yenni. “Could This Man Become the Middle East’s New Mediator?” Time, January 20, 2016. <https://time.com/4186427/indonesia-saudi-arabia-iran-diplomacy-sunni-shia/>.
- Lejla, Villar, and Mason Hamilton. “The Strait of Malacca, a Key Oil Trade Chokepoint, Links the Indian and Pacific Oceans.” Government. U.S. Energy Information Administration, August 11, 2017. <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=32452>.
- Liow, Joseph Chinyong. “ISIS Goes to Asia.” *Foreign Affairs*, September 19, 2019. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/east-asia/2014-09-19/isis-goes-asia>.
- . “The Arab Spring and Islamist Activism in Southeast Asia: Much Ado about Nothing?” *Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World at Brookings*, Rethinking Political Islam Series, August 2015. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Southeast-Asia_Liow-FINALE.pdf.
- Lipka, Michael. “Muslims and Islam: Key Findings in the U.S. and around the World.” *Pew Research Center* (blog), August 9, 2017. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>.
- Looney, Robert. “Saudi Arabia: Out of Options?” Milken Institute Review, September 15, 2016. <https://www.milkenreview.org/articles/saudi-arabia-out-of-options>.
- Lovell, Madeleine. “Food and Water Security in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.” *Future Directions International* (blog), July 28, 2015. <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/food-and-water-security-in-the-kingdom-of-saudi-arabia/>.
- Lowe, Maxwell. “Khomeini in the Archipelago: Iranian Interests and Influence in Indonesia.” *The Diplomat*, February 15, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/khomeini-in-the-archipelago-iranian-interests-and-influence-in-indonesia/>.

- Lynch, Marc. "Saudi Arabia's Counter-Revolution." *Foreign Policy* (blog), August 10, 2011. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/08/10/saudi-arabias-counter-revolution/>.
- Machmudi, Yon. "Saudi Arabia's Relations with Indonesia." In *Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: Conflict and Cooperation*, edited by Neil Partrick. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016.
- Macrotrends. "Brent Crude Oil Prices - 10 Year Daily Chart." 2021. <https://www.macrotrends.net/2480/brent-crude-oil-prices-10-year-daily-chart>.
- Martini, Jeffrey, Becca Wasser, Dalia Dassa Kaye, Daniel Egel, and Cordaye Ogletree. "The Outlook for Arab Gulf Cooperation." *RAND Corporation*, July 26, 2016. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1429.html.
- Maulia, Erwida. "Qatari Emir to Visit Indonesia to Enhance Ties." News. The Jakarta Post, May 19, 2009. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/05/19/qatari-emir-visit-indonesia-enhance-ties.html>.
- McSweeney, Bill. "Identity and Security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School." *Review of International Studies* 22, no. 1 (1996): 81–93.
- McVann, Christine. "Reshaping U.S. Force Posture in the Middle East." The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 10, 2021. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/reshaping-us-force-posture-middle-east>.
- Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2001.
- Meester, Jos, Willem Van Den Berg, and Harry Verhoeven. "Riyal Politik: The Political Economy of Gulf Investments in the Horn of Africa." *Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations*, April 2018. <https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2018-04/riyal-politik.pdf>.
- Mehden, Fred R. von der. *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction Between Southeast Asia and the Middle East*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. "Meeting of Prime Minister Abe and Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman." Government. September 1, 2016. https://www.mofa.go.jp/me_a/me2/sa/page4e_000511.html.
- Munro, Diane. "Restructuring of Saudi Arabia's Energy Industry Gathers Pace." *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), March 2, 2017. <https://agsiw.org/restructuring-saudi-arabias-energy-industry-gathers-pace/>.

- Mydans, Seth. "The Fall of Suharto." *The New York Times*. May 21, 1998, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/21/world/fall-suharto-overview-suharto-besieged-steps-down-after-32-year-rule-indonesia.html>.
- Nakano, Jane, and Frank Verrastro. "The Saudi 'Pivot to Asia.'" *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. March 27, 2017. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/energy-fact-opinion-saudi-pivot-asia>.
- Nuclear Threat Initiative. "Non-Aligned Movement," February 25, 2021. <https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/non-aligned-movement-nam/>.
- Nur Alam, Gilang, Obsatar Sinaga, Djoko Roespinoedji, and Fuad Azmi. "The Impacts Of Covid-19 To Saudi Arabia's Economic Sector And Hajj Pilgrimage Policy Of The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia." *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education* 12, no. 8 (2021): 463–72.
- Obeid, Nawaf. "Will We Soon See the Israeli Flag Flying in Riyadh?" *Al-Quds* (blog), May 22, 2021. <https://alquds.com/2021/05/22/%d9%87%d9%84-%d8%b3%d9%86%d8%b1%d9%89-%d9%82%d8%b1%d9%8a%d8%a8%d8%a7%d9%8b-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b9%d9%84%d9%85-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a5%d8%b3%d8%b1%d8%a7%d8%a6%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%8a-%d9%8a%d8%b1%d9%81%d8%b1%d9%81/>.
- The Observatory of Economic Complexity. "Indonesia Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners." 2019. <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/idn?yearSelector2=importGrowthYear11>.
- . "Qatar Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners." 2019. <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/qat>.
- . "Saudi Arabia Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners." 2019. <https://app-ant.oec.world/en/profile/country/sau>.
- Office of Assistant to Deputy Cabinet Secretary for State Documents & Translation. "Indonesia Gets Hajj Quota of 221,000 This Year." Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, January 22, 2019. <https://setkab.go.id/en/indonesia-gets-hajj-quota-of-221000-this-year/>.
- O'Sullivan, Meghan. *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Upends Global Politics and Strengthens America's Power*. New York: Simin & Schuster Paperbacks, 2017.
- Our World in Data. "Fossil Fuel Consumption." 2019. <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/fossil-fuel-primary-energy>.

- Panda, Ankit. "India and Saudi Arabia Sign Defense Cooperation Pact." *The Diplomat*, February 27, 2014. <https://thediplomat.com/2014/02/india-and-saudi-arabia-sign-defense-cooperation-pact/>.
- . "Indonesia and Saudi Arabia Sign Defense Cooperation Agreement." *The Diplomat*, January 25, 2014. <https://thediplomat.com/2014/01/indonesia-and-saudi-arabia-sign-defense-cooperation-agreement/>.
- . "King Abdullah's Legacy in Asia." *The Diplomat* (blog), January 23, 2015. <https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/king-abdullahs-legacy-in-asia/>.
- Parameswaran, Prashanth. "New Pact Puts Indonesia-Saudi Arabia Military Ties in the Spotlight." *The Diplomat*, October 10, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/new-pact-puts-indonesia-saudi-arabia-military-ties-in-the-spotlight/>.
- . "Why Is Malaysia in Saudi-Led War Games in the Middle East?" *The Diplomat*, February 18, 2016. <https://thediplomat.com/2016/02/why-is-malaysia-in-saudi-led-war-games-in-the-middle-east/>.
- . "Will Malaysia End Its Military Presence in Saudi Arabia?" *News. The Diplomat*, June 26, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/will-malaysia-end-its-military-presence-in-saudi-arabia/>.
- Partrick, Neil. "Saudi Arabia's Elusive Defense Reform." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, November 14, 2019. <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/80354>.
- Qatar Embassy in Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia. "Qatar - Indonesia Relations," 2018. <https://jakarta.embassy.qa/en/indonesia/qatar---indonesia-relations>.
- Rakhmat, Muhammad Zulfikar. "Doha Looks to Southeast Asia." *News. The Diplomat*, May 21, 2014. <https://thediplomat.com/2014/05/doha-looks-to-southeast-asia/>.
- Rakhmat, Muhammad Zulfikar, and Fuad Tingai. "Opportunities and Obstacles in Qatar-Indonesia Relations." *Geopolitical Monitor. Opportunities and Obstacles in Qatar-Indonesia Relations* (blog), November 17, 2020. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/opportunities-and-obstacles-in-qatar-indonesia-relations/>.
- Republic of Indonesia. "Declaration of Intent Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf." *Republic of Indonesia-Gulf Cooperation Council*, September 12, 2015.
- . "Peace Message from the President of the Republic of Indonesia to Iran and Saudi Arabia." *Government. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia*, January 19, 2016. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160120191644/http://www.kemlu.go.id/id/berita/Pages/pesan-damai-indonesia-arab-saudi.aspx>.

Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. “Cooperation Program Between the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of the Republic of Indonesia and Small and Medium Enterprises Authority of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Concerning Small and Medium Enterprises Development.” Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017.

———. “Cooperation Program Between the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Scientific and Higher Educational Cooperation.” Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017.

———. “Cooperation Program in the Field of Commerce Between the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Commerce and Investment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.” Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017.

———. “Executive Program on Cultural Cooperation for the Years 2019–2022 Between the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.” Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, December 22, 2018.

———. “Implementing Arrangement Between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Cooperation in the Field of Health Services for Indonesian Hajj and Umrah Pilgrims.” Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 4, 2019.

———. “Joint Declaration by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Upgrading the Headship Level in the Work of the Joint Committee.” Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017.

———. “Memorandum of Understanding of Cultural Cooperation Between the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.” Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 1, 2017.

Resource Trade by Chatham House. “GCC and ASEAN Exports.” 2020.

<https://resourcetrade.earth/?year=2019&exporter=gcc&importer=asean&units=value&autozoom=1>.

———. “Indonesia Imports from Saudi Arabia.” 2020.

<https://resourcetrade.earth/?year=2019&exporter=682&importer=360&units=weight&autozoom=1>.

- . “Saudi Arabia Agricultural Imports in 2019.” 2020.
<https://resourcetrade.earth/?year=2019&exporter=682&importer=360&category=4&units=value&autozoom=1>.
- Roberts, David B. *Qatar: Securing the Global Ambitions of a City-State*. London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2017.
- Rundell, David. *Vision or Mirage: Saudi Arabia at the Crossroads*. London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2021.
- Russell, James. “In the Furnace: Saudi Arabia and the Dynamics of Global Climate Change.” In *Handbook of Transitions to Energy and Climate Security*, edited by Robert Looney, 107–20. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- . “Saudi Arabia: The Strategic Dimensions of Environmental Insecurity.” *Middle East Policy* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 44–58.
- Ryan, Curtis. “Chapter 24: Alliances and Balance of Power.” In *The Routledge Handbook to the Middle East and North African State and States System*, 340–53. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- Salikha, Adelaida. “Meet The Only Southeast Asia Representative Country In G20 (Group of Twenty) | Seasia.Co.” Good News from Southeast Asia, December 1, 2018. <https://seasia.co/2018/12/01/meet-the-only-southeast-asia-representative-country-in-g20-group-of-twenty>.
- Santosa, Novan Iman. “Saudi Arabia, RI Ink Defense Cooperation Agreement.” The Jakarta Post, January 24, 2014. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/01/24/saudi-arabia-ri-ink-defense-cooperation-agreement.html>.
- Saudi Central Bank. “Yearly Statistics.” Government. May 31, 2021.
<https://www.sama.gov.sa/en-US/EconomicReports/Pages/YearlyStatistics.aspx>.
- Seligman, Lara. “Top U.S. General: It’s ‘Very Possible’ Iran Will Attack Again.” *Foreign Policy* (blog), November 23, 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/23/very-possible-iran-will-attack-again-top-us-general-says/>.
- Septiari, Dian. “Indonesia to Review New Deal with Saudi Arabia.” News. The Jakarta Post, November 1, 2018. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/11/01/indonesia-to-review-new-deal-with-saudi-arabia.html>.
- Shane, Scott. “Saudis and Extremism: ‘Both the Arsonists and the Firefighters.’” *The New York Times*. August 25, 2016, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-islam.html>.

- Sharief, Felix. "Story From Doha: The Start of Middle-Eastern Look East Policy - International Affairs Forum." International Affairs Forum, August 13, 2013. https://www.ia-forum.org/Content/ViewInternal_Document.cfm?contenttype_id=1&ContentID=8041.
- Shay, Shaul. "Boosting Regional Cooperation: Behind Gulf Shield 1." Israel Defense, April 22, 2018. <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/33912>.
- Shayan, Fatemeh. "Iran and Security Complex in the Persian Gulf." *Journal of World Sociopolitical Studies* 3, no. 1 (January 2019): 45–74. <https://doi.org/10.22059/wsp.2019.276060.1094>.
- Sipahutar, Tassia. "Jokowi Heads to Mecca for Pilgrimage as Indonesia Vote Nears." News. BNN Bloomberg, April 14, 2019. <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/jokowi-heads-to-mecca-for-pilgrimage-as-indonesia-vote-nears-1.1244189>.
- Soubrier, Emma. "Gulf Security in a Multipolar World: Power Competition, Diversified Cooperation." *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*, March 24, 2020. <https://agsiw.org/gulf-security-in-a-multipolar-world-power-competition-diversified-cooperation/>.
- . "The Gulf Cooperation Council at 40: Finally Ripe for a Regional Security System?" *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), May 27, 2021. <https://agsiw.org/the-gulf-cooperation-council-at-40-finally-ripe-for-a-regional-security-system/>.
- Stocker, Marc, John Baffes, and Dana Vorisek. "What Triggered the Oil Price Plunge of 2014–2016 and Why It Failed to Deliver an Economic Impetus in Eight Charts." *The World Bank* (blog), January 18, 2018. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/what-triggered-oil-price-plunge-2014-2016-and-why-it-failed-deliver-economic-impetus-eight-charts>.
- Sun, Degang. "China's Soft Military Presence in the Middle East." Middle East Institute, March 11, 2015. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/chinas-soft-military-presence-middle-east>.
- Szuba, Jared. "Iran, Russia, China to Conduct Joint Naval Exercise in Indian Ocean." Al-Monitor, February 9, 2021. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/02/iran-russia-china-naval-drill.html>.
- Tiezzi, Shannon. "What's in the China-Iran Strategic Cooperation Agreement?" *The Diplomat*, March 30, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/whats-in-the-china-iran-strategic-cooperation-agreement/>.

- Todman, Will. "The Gulf Scramble for Africa: GCC States' Foreign Policy Laboratory." Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 20, 2018. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/gulf-scramble-africa-gcc-states-foreign-policy-laboratory>.
- Tol, Gonal. "Viewpoint: Why Turkey Is Flexing Its Muscles Abroad." *BBC News*. October 16, 2020, sec. Europe. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54547304>.
- Trofimov, Yaroslav. *The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam's Holiest Shrine and the Birth of Al Qaeda*. New York: Doubleday, 2007.
- Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates. *The Changing Security Dynamics of the Persian Gulf*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- . *Insecure Gulf: The End of Certainty and the Transition to the Post-Oil Era*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- . "King Salman's Outreach to Asia." *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), March 3, 2017. <https://agsiw.org/king-salmans-outreach-asia/>.
- . *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates, and Theodore Karasik. "How Asian and European Countries Helped Qatar Maintain Sovereignty." *Gulf State Analytics* (blog), April 22, 2018. <https://gulfstateanalytics.com/how-asian-and-european-countries-helped-qatar-maintain-sovereignty/>.
- United Nations. "International Migrant Stock." United Nations Population Division, 2020. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock>.
- Utama, Mohamad Rezky. "The US-Iran Conflict and What It Means for Indonesia." *News. The Conversation*, January 21, 2020. <http://theconversation.com/the-us-iran-conflict-and-what-it-means-for-indonesia-129621>.
- Vakil, Sanam. "Middle East Perceptions of an America Adrift." Hoover Institution, March 28, 2019. <https://www.hoover.org/research/middle-east-perceptions-america-adrift>.
- Varagur, Krithika. *The Call: Inside the Global Saudi Religious Project*. New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2020.
- Vatikiotis, Michael. *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict in Modern Southeast Asia*. London: The Orion Publishing Group Ltd, 2017.

- . *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict in Modern Southeast Asia*. London: The Orion Publishing Group Ltd, 2017.
- Verhoeven, Harry. “The Gulf and the Horn: Changing Geographies of Security Interdependence and Competing Visions of Regional Order.” *Civil Wars* 20, no. 3 (June 12, 2018): 333–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2018.1483125>.
- Waikar, Prashant, and Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman. “The 2019 Kuala Lumpur Summit: A Strategic Realignment in the Muslim World?” *Berkley Forum*, Geopolitics of Religious Soft Power Project, February 24, 2020. <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/the-2019-kuala-lumpur-summit-a-strategic-realignment-in-the-muslim-world>.
- White House. “National Security Strategy of the United States of America.” December 2017. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.
- . “U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific.” 2021. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IPS-Final-Declass.pdf>.
- World Bank. “Fossil Fuel Energy Consumption (% of Total) - United States.” 2015. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.USE.COMM.FO.ZS?locations=US>.
- . “GDP (Current US\$) - Indonesia.” 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=ID>.
- . “Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP) - Indonesia.” 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=ID>.
- . “Population, Total - Saudi Arabia, Qatar.” 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=SA-QA>.
- . “Urban Population (% of Total Population) - Qatar.” 2018. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=QA>.
- World Energy Council. “Energy Trilemma Index Tool.” 2020. <https://trilemma.worldenergy.org/#!/energy-index>.
- . “WEC Trilemma: Saudi Arabia.” 2020. <https://trilemma.worldenergy.org/#!/country-profile?country=Saudi%20Arabia&year=2020>.
- World Nuclear News. “Korea, Saudi Arabia Progress with SMART Collaboration : New Nuclear - World Nuclear News.” January 7, 2020. <https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Korea-Saudi-Arabia-progress-with-SMART-collaborati>.

Yamada, Makio. "Saudi Arabia's Look-East Diplomacy: Ten Years On." *Middle East Policy* 22, no. 4 (December 2015): 121–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12163>.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1. Defense Technical Information Center
Ft. Belvoir, Virginia
2. Dudley Knox Library
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California