**TRIGGER WARNING- Our case refers to rape as concept. If you have any suggestions or preferred censorship of content, we are willing to make reasonable edits.**

**We Negate**

**Resolved:** The U.S should end arms sales to Saudi Arabia

**First, with an observation**

Peace is only possible if Saudi Arabia defeats the Houthi Rebel Movement. **Rogan 19 explains[[1]](#endnote-1)** that the Saudis have not realized that the war is causing too much suffering without adequate prospect of strategic gain. The Saudi Crown Prince sees Yemen as a defining battleground in an existential fight against Iran. **Rogan furthers** it is ludicrous to think the prince would cease his war effort absent of the major U.S. pressure and resolute U.S. support. On the other hand, **Alasar 18 finds[[2]](#endnote-2)** that the Houthis will have little incentive to negotiate in good faith unless we further continuing military pressure. Thus, withdrawing U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition will do nothing to actually end the war and the only solution is defeating the Houthi rebels.

**Second, the ballot ought to value preventing sexual assault as the most important deciding factor in the round**

The judge should make their decision based off what the people effected want. **Cunningham explains[[3]](#endnote-3)** that many cultures consider sexual assault worse than death, because the survivor lives through the experience, causing further trauma and suffering to the individual. Most societies consider a woman to be destroyed after sexual assault has occurred, so women are not encouraged to heal or to consider that their lives can continue after such an assault. **Harazi cites[[4]](#endnote-4)** the common consensus in Yemen from a Yemeni woman who specifically pleaded verbatim “Death is death, we all die eventually, but the shame of sexual assault is what we cannot handle”. Since the people being primarily affected by the policy to end arms sales would prefer death over sexual assault, so shall the ballot.

With that in mind…

**Our First Contention is Yemen’s Deadly Alternatives**

**Disarming Saudi Arabia will be harmful to the civil war in Yemen for 2 reasons**

**First, Saudi Arabia will recruit Sudanese children to the front lines**

Currently, Saudi Arabia is reliant on U.S weapons to intervene in Yemen. In the world without U.S weapons, **Mourad 18 indicates[[5]](#endnote-5)** that the inherent weakness of Saudi ground forces manifests itself clearly through the Gulf kingdom’s heavy reliance on foreign mercenaries to fight on behalf of its armed forces. **Kirkpatrick 18 finds[[6]](#endnote-6)** that Saudi Arabia will have to become more dependent on the poor population of Sudan for recruiting infantry, which often includes children, to fight against Houthi’s in Yemen. Saudi’s can do this by using their vast oil wealth to hire survivors of the conflict in South Sudan to fight. **Kirkpatrick concludes** that these children soldiers are responsible for systemic sexual assault in the Sudanese civil war and that Yemen will be opened as a new ground for the same atrocities.

**Second, is a Russian fill-in**

**O’Connor 18 writes[[7]](#endnote-7)** that Russia and China have pledged to strengthen their bilateral military and political ties as part of a strategic cooperation that challenges U.S. interests, especially to Washington's stance on Middle East allies Syria and Iran. **Goldenburg 18 indicates[[8]](#endnote-8)** that walking away from the Yemen and Saudi war would not do anything to help stop the bloodshed. In fact, the threat of Iranian expansion is great enough for Saudi Arabia to purchase and use Russian weapons and tactics as a replacement. **Goldenburg concludes** that these Russian weapons and tactics are far less precise and will kill more bystanders.

**Our Second Contention is Qatar**

**Emmons[[9]](#endnote-9) 18** explains that with plummeting oil prices, Saudi Arabia’s economy has entered an intense recession, leading the Kingdom to seek new forms of wealth out. This desire led Saudi Arabia to developing plans to seize and invade Qatar, hoping to capture it’s 320-billion-dollar sovereign wealth fund. **Dickey[[10]](#endnote-10)** explains, Saudi Arabia has long seen Qatar as an enemy because of their influence and support of uprisings that threaten Saudi Arabia’s power. As this has continued, Saudi Arabia has now begun to view Qatar as a threat that must be wiped out. Recent actions have only worsened this perception as **Buckle[[11]](#endnote-11) reports in December** that Qatar announced it was leaving OPEC, which Saudi Arabia viewed as a direct swipe at them. Luckily, **Emmons[[12]](#endnote-12)** continues that it was the coercion and resistance on the part of the US that forced Saudi Arabia to back down from their invasion plan. Absent of strong US influence, the middle east would have been in more disarray than ever. Unfortunately, **Hill[[13]](#endnote-13) 18** notes that cutting off arms sales would seriously damage the US-Saudi alliance, as **Phillips[[14]](#endnote-14) 18** continues, the decision to end arms sales would end a decades long mutual relationship and hamper our influence over middle east relations.

**The impact is Ending the Syrian Civil War**

**Dickey[[15]](#endnote-15) 17** **explains** that because of Qatar’s regional alliances with Syria, they play a “key and critical” role in mediating opposing sides and ending the Syrian Civil War. **Pelayo[[16]](#endnote-16) 18** **furthers** that because of the economic incentives, Qatar’s sovereign wealth fund can provide connections to Russia, Syria and the US. Logically, this makes Qatar key to ending the war.

**This terminalizes in 2 major ways**

**First, are casualties**

**Specia[[17]](#endnote-17) 18** **writes** that at least 400,000 people had been killed in the Syrian civil war and that this number that has only skyrocketed since then. This is in itself is an atrocity, but it gets worse.

**Second, is sexual assault**

**AJ 18 indicates[[18]](#endnote-18)** that Syrian militias have turned systemic sexual assault into a weapon in war. Without a strong U.S-Saudi relationship, the war fought with sexual assault has no clear end in sight.

**Thus,**

**We urge you to negate**

1. Tom **Rogan**, 2-6-**2019**, "Ending US support for Saudi Arabia would make things much worse in Yemen," **Washington Examiner**, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/ending-us-support-for-saudi-arabia-would-make-things-much-worse-in-yemen>

The Senate is now leaning toward ending U.S. participation in the Saudi-United-Arab-Emirates-led war in Yemen. I believe that the Senate has the authority to do this, but I also believe that course of action would be a terrible mistake, doing more harm than good to the civilians who have been suffering through the conflict. I know that sounds odd. After all, tens of thousands have starved to death or died in the fighting since 2015. So it's understandable that senators want to end to the Saudi campaign against Iranian-supported Houthi rebels in Yemen. They believe that pulling American support will put immense pressure on Riyadh to accept a rapid cease fire. But the problem is that the senators are wrong. If the U.S. pulls its functional support for the Saudi alliance, two negative consequences will immediately follow. First, the Saudis will lose all the inhibitions about accurate targeting of Houthi formations that American intervention has forced. Second, Riyadh will lose interest in energetic efforts by Washington to reach a durable cease fire. Both of those developments will be disastrous for Yemeni civilians. For a start, the only reason the Saudis are now moving toward a cease fire is the Trump administration's pressure. Trump has earned Saudi trust and their corresponding deference on issues negatively affecting America: in this case, the human suffering of the Yemeni civil war. **The Saudis have not suddenly woken up and realized that the war is causing too much suffering without adequate prospect of strategic gain. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sees Yemen as a defining battleground in an existential fight against Iran.** With Iran repeatedly firing ballistic missiles at Riyadh and helping assassinate erstwhile Saudi allies**, it is ludicrous to think the prince would cease his war effort absent the present mix of major U.S. pressure and resolute U.S. support.** And if you want to understand how a U.S. withdrawal of military support would affect the Saudi war effort, look no further than President Bashar Assad's Syria. The Saudi coalition has far more advanced weapons platforms than the Syrians, but it lacks the integrated command and control, intelligence, targeting, communications, and logistical skill to employ its military effectively. The U.S. has been absolutely critical in filling in the gaps in these areas. And although the Saudis are still too capricious with their use of force, American guidance has helped them target Houthi formations rather than entire city blocks with a few Houthis somewhere inside those blocks. Again, motivated by their historic, cultural, and theological blood feud with Iran, the Saudis would care little about killing thousands more civilians if they believed it might win the war. America is the only check on them at this moment. And, as demonstrated by the Saudi suspension of operations around the port of Hodeidah, that check has held. None of this is palatable for a democracy like ours. We want our world to be without wars. But reality sometimes sucks. And the simple reality of the Yemeni civil war is that it would be, as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo put it on Wednesday, "a hell of a lot worse" were the U.S. disengaged from it. Yes, Pompeo exaggerates the degree to which Saudi Arabia is a constructive, stable partner for the U.S. in the broader Middle East. Still, he is right on the fundamental issue: that the U.S. needs a Saudi Arabia that is modernizing and stable. If we want a cease-fire that restrains Iran as well as serving the Yemeni people, we need to stay engaged with the Saudis. In the end, the Senate's looming action would only decorate Yemen with more civilian blood. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Fatima **Alasrar**, 7-25-**2018**, "Yemen Is Bad but It Would Be Worse Without U.S. Involvement," **National Interest**, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/yemen-bad-it-would-be-worse-without-us-involvement-26801>

The war against Iran and the Houthis is also linked with the United States’ war on terror, which is supported by Congress, specifically the fight against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), an organization that is based in Yemen and is widely considered to be the most dangerous of al-Qaeda’s remaining regional affiliates. For example, the Saudi-led coalition helped to build the elite anti-Houthi Southern Security Belt forces. These United Arab Emirates–trained Yemeni units have, alongside Emirati special forces, fought AQAP. Last year, they pushed them out of the Shabwah Governorate, where, six years ago, a U.S. drone successfully targeted one of the al-Qaeda terrorists responsible for the 2000 attack on the USS Cole. In addition, the U.S. military plays a critical role in safeguarding Yemeni civilians by identifying nonmilitary and civilian facilities for the coalition so that these are not accidentally targeted by air strikes. This intelligence support has not prevented civilian casualties altogether, but it has almost certainly reduced their number. Also, American-produced Patriot missile defense systems have allowed the coalition to intercept dozens of Houthi ballistic missiles fired against Saudi, Emirati, and Yemeni civilian population centers. American involvement also bolsters ties between the U.S. military and the militaries of its Arab allies and these relationships are a key tool of U.S. power and influence if America is to remain globally relevant. America should continue to support United Nations Special Envoy Martin Griffiths’ in his attempt to broker a lasting political resolution. But **the Houthis will have little incentive to negotiate in good faith absent continuing military pressure. Withdrawing U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition and for Yemen’s internationally recognized government will ease this pressure without doing anything to end Yemen’s war. It also will not help—and may even exacerbate—the country’s humanitarian crisis** while dealing a blow to America’s regional prestige and its short and long-term strategic interests. Lawmakers would do well to consider these costs as they seek to reclaim war-making powers from the executive branch. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. (PDF under Cunningham in cases folder)

The simplest and most direct way in which rape exerts control over communities is through its impact on population demographics: mass rape directly decreases population because many women are raped and beaten to death. It is common for a woman to lose consciousness and die during or shortly after rape. Survivors abandoned in varying levels of consciousness and distress may die of exposure, dehydration, or starvation or from animal attacks. Many are beaten to death or shot after being sexually assaulted; some victims even beg their abusers to kill them.34 Many survivors of genocidal rape commit suicide following their ordeal; those who become pregnant often die in an attempt to abort the fetus. It is also common in some cultures for a woman to be killed by her own family or community after experiencing rape, because of the shame the assault brings on the family and the community. **Many cultures consider rape worse than death, because the survivor lives through the experience, causing further trauma and suffering to the individual.** Many **societies consider a woman to be destroyed after a rape has occurred, so women are not encouraged to heal or to consider that their lives can continue after such an assault.** Rape is used during genocide because it accomplishes two goals at once**: the woman is effectively ‘‘killed,’’ or loses the will to live, yet goes on living among her people as a constant reminder of their downfall**.35 Infection and Illness Infections and illnesses such as HIV, hepatitis, and syphilis are common in survivors of wartime sexual assault. Survivors are also more likely to experience acute and chronic health problems such as diabetes, asthma, and arthritis. Somatic complaints, especially unexplained abdominal pain, are common among survivors of sexual assault.36 Sexually transmitted diseases take on a particular salience during ethnic conflict and genocide. Transmission of HIV through mass rape may be used as a strategy of population reduction, and unintentional spreading of HIV is also facilitated by mass rape. The virus may be transmitted at elevated levels when violent sexual attacks involving heightened contact with blood and other bodily fluids occur on a large scale. In Rwanda, an estimated 70 to 90% of rape survivors have contracted HIV/AIDS. Given that more than 500,000 women were raped, the health crisis created by this epidemic is staggering. Advocacy groups argue that the 1994 genocide never ended: it is still claiming victims today. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Shatha Al-**Harazi**, xx-xx-xxxx, "To Yemenis 'rape is worse than death'," **News and Letters Committees**, https://newsandletters.org/to-yemenis-rape-is-worse-than-death/

**“I would rather she died than be raped,” said Um Ahmed Alam angrily.** A woman in her fifties, she fears the chaos the country will suffer if civil war breaks out in Yemen. Her fear of sexual harassment is bigger than her fear of losing any of her four daughters. **“Death is death, we all will die eventually, but the shame of rape is what we cannot handle,” she said sadly. Unfortunately, this is a common worry among Yemenis.** Fear that sexual harassment and rape could become a big problem if the state loses control and war breaks out is a growing concern for Yemeni men and women alike. Mothers have begun to exchange advice on how to protect their daughters from rape if the country slips into civil war. “I would kill my daughter with my bare hands if this happened,” said Alam’s husband, even though he acknowledged that the girl would be the victim in this situation. “At the very least we make sure she [the daughter] is covered from top to toe when she sleeps, since the shelling usually starts at night,” said Alam. Nuha Saleem, 23, is a resident of Hail area. She told the Yemen Times that her mother wakes up at night when she hears explosions and makes her cover her body to protect her from rape. BE PREPARED AND COVER UP Zainab Al-Ahdel, 23, lives in the Al-Hassaba neighborhood, where the warfare between the Hashid tribal confederation and the regime forces has been fierce. She described her own–and her mother’s–fears and thoughts when the area was shelled. Al-Ahdel said that she was in her pajamas, a pair of trousers and T-shirt, when the sound of explosions became closer and more frightening. “I felt the house shaking,” she said. Then her mother began shouting at her to wear her abayya (a traditional black dress that Yemeni women wear while out to cover their bodies). “We were scared, we could become victims of the random shelling and then become one of the daily deaths,” said Al-Ahdel. “When our fear reached its maximum, my mother began shouting at us to dress in our abayya–that was not at all logical for us.” In Sana’a, the capital of Yemen–where all women wear an abayya and scarf to cover their face and body–families fear their community’s reaction if the shelling forced their daughters to escape without being able to cover themselves appropriately. “I believe my mother wants us to make it a priority to cover our bodies the whole time in case we need to escape. But by saying so she makes me feel as though I have no value in life other than those society gave us,” said Reem Ali, a 25-year-old from Hail Street. She lives in an area where the regime forces have been fighting the defected First Armored Division. Hail Street it is also at the entrance to Change Square, where the anti-government protests and continued fighting have been taking place. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ali **Mourad**, 6-26-**2018**, "Saudi Arabia Relies on Mercenaries, Militias and the US to Win Wars," **MintPress News**, <https://www.mintpressnews.com/saudi-arabia-relies-on-mercenaries-militias-and-the-us-to-win-wars/244751/>

Later, Saudi Arabia’s military weakness would emerge in the 2009 “Saada War” against Yemen’s Houthi rebels. The latter were able to take control of several locations and towns inside the Saudi Kingdom, reportedly killing dozens of Saudi soldiers in the ensuing battles. **As for Saudi Arabia’s ongoing war on Yemen, launched in March of 2015, the inherent weakness of Saudi ground forces manifested itself clearly through the Gulf kingdom’s heavy reliance on foreign mercenaries to fight on behalf of its armed forces**, the failure to progress on fronts adjacent to the border, and the inability of Saudi forces to hold positions and villages, despite support from the Saudi Royal Air Force. Despite Saudi Arabia failures, it has yet to establish minimum requirements for its regular army, instead relying on a strategy of using outside agents, often armed militias with Wahhabi ideology, to complete missions. This factor, coupled with a failure to invest in domestic weapons production despite the availability of money and raw materials, has left the Saudi military heavily reliant on foreign aid to secure arms, making the country a hugely profitable market for the Western arms dealers. A history of reliance and dependence In March of 1929, the founder of the modern Saudi kingdom, Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, supported by the British Royal Air Force, was able to defeat the militias he previously relied on to secure territory, and ultimately, the throne. Al-Saud then set about constructing the formation of the forces that would eventually become the core of Saudi Arabia’s regular army following international recognition of his kingdom. He established the so-called “Directorate of Military Affairs” and — in 1939, seven years after Kingdom was established — the “Directorate of the Chief of Staff,” followed by the Saudi Ministry of Defense on November 10, 1943. During the famous meeting between President Roosevelt and Al-Saud in February of 1945, Roosevelt was asked to send a U.S. military mission to oversee the training of Saudi soldiers. In 1949, General Richard O’Keefe was appointed as the first commander of the U.S training mission, which did not officially start until four years later, after the two parties signed the so-called “Joint Military Cooperation Agreement” in 1951. The United States Military Training Mission (USMTM) officially began on June 27, 1953. It took up headquarters in Dhahran before moving to its current location in Riyadh’s so-called Iskan Village. “Our mission is to strengthen U.S national security through building the capabilities of the Saudi armed forces to defend our common interests in the Middle East,” reads the mission statement on its website. Members of Saudi Arabian's Marine Corps meet with Cpl. Robert Loeffler, the assistance maintenance chief at Marine Corps Training Center in Tampa, Fla., Dec. 5, 2014. Ian Ferro | U.S. Marine Corps Members of Saudi Arabia’s Marine Corps meet with Cpl. Robert Loeffler at the U.S. Marine Corps Training Center in Tampa, Fla., Dec. 5, 2014. Ian Ferro | U.S. Marine Corps On Feb. 8, 1977, the U.S and Saudi Arabia signed a new treaty governing the work of the training mission. Nestled in the third article of that treaty was a clause that left the number of American soldiers and officers that were to join the mission open and subject to change based on the perceived needs of the Saudi Ministry of Defense, the Chairman of the Saudi Staff, and the Pentagon. Article 5 of the treaty described the mission’s function: “USMTM is responsible for providing advisory services in Planning, Organization, Training, Logistics Support and Armament.” USMTM was also given the privilege of requesting arms shipments to the Saudis, within the so-called Military Sales Program. Under Article 6, U.S. military personnel were firmly entrenched into the structure and performance of Saudi Armed Forces. Under the provision, Washington committed its officers (even after retirement) to refrain from disclosing any details about the nature of the mission or of Saudi military secrets, leaving researchers with scant information. For their part, the Saudis promised to exempt members of the mission from customs duties and taxes; committed themselves to provide suitable housing for the members of the Mission; to bearing the costs of “transport, food, entertainment, furniture and medical services;” and to allowing U.S. military aircraft to land and take off from civilian and military airports without paying fees. Following the 1991 Gulf War and subsequent liberation of Kuwait, the Bush administration tried unsuccessfully to negotiate an amendment to the treaty that would have increased the U.S’ military footprint in Saudi Arabia. The negotiations failed, as the Saudi regime was in the midst of quelling public outcry over U.S military presence in the Kingdom. After 9/11, and the increase in tensions between Washington and Riyadh that accompanied it, the U.S. considered putting an end to the training mission, but ultimately decided to abide by the 1977 treaty. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. David D. **Kirkpatrick**, 12-28-**2018**, "On the Front Line of the Saudi War in Yemen: Child Soldiers From Darfur," **New York Times**, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/28/world/africa/saudi-sudan-yemen-child-fighters.html>

KHARTOUM, Sudan — The civil war in Darfur robbed Hager Shomo Ahmed of almost any hope. Raiders had stolen his family’s cattle, and a dozen years of bloodshed had left his parents destitute. Then, around the end of 2016, Saudi Arabia offered a lifeline: The kingdom would pay as much as $10,000 if Hager joined its forces fighting 1,200 miles away in Yemen. Hager, 14 at the time, could not find Yemen on a map, and his mother was appalled. He had survived one horrific civil war — how could his parents toss him into another? But the family overruled her. “Families know that the only way their lives will change is if their sons join the war and bring them back money,” Hager said in an interview last week in the capital, Khartoum, a few days after his 16th birthday. The United Nations has called [the war in Yemen](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/10/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-war-yemen.html?module=inline) the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. An intermittent blockade by the Saudis and their partners in the United Arab Emirates has pushed as many as 12 million people to the brink of starvation, killing some 85,000 children, according to aid groups. Led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudis say they are battling to rescue Yemen from a hostile faction backed by Iran. But to do it, the Saudis have used their vast oil wealth to outsource the war, mainly by hiring what Sudanese soldiers say are tens of thousands of desperate survivors of the conflict in Darfur to fight, many of them children. At any time for nearly four years as many as 14,000 Sudanese militiamen have been fighting in Yemen in tandem with the local militia aligned with the Saudis, according to several Sudanese fighters who have returned and Sudanese lawmakers who are attempting to track it. Hundreds, at least, have died there. Almost all the Sudanese fighters appear to come from the battle-scarred and impoverished region of Darfur, where some 300,000 people were killed and 1.2 million displaced during a dozen years of conflict over diminishing arable land and other scarce resources. Most belong to the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, a tribal militia previously known as the Janjaweed. They were blamed for the systematic rape of women and girls, indiscriminate killing and other war crimes during Darfur’s conflict, and veterans involved in those horrors are now leading their deployment to Yemen — albeit in a more formal and structured campaign. Some families are so eager for the money that they bribe militia officers to let their sons go fight. Many are ages 14 to 17. In interviews, five fighters who have returned from Yemen and another about to depart said that children made up at least 20 percent of their units. Two said children were more than 40 percent. To keep a safe distance from the battle lines, their Saudi or Emirati overseers commanded the Sudanese fighters almost exclusively by remote control, directing them to attack or retreat through radio headsets and GPS systems provided to the Sudanese officers in charge of each unit, the fighters all said. “The Saudis told us what to do through the telephones and devices,” said Mohamed Suleiman al-Fadil, a 28-year-old member of the Bani Hussein tribe who returned from Yemen at the end of last year. “They never fought with us.” “The Saudis would give us a phone call and then pull back,” agreed Ahmed, 25, a member of the Awlad Zeid tribe who fought near Hudaydah this year and who did not want his full name published for fear of government retaliation. “They treat the Sudanese like their firewood.” A few thousand Emiratis are based around the port of Aden. But the rest of the coalition the Saudis and Emiratis have assembled is united mainly by dependence on their financial aid. The Pakistani military, despite a parliamentary vote blocking its participation, has quietly dispatched 1,000 soldiers to bolster Saudi forces inside the kingdom. Jordan has deployed jets and military advisers. Both governments rely heavily on aid from the Gulf monarchies. (A report by a United Nations panel [suggested Eritrea](http://untribune.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Somalia-Eritrea-UN-Sanctions-Monitoring-Group-Report-Oct-2015.pdf) may have sent about 400 troops as well.) But in Sudan, which has played a far larger role, the Saudi money appears to flow directly to the fighters — or mercenaries, as critics call them. It benefits the economy only indirectly. “People are desperate. They are fighting in Yemen because they know that in Sudan they don’t have a future,” said Hafiz Ismail Mohamed, a former banker, economic consultant and critic of the government. “We are exporting soldiers to fight like they are a commodity we are exchanging for foreign currency.” A spokesman for the Saudi-led military coalition said in a statement that it was fighting to restore the internationally recognized government of Yemen and that coalition forces upheld all international humanitarian and human rights laws, including “abstaining from child recruitment.” “The allegations that there are children among the ranks of the Sudanese forces are fictitious and unfounded,” the spokesman, Turki al-Malki, said in the statement. Saudi officials said their soldiers have also died in Yemen, but declined to disclose how many. The Sudanese ground troops unquestionably have made it easier for the Saudis and Emiratis to extend the war. The Sudanese have insulated the Saudis and Emiratis from the casualties that might test the patience of families at home. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Tom O'Connor, 4-24-2018, "Russia and China “deepen” military ties as they challenge U.S. over Middle East," Newsweek, <https://www.newsweek.com/china-russia-military-reach-new-heights-together-agree-challenge-us-middle-899689>

**Russia and China have pledged to strengthen their bilateral military and political ties as part of a strategic cooperation that challenges U.S. interests, especially to Washington's stance on Middle East allies Syria and Iran.** Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu met Tuesday with Air Force General Xu Qiliang, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, and other regional military officials as part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in the eastern city of Qingdao. As increasingly powerful Russia and China build up their clout on the world stage, they sought a more united front against the U.S., which frequently challenged their rise. "Time changes everything," Shoigu said, according to the Russian Defense Ministry. "But, fortunately, it does not change our relations both personally between us and between our states, and the very close, friendly relations of the heads of our states serve as a guarantee of this." Shoigu praised "the privileged character of intergovernmental ties" evidenced by numerous meetings between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, both of whom secured enough national support to extend their terms last month. He said the two nations were continuing "their strategic course toward further boosting friendly and trustworthy ties in the defense sphere," calling this relationship "an important factor for maintaining global and regional security." [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Ilan Goldenberg  12-5-18 [Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for a New American Security’s (CNAS) Middle East Security Program and formerly served as the Iran Team Chief in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.] "Give Saudi Arabia a Take It or Leave It Deal," National Interest, [[https://nationalinterest.org/feature/give-saudi-arabia-take-it-or-leave-it-deal-37902]](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/give-saudi-arabia-take-it-or-leave-it-deal-37902%5D)

Walking away from supporting the Saudi-led war in Yemen and ending U.S. mid-air refueling might give Washington the moral high ground, but it will do little to stop the killing. The Saudis view the threat in Yemen as crucial to their interests, so U.S. pressure to end the war altogether will fall short of causing real change. To the Saudis, the threat of Iran establishing a foothold on their southern border is much more vital to their interests than procuring U.S. weapons. Rather than walk away from Yemen, they will buy Russian bombs or use less sophisticated weapons and tactics that will kill even more civilians. Americans will have washed our hands of a morally unacceptable situation, but civilian deaths and the threat of famine will actually get worse, and the world will look on and do nothing. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. **The Saudis want to invade Qatar – their economy is on a crash course because of cradle-to-grave welfare that’s funded by declining oil revenues, which would be solved by seizing Qatar’s $320 billion sovereign wealth fund**

Emmons, Alex. [Investigative journalist for The Intercept]. “Saudi Arabia Planned to Invade Qatar Last Summer. Rex Tillerson’s Efforts to Stop it May Have Cost Him His Job.” The Intercept, Aug 1, 2018. h ps://theintercept.com/2018/08/01/rex-tillersonqatar-saudi-uae/

**“There is little doubt that senior Qatari officials with whom I spoke were convinced — or at least acted as if they were convinced — that Saudi Arabia and the UAE had been planning a military a ack on their country that was halted as a result of U.S. intervention,”** Malley told The Intercept. Tillerson’s attempts to de-escalate the conflict in the Gulf diverged from the signals sent by the White House. Trump offered a full-throated public endorsement of the blockade, tweeting that “perhaps this will be the beginning of the end to the horror of terrorism.” As Tillerson called on the Gulf countries to lift their embargo, Trump told reporters that “the nation of Qatar, unfortunately, has historically been a funder of terrorism at a very high level.” According to one news report, Tillerson was frustrated with the White House for undercu ing him, and his aides suspected that the line in Trump’s prepared Rose Garden remarks had been wri en by UAE Ambassador Yousef Al Otaiba, a powerful D.C. player who maintained “almost constant phone and email contact” with Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner, according to Politico. “Senior Qatari officials with whom I spoke were convinced — or at least acted as if they were convinced — that Saudi Arabia and the UAE had been planning a military a ack on their country.” At the time, Kushner was personally handling much of the administration’s diplomacy with the Gulf states, and the leaders of Saudi Arabia and the UAE were choosing to go through him instead of the U.S. defense or intelligence establishments. Kushner communicated directly with the crown princes of Saudi Arabia and the UAE using the encrypted messaging service WhatsApp. Some Gulf watchers speculate that the incentive for the planned invasion may have been partly financial. **Saudi Arabia’s “cradle to grave” welfare system relies on high oil prices, which plummeted in 2014 and have not fully recovered. Since the current king came to power in 2015, the country has spent more than a third of its $737 billion in reserves, and last year, the Saudi economy entered a painful recession**. In response, the government has looked for ways to raise money, including by selling shares in the state-owned oil company, Saudi Aramco. “It’s unsustainable,” said Bruce Riedel, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute and 30-year CIA officer, in a lecture last November. “In the three years since [King Salman] ascended to the throne, one third of Saudi Arabia’s reserves have already been spent. You don’t need to have an MBA from the Wharton school to figure out what that means six years from now.” **If the Saudis had succeeded in seizing Doha, they would potentially have been able to gain access to the country’s $320 billion sovereign wealth fund.** In November of last year, months after the plan collapsed, the Saudi crown prince rounded up and detained dozens of his relatives in the Ri -Carlton Riyadh, forcing them to sign over billions in privately held assets. The government justified the detentions as a corruption crackdown, but it allowed the state to recoup billions in assets for government use. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. **Saudis also have historical and ideological reasons to eliminate Qatar – Qatari support for the Arab Spring and Muslim Brotherhood means the Saudis see them as an existential threat that must be eliminated**

Dickey, Christopher. [A veteran foreign correspondent, is The Daily Beast’s World

News Editor. He is the author of seven books]. “Where Does the Saudi-Qatar Death MatchLeaveTrump’sTroops?”. DailyBeast, Jun5, 2017. h ps://www.thedailybeast.com/wheredoes-the-saudi-qatar-death-match-leave-trumps-troops

In fact, little **Qatar, which looks like a polyp on the eastern edge of the Arabian peninsula, has long been a nuisance that the Saudis wished they could excise.** Historically they’ve seen the Qatari people as Wahhabis like themselves who somehow went astray, and their rulers as impudent upstarts. **The irritation intensified greatly after Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani overthrew his father in 1995 and began to build his own empire out of “blowing sand and natural gas, Allah and ambition,”** as we wrote some years ago. By the time he handed the reins of power to his son, Sheikh Tamim, in 2013, li le Qatar’s per capita income was well over $100,000 a year, the highest on earth. “The future of Qatar is soft power,” its former ambassador to Paris liked to say. The country used skilled diplomacy, along with all that money from the natural gas boom, to make itself a surprising new presence on the world stage—one that its rulers hoped would be too well known for the Saudis to smash or absorb. It created the Al Jazeera international television network in the 1990s, which became hugely popular and powerful as it brought to the region for the first time hard hitting, largely independent news coverage in Arabic and with an Arab perspective. **It drove the Saudis crazy**—and infuriated the George W. Bush administration, as well, which branded it a mouthpiece for Osama bin Laden. The Qataris asserted their independence from Riyadh by developing good relations with all the other major players in the region, including with Iran, but also, commercially, with Israel. Members of the Qatari royal family became important patrons of education (Georgetown University and Texas A&M are two of several American institutions with branches there). Sheikha Mayassa, the young sister of the current ruler, quickly became one of the most powerful figures in the international art world. They bought up sports teams, including the Paris Saint-Germain soccer club; they purchased Harrod’s department store in London; and they used their money behind the scenes to facilitate hostage releases in the region. **The list of largesse goes on and on. But during the uprisings that swept through North Africa and the Middle East in 2011— the so-called Arab Spring—Qatar overplayed its hand, and the Saudi royals began to see it not just as an annoyance, but as a potential threat to their existence**. Qatar had always had close ties to the international Muslim Brotherhood, but its power had been largely circumscribed, or crushed, by the region’s dictators. Now they were in trouble, and the Brotherhood moved to exploit the situation, either directly or through affiliated groups—and with Qatar’s backing. Al Jazeera’s Arabic service started to look like li le more than a propaganda organ for the Islamists, and by the time Egypt, the most populous country in the Arab world, elected the Brotherhood candidate as its president— again, heavily subsidized by Qatar—**the Saudis started building a counteroffensive**. In 2013, the former Egyptian military a aché in Saudi Arabia, who had risen to be commander of Egypt’s armed forces, exploited popular discontent to depose President Mohammed Morsi and his Brotherhood-dominated government. General Abdel Fa ah al-Sisi declared the Islamist organization “terrorist,” and set out to crush it using every means at his disposal, from massacres to mass imprisonment. Qatar’s financial support for Egypt disappeared overnight, and instantly was replaced by Saudi money. In Syria, the situation grew more complicated, and with devastating effects. Traditionally, the most ruthless and well organized opponent of the Assad dynasty was the Syrian branch of the Brotherhood. Decimated by an infamous massacre in Hama in 1982, it had managed to rebuild itself abroad, in Europe as well as in Qatar. **And when the Arab Spring came along, the Brotherhood moved to assert its leadership in Syria as it had in Egypt. That presented a big problem for Saudi Arabia.** Riyadh wanted Bashar Assad’s regime removed, because Assad is an ally and a client of the hated Iranian mullahs. But it did not want the Brotherhood, backed by Qatar, to come to power. The internecine intrigues that resulted were part of the reason the Syrian opposition found it virtually impossible to organize a political front, while on the ba lefield Saudi Arabia and Qatar funded competing groups whose factions became hard to distinguish from al Qaeda and the competing Islamic State if, indeed, they could be distinguished at all. Unrest in the little island nation of Bahrain in 2011 led to intervention by the Saudi National Guard, which simply drove across the causeway to impose order on a restive Shia population ruled by a Sunni monarch. It’s probably also worth noting that Bahrain and Qatar have been rival emirates since they competed for pearl fisheries in the days before oil and gas were discovered. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Charlie Buckle, 12-3-2018, "Qatar QUITS OPEC after 57 years in HUGE SWIPE at Saudi Arabia as Middle East FURY rises," Express.co.uk, https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1053564/Qatar-vs-Saudi-Arabia-World-War-3-news-oil-Middle-East-latest

Qatar said today it was quitting OPEC from January to focus on its gas ambitions, taking a swipe at the group's de facto leader Saudi Arabia and marring efforts to show unity before this week's meeting of exporters to tackle an oil price slide. Doha, one of OPEC's smallest oil producers but the world's biggest liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporter, is embroiled in a protracted diplomatic row with Saudi Arabia and some other Arab states. Qatar said its decision was not driven by politics but in an apparent swipe at Riyadh, Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad al-Kaabi said: "We are not saying we are going to get out of the oil business but it is controlled by an organisation managed by a country." He did not name the nation. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. **The only thing that’s stopping a Saudi invasion is their relationship with the US – absent fears over damaging the alliance, they would have acted on their invasion plan and taken the capital**

Emmons, Alex. [Investigative journalist for The Intercept]. “Saudi Arabia Planned to Invade Qatar Last Summer. Rex Tillerson’s Efforts to Stop it May Have Cost Him His Job.” The Intercept, Aug 1, 2018. h ps://theintercept.com/2018/08/01/rex-tillersonqatar-saudi-uae/

The Intercept has learned of a previously unreported episode that stoked the UAE and Saudi Arabia’s anger at Tillerson and that may have played a key role in his removal**. In the summer of 2017, several months before the Gulf allies started pushing for his ouster, Tillerson intervened to stop a secret Saudi-led, UAE-backed plan to invade and essentially conquer Qatar**, according to one current member of the U.S. intelligence community and two former State Department officials, all of whom declined to be named, citing the sensitivity of the ma er. **In the days and weeks after Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Bahrain cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and closed down their land, sea, and air borders with the country, Tillerson made a series of phone calls urging Saudi officials not to take military action against the country.** The flurry of calls in June 2017 has been reported, but State Department and press accounts at the time described them as part of a broad-strokes effort to resolve tensions in the Gulf, not as an a empt by Tillerson to avert a Saudi-led military operation. Tillerson made a series of phone calls urging Saudi officials not to take military action against Qatar. In the calls, **Tillerson, who dealt extensively with the Qatari government as the CEO of Exxon Mobil, urged Saudi King Salman, then-Deputy Crown PrinceMohammed bin Salman, and Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir not to a ack Qatar or otherwise escalate hostilities**, the sources told The Intercept. Tillerson also encouraged Defense Secretary Jim Ma is to call his counterparts in Saudi Arabia to explain the dangers of such an invasion. Al Udeid Air Base near Doha, Qatar’s capital city, is the forward headquarters of U.S. Central Command and home to some 10,000 American troops. **Pressure from Tillerson caused Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto ruler of the country, to back down, concerned that the invasion would damage Saudi Arabia’s long-term relationship with the U.S.** But Tillerson’s intervention enraged Mohammed bin Zayed, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi and effective ruler of that country, according to the U.S. intelligence official and a source close to the Emirati royal family, who declined to be identified, citing concerns about his safety. Later that June, Mohammed bin Salman would be named crown prince, leapfrogging over his cousin to become next in line for the throne after his elderly father. His ascension signaled his growing influence over the kingdom’s affairs. Qatari intelligence agents working inside Saudi Arabia discovered the plan in the early summer of 2017, according to the U.S. intelligence official. Tillerson acted after the Qatari government notified him and the U.S. embassy in Doha. Several months later, intelligence reporting by the U.S. and U.K. confirmed the existence of the plan. **The plan, which was largely devised by the Saudi and UAE crown princes and was likely some weeks away from being implemented, involved Saudi ground troops crossing the land border into Qatar, and, with military support from the UAE, advancing roughly 70 miles toward Doha.** Circumventing the U.S. air base, Saudi forces would then seize the capital. On June 20, State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert told reporters that Tillerson had “more than 20 calls and meetings with Gulf and other regional and intermediate actors,” including three phone calls and two meetings with Jubeir. “The more time goes by, the more doubt is raised about the actions taken by Saudi Arabia and the UAE,” she said. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. **No arms sales means no relationship with the Saudis**

Hill, Evan. [Writer for BuzzFeed News]. “Our Special Relationship With Saudi Arabia Needs To End”. BuzzFeed News, Oct 12, 2018. h ps://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ evanhill/end-special-relationship-with-saudi-arabia-khashoggi

**If this special relationship is going to end, the breakup needs to be orchestrated by Congress**, where the rising progressive movement is likely to have more power than ever after this November. The Senate has already triggered an investigation into Khashoggi’s disappearance under the Global Magnitsky Act, which could lead to sanctions at the highest level of the Saudi regime — an important first step, but the new Congress that will sit in January can and should do more. **We should go beyond the informal holds individual senators have placed on weapons transfers to the kingdom and end the arms sales regime entirely.** [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. **Undermining military aid to Saudi Arabia collapses the overall US-Saudi alliance and creates multiple scenarios for Mideast instability**

James **Phillips 10-19-2018** Senior Research Fellow, The Heritage Foundation Full Investigation Needed Before U.S. Takes Action on the Khashoggi Crisis https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/full-investigation-needed-us-takes-action-the-khashoggi-crisis

The U.S. Response The Trump administration must make it clear to the Saudis that a failure to come clean on the Khashoggi affair could severely undermine Saudi-American ties. It should disabuse Riyadh of any notion that the White House is willing or able to protect Saudi Arabia from congressionally-imposed sanctions, if the Saudis continue to stonewall international efforts to get to the bottom of the matter. In this context, Thursday’s announcement that Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin had cancelled his participation in next week’s Saudi investment summit is an appropriate and necessary signal. The U.S. cannot turn a blind eye to state-sponsored murder or allow it to pass without consequences. As a matter of principle, Washington should support free speech, a free press, and respect for the rule of law. It cannot give Saudi Arabia a free pass. If guilt is established, then it must hold the Saudis accountable. There must be real consequences for such a horrific act. Saudi officials found responsible for criminal acts should be removed from their positions and prosecuted. But until guilt has been established through a full investigation, it would be premature for U.S. officials to impose punitive measures against Saudi Arabia. Washington should not overreact by **torpedoing the alliance**, which could **trigger even more dangerous actions by Saudi Arabia** and play into the hands of U.S. adversaries, such as Iran, Russia, and China. If proven to have occurred, it is likely the murder of Khashoggi was motivated by a sense of insecurity and vulnerability. Washington must take care that its response does not exacerbate that insecurity, leading Riyadh to take further steps that undermine American interests. In any event, the U.S. should try to insulate vital bilateral security cooperation from the fallout of the Khashoggi affair. The worst possible outcome would be a rush to judgement which **destroys an important long-term partnership**, pushes Saudi Arabia into the **arms of Russia or China,** and **undermines efforts** to **contain Iran**, **defeat ISIS**, and stabilize the **volatile Middle East.** [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. **Only Qatar’s wide range of relationships with actors across the spectrum can create a political solution to the Syria civil war**

Dickey, Christopher. [A veteran foreign correspondent, is The Daily Beast’s World News Editor. He is the author of seven books]. “Where Does the Saudi-Qatar Death MatchLeaveTrump’sTroops?”. DailyBeast, Jun5, 2017. h ps://www.thedailybeast.com /where-does-the-saudi-qatar-death-match-leave-trumps-troops

**Yet, as American diplomats, spies, and military leaders have understood for a long time, as slippery as the Qataris might be, they could also be useful even on the fractured Syrian battlefield**. In his “posture statement” published just three months ago, CENTCOM chief Gen. Joseph Vogel wrote, **“In Syria, given their relationships with a wide range of actors, including more moderate elements, the Qataris are well-positioned to play an influential role in facilitating a political resolution to the conflict.”** Vogel called **Qatar “a key and critical partner in the region.”** But whether and how the Trump administration will defend it from Saudi-led pressure is now an open question. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. **Qatar is key to solving Syria – they have huge diplomatic clout with all the major actors and can act as a mediator and use their sovereign wealth fund to create financial incentives to end the war – obviously none of that is possible if the country ceases to exist due to Saudi invasion and their wealth fund gets seized**

Pelayo, Joze. [research and analysis graduate trainee at the Arab Center Washington DC, a think-tank focused on furthering the understanding of the Middle East in the United States, and on analyzing the impacts of U.S. foreign policy in the region. Master’s from the University of Oregon’s International Studies & Development Master’s program]. “Doha’s Diplomatic Potential in Syria”. International Policy Digest, Apr 19,

2018. h ps://intpolicydigest.org/2018/04/19/doha-s-diplomatic-potential-in-syria/

As Syria enters a new phase that borderlines larger conflict with the coordination of forces between the US, France, the UK, and reportedly, Israel too, it is important to bring into the narrative a new player for diplomatic efforts. **Additionally, given the developments in Syria with Russia and other unaligned factions (Iran, Hezbollah, among others), Qatar long-standing diplomatic ability to maintain close relations with all major powers – despite their different stances—could become a great political tool, in conjunct with its SWF (Sovereign Wealth Fund), to influence a se lement in Syria and use its (envied) prominence among its neighbors to bring about an agreement on regional rules of governance and post-conflict reconstruction.** Especially as President Trumps is keenly interested in creating an indigenous Arab force of aligned partners in the Gulf to take over for the US. In this arrangement, Gulf countries would be responsible for funding and se ing up more troops after the US defeats Daesh, as it was mentioned by Trump on Friday 13th when he decided to strike Syria: “America does not seek an indefinite presence in Syria. It’s a troubled place. We will try to make it be er. But it’s a troubled place.” It is an initiative that it is taking force within the White House especially. However, as there is a general concern on Russia’s strategy after the US leaves (especially among Sunni Gulf States), there’s a diplomatic heavyweight that has the potential to apply leverage to both sides and prevent the region from being dominated by hostile forces. Qatar, even after the most recent blockade imposed by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE, seems to be standing up for itself, accelerating measures that will improve international trade routes and economic diversification. Remarkably, the role of Qatar in this new indigenous Arab force can become extremely strategic for the US and Russia as a vital and wealthy intermediary that could be playing a more effective role on the ground. Moreover, Al Jazeera’ vital role as a Doha-based regional Arab News network has certainly enhanced Qatar’s emergence as an important regional player, whose role in bringing and balancing promising relations with ideologically different groups portray an ability and willingness to engage further in constructive and all-inclusive settlements to regional crises such as the one in Syria. Russian-Qatari Ties Among those partners that have different ideological objectives in regional crises is Russia, who along with Qatar, is among the world’s top largest producers of natural gas. Which means that Qatar tends to be seen as an alternative provider of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean and other countries along the Russian periphery. Therefore, it has always been intheinterestsofRussiatofindapartnerinQatarandacttogether(insteadofseparately) to control the natural gas market. Additionally, given Al-Jazeera’s well-gained respect in the Arab World, Russia is certainly interested in keeping Qatari and Russian relations on a positive trajectory, hoping that this will motivate the network to portray good coverage of Russian influence in the region. This is something that will be very unlikely if relations between the two countries are tense. Yet, in light of Russia growing influence as a key player in the region, it is also in the interest of Qatar to have good relations with Russia, and remain a diplomatic heavyweight that has always “a empt to maximize its number of friends and minimize its number of enemies.” At this point there is plenty of evidence to back this allegation, especially when Qatar remains an important US ally, but also maintains a favorable public opinion in the Arab World, and has substantial relations with Russia and Iran. Moreover, Qatar’s investment in the Russian economy has been increasing significantly in recent years. Qatar’s investments in Russia go up to $2.5 billion, in addition to $500 million in the Russian bank VTB. In the gas realm, Qatar now owns around 40% of the Russian Gas Giant Rosneft, which is about $11.3 billion, making the countries’ ties firmer and helping solidify the partnership between both nations in regards to Syria, as it was the case of Qatar’s inclusion in the Astana talks. Therefore, the deal between Rosneft and Doha made sure that there was li le rivalry between both countries to control the gas market. Instead, the deal’s arrangements assisted in mobilizing an inclination to advance their diverse strategies and diplomatic measures in regard to Syria. Both sides have indeed different interests in Syria, yet, the implications of the global gas market, Russia neorealist approach (states that power is the most important factor in international relations) in international affairs, and **Qatar’s diplomacy have facilitated significantly the reaching of an understanding between both parties**. Doha and Moscow’s relations are expected to keep growing, and recent examples of Russian and Qatari cooperation show a commitment to find a solution to the Syrian’s people suffering and continue to facilitate solutions to other regional conflicts. Qatar understands Russia’s major role in the region and has remained focused on the fact that fighting violent terrorism continues to be a pragmatic imperative to end regional crises. In this regard, Al-Thani’s remarks in 2016 during his first official visit to Russia portray a priority on addressing grievances that lead to violent extremist: “Fighting its (terrorism’s) emergence and causes are more important because if we did not fight such ma ers it will persist and we will not be able to end it permanently.” (Freedom House/Flickr) Certainly, ties between the Kremlin and Doha have been strengthened by the on-going blockade of the Quartet on Qatar. Most recently, in March 2018, Moscow and Doha conducted a presidential meeting in Moscow to reinforce their bilateral economic cooperation, and discuss the worsening situation in Syria. However, things can always go wrong, and there are no historical precedents of trust between Russia and Qatar, but as the US keeps retreating from international world politics, Russia remains keen on becoming the chief commander of Eurasian affairs. However, despite risks, both leaders remain keenly positive that their ties will be reinforced thanks to on-going economic and humanitarian agreements. Where is the US in all this? Despite Russia’s willingness to apply a greater role in international politics, the US remains one of Qatar’s main partners, especially in regard to security. Qatar and Washington hold a similar stance in Syria and collaborate in different spheres to tackle the issue of international violent extremism. Additionally, the largest US military base, the Al Udeid Air Base, remains in Qatar, and it is home to the US Central Command, which houses 10,000 US military personnel from the US, UK and other nations, and has been essential in the fight against Daesh. It appears to be then that Doha’s diplomatic skills came to stay, as the blockade imposed has just helped Qatar boost its relationship with the US, and maintain an economic trade relationship of more than $125 billion, a figure that is expected to double in coming years. In the most recent meeting between Trump and the Qatari Emir Al Thani last week, both leaders agreed on the fact that there is a strong agreement in working together in regard to Syria and tackling other regional crises, such as the latest chemical a ack by the Assad regime. **Significantly, Qatar has maintained contact with both the US and Russia in an effort to bring about a solution to the Syrian crisis. Most recently, Qatar has shown interest in participating in post-reconstruction efforts, where a balanced alliance with both players would guarantee that the Emirate can have a participatory and financially authoritative role in post-conflict reconstruction. Qatar’s Sovereign Wealth Fund as Leverage in Syria and Elsewhere Qatar’s growing economic diversification and international influence have come to push back the Saudi-led blockade**. The Quartet countries have accused Qatar of “terrorism,” allegations that have been repeatedly denied by Qatar. In reality, the blockade seems to have boosted Qatar’s already impressive diplomatic capabilities, and it has helped deepen its ties with Iran, Russia, the US, and Turkey. **Additionally, the Qatari economy continues to have a $335 billion sovereign wealth fund and has invested more than $30 billion in stocks and other assets.** [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. **Any chance of solving Syria outweighs – the death toll is continually increasing and it’s so high that people have literally stopped counting**

Specia, Megan. [Reporter for the New York Times]. “How Syria’s Death Toll Is Lost in the Fog of War”. New York Times, Apr 13, 2018. h ps://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/

world/middleeast/syria-death-toll.html

**In seven years, the casualties of Syria’s civil war have grown from the first handful of protesters shot by government forces to hundreds of thousands of dead**. **But as the war has dragged on, growing more diffuse and complex, many international monitoring groups have essentially stopped counting. Even the United Nations, which released regular reports on the death toll during the first years of the war, gave its last estimate in 2016 — when it relied on 2014 data, in part — and said that it was virtually impossible to verify how many had died. At that time, a United Nations official said 400,000 people had been killed.** But so many of the biggest moments of the war have happened since then. In the past two years, the government of President Bashar al-Assad, with Russia’s help, laid siege to residential areas of Aleppo, once the country’s second-largest city, and several other areas controlled by opposition groups, leveling entire neighborhoods. Last weekend, dozens of people died in a suspected chemical a ack on a Damascus suburb, prompting the United States, Britain and France to launch retaliatory strikes against Syrian targets early Saturday. In addition, American-led forces have bombed the Islamic State in large patches of eastern Syria, in strikes believed to have left thousands dead. And dozens of armed groups, including fighters backed by Iran, have continued to clash, creating a humanitarian catastrophe that the world is struggling to measure. Historically, these numbers ma er, experts say, because they can have a direct impact on policy, accountability and a global sense of urgency. The legacy of the Holocaust has become inextricably linked with the figure of six million Jews killed in Europe. The staggering death toll of the Rwandan genocide — one million Tutsis killed in 100 days — is seared into the framework of that nation’s reconciliation process. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. No Author, 6-11-**2018**, "Silent War: How Rape Became a Weapon in Syria," **Aljazeera**, <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/witness/2018/06/silent-war-rape-weapon-syria-180611071447939.html>

"I didn't know what was happening to me except that I was screaming and I was in pain. I felt like my thoughts no longer belonged to my body and my body no longer to my soul. My soul was elsewhere and my body was in the hands of the monsters." **In Silent War, Syrian women break the taboo surrounding rape to speak openly about the abuse they endured at the hands of pro-regime militias and government soldiers**. In basements, prisons and their own homes, they were repeatedly raped for "crimes" such as participating in peaceful demonstrations or to send a message to their husbands, fathers and brothers. "Every free citizen or any citizen engaged in the revolution has had one of the women of his family sent to detention ... His sister, his daughter, his wife. The message is, 'Either you surrender or we keep your wife or your daughter'. The regime used rape to humiliate the Syrian men," explains one woman who served in the army of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for eight years before defecting. They started to rape women at roadblocks, at home in front of their husbands, their children …. **At some point, the regime took a new approach. It recorded videos of the rapes of women in detention and sent them to the fighters. Defector, Syrian army She describes the evolution of the use of rape as a weapon of war during the Syrian conflict, explaining how something that initially took place only inside prisons became more widespread and systematic.** "They started to rape women at roadblocks, at home in front of their husbands, their children …. At some point, the regime took a new approach. It recorded videos of the rapes of women in detention and sent them to the fighters." Soldiers were, in turn, encouraged to film themselves raping women so that the videos could be sent to the women's families. It is a topic filmmaker Manon Loizeau has long wanted to tackle. "Since I made my first film in Homs in 2011, I have thought about how to make a film about the unnameable," she says. "The family I was staying with took me to a house where there lived a woman who had just been released from the torture cells of Bashar al-Assad. She stood pale and frail by the door, then left without saying a word, too afraid to speak. For all those years, I wondered how to tell this story." Through their harrowing personal testimonies, the women in Silent War tell not only the story of what takes place in these cells but of what happens when they leave them, returning to a society that stigmatises, rejects and punishes them for being raped, sometimes to the point of death. "The regime raped her and society rejects her. If it happens to you, then you must die. But it happened to me and I did not die. What can I do?" asks one woman. "We are trapped between traditions on one side and the regime on the other. And we die caught in between." At first, rape as a weapon of war in Syria was committed only inside prisons, but it became more widespread and systematic [Laurent Stoop/Al Jazeera] Source: Al Jazeera Tell us what you think Share via FacebookShare via TwitterShare via RedditPrintSend Feedback Sign up for our Newsletter RELATED Syria war: Speaking out on 'sadistic' government jails Syria war: Speaking out on 'sadistic' government jails Hanada al-Refai tells Al Jazeera about being tortured, losing her brother, and her campaign to free political prisoners. Human Rights, War & Conflict, Middle East, Syria's War To truly address sexual violence within the military, comprehensive changes must be implemented, writes Fatima [Reuters] Across the world, militaries have a sexual violence problem From Pakistan to the US, it is still very difficult for military women to speak of sexual assault and seek justice. Women's Rights, Pakistan, Military, Sexual assault Commenting has been disabled. To find out more, click here. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)