

Origin of Saudi-Qatar spat

What lies in the future



SAEED NAQVI

THE western media, which was shy of mentioning the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) as a threat to the Saudi regime, has now

brought the Ayatollahs to power in Tehran in 1979 coincided more or less with the siege of the Mecca Mosque by Juhayman al-Otaybi and hundreds of his supporters, demanding the overthrow of the House of Saud and an end to the "anti Islamic" monarchy in Saudi Arabia.

Taking advantage of these eruptions, the oil bearing Eastern province of Saudi Arabia, the Shia dominated Qatif and al Hasa region rose in rebellion in 1979 against Riyadh's anti Shia

about Qatif and Bahrain where they sent their troops to quell the Arab Spring. Those issues could possibly invite a Human Rights scrutiny. Focus on Iran, Hezbollah, Alawite power in Syria is much more beneficial because this axis invokes Israel's deepest anxieties. The western media is so much more sympathetic for this reason. If the past is any guide, Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times* should be on his way to Riyadh for yet another exclusive interview with the new Crown Prince.

of Saud had a declared reason: Saudis had accorded hospitality to the troops of the "infidel US". Qatar took advantage of the situation and hosted CENTCOM.

Then came another affront to Saudi pride: *Al Jazeera TV*. When the BBC shut down its Arabic service, trained TV hands became available in the market. At the time the BBC was also in search of funds for its World Service TV. BBC had been left behind by CNN which stole the limelight during Operation

Arabic. As BBC retirees like Sir David Frost became available, *Al Jazeera English* made rapid recruitments.

At a time when Osama bin Laden was a news source, *Al Jazeera* became the channel for all bin Laden interviews and audio statements. Coverage by BBC, CNN, *Fox News* of all the 9/11 wars acquired a uniformity which strained credibility. *Al Jazeera* lived up proceedings by bringing into focus "the other" perspective as well. This was not "cricket" for the authors of the New World Order. Scholars like the late Fouad Ajami, supportive of George W. Bush's invasion of Iran and Afghanistan, wrote academic papers on *Al Jazeera's* perfidy. Allied aircraft even bombed the channel's offices in Kabul and Baghdad. All of this boosted *Al Jazeera's* viewership sky high.

The late Saudi King Abdullah, much the most supple ruler in recent decades, mended fences with Qatar. We have to be together, otherwise the "spring" will blow away the region's monarchies, he argued.

Moreover, CNN, BBC propaganda was not being believed in the region during the Syrian and Libyan operations. *Al Jazeera's* priceless credibility was commandeered. Qatar succumbed. Both the operations, Syria and Libya have been a disaster from every angle. Additionally they have taken a toll on *Al Jazeera's* credibility.

The present spat however has the potential of restoring *Al Jazeera's* credibility should deft editorial hands take up the anti-establishment position which was *Al Jazeera's* forte and which it surrendered under the personal pressure of the late Saudi king.

The larger game now must impinge on Qatar, Iran and Russian gas reserves, the energy of the future. To keep the cohesion of this triangle or to break it must be the preoccupation of regional combatants now and in the foreseeable future.

The writer is a senior Indian journalist, television commentator and interviewer.



SOURCE: BREAKINGNEWS.CO.ID

That Qatar has relations with Iran is disliked in Riyadh, of course, but what causes much deeper anxieties is the material and moral support Qatar can provide to MB which represents all the tendencies that the Otaybi rebellion in 1979 represented.

started describing it as a threat to Riyadh quite as potent as Shia Islam. This change is a major fall-out from the Saudi-Qatari spat.

Qatar for quite some time has patronised the Muslim Brothers, a powerful grassroots force in Egypt and Turkey. It is sufficiently powerful to keep King Abdullah of Jordan on sixes and sevens. Also, one must not forget the Muslim Brotherhood uprising in Hama, northwest Syria, in 1982, which Bashar al Assad's father, Hafez al Assad quelled with such brute power that the death toll exceeded 10,000. In 2011 when Tayyip Erdogan took a more benign interest in Syrian affairs his advice to Assad was straightforward: accommodate the MB in the establishment.

Unbridled MB power is anathema to both: Israelis and Saudis. That is why Saudis placed USD 8 billion in Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's hand when he ousted the MB's Mohamed Morsi. Today, Sisi's job is on the line.

Israel has nightmares because it fears the MB weed in Egypt and elsewhere will link up with Hamas, another strong MB outfit. When the western media, protective of Israeli interests, list the "Shia axis" inimical to the Jewish state — Iran, Hezbollah, Syria — it mentions Hamas in the same breath without the essential qualification: Hamas is True Blue Sunni. The link up with Iran is political or ideological not religious.

Saudi anxieties are more profound. Remember, from January 1980, the Saudi began to play down the monarchy and focus more on the King's role as the "keeper of the holy shrines at Mecca and Medina." This show of humility followed two events, one after the other, which shook the house of Saud.

The Iranian revolution which

sectarian bias and arbitrary arrests. The uprising lasted a week. Over 100 died in police action.

This regional uprising magnified itself a 100 fold in Saudi eyes because of the emergence of the Ayatollahs in Iran. This also became the source of anxiety to Bahrain where 70 per cent of the population is Shia and locked in a tussle for more rights from the Sunni rulers — the House of Khalifas.

While pointing at the Shia menace, Saudis seldom express their worries

That Qatar has relations with Iran is disliked in Riyadh, of course, but what causes much deeper anxieties is the material and moral support Qatar can provide to MB which represents all the tendencies that the Otaybi rebellion in 1979 represented.

Riyadh-Doha differences go back to the days when the aging Emir, was ousted by his son, Hamad bin Khalifa. The ousted Emir's attempted counter coup failed but it had Saudi support.

Osama bin Laden's war on the house

Desert Storm in 1992.

Saudi King Fahd's cousin, Khalid bin Faisal al Saud's Orbit Communications hired the BBC hands and launched a channel. But it lasted no more than 18 months because editorial freedom clashed with Saudi's abiding restrictions on issues anchored to Sharia. Riyadh would not allow the new channel to telecast a documentary on public "beheadings".

That is when Qatar moved into the breach and launched *Al Jazeera*, first in

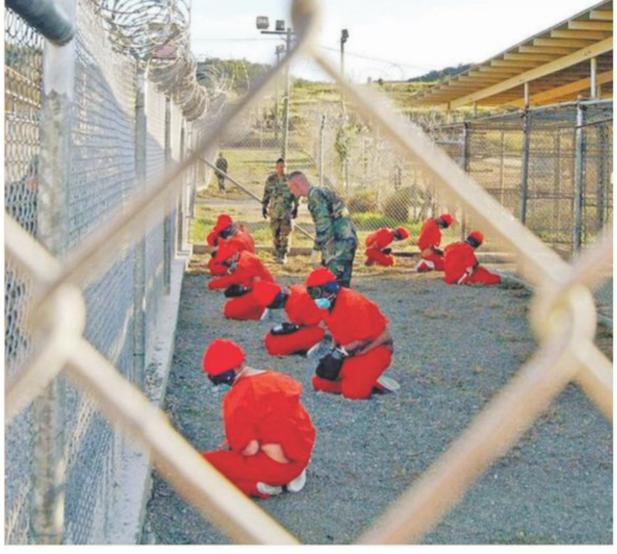
Torture poisons societies from within

HANIF HASSAN ALI AL QASSIM

"You can chain me, you can torture me, you can even destroy this body, but you will never imprison my mind."

THESE were the words of Mahatma Gandhi who was jailed 13 times for his non-violent and peaceful resistance against British colonial rule in India. Torture was also a common practice at the Robben Island prison camp where the former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela spent 18 years of his life. One would assume that this shameful practice would belong to the past. Nonetheless, it is still being practiced in more than 100 countries and is being re-legitimised in others.

The '2017 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture' on June 26 commemorates the numerous victims of torture globally. It also marks the entry into force of the "1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment" that has been ratified by 162 Member States of the United Nations (UN). This Convention prohibits the use of torture by calling upon States to implement "effective legislative,



Detainees in orange jumpsuits sit in a holding area under the watchful eyes of military police at Camp X-Ray inside Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, during their processing into the temporary detention facility on January 11, 2002.

SOURCE: REUTERS

administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction."

Torture does not take place in public. It occurs primarily in detention and in prison centres

where detainees and prisoners experience cruelty and degrading treatment. Torture and prison abuse are well documented. The scandal that emerged following the Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse in March 2003 reminded the world that torture is still a common practice. At the Guantanamo Bay prison camp in Cuba, it was revealed that detainees were being tortured for lengthy periods of time. Instances of physical and mental forms of torture were also denounced by the UN.

Another form of torture that has been condemned by civil rights groups and the UN is the treatment of migrants and refugees in asylum centres. Certain countries have been accused of implementing detention policies that violate the stipulations set forth in the Convention against Torture. The UN Special Rapporteur Juan Mendez issued a report in 2015 in which he cautioned against the inhuman and degrading practices inflicted on migrants and refugees at detention centres. This clearly contradicts Article 5 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulating: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or

punishment." It remains a paradox that refugees and migrants are subjugated to various forms of torture in certain host countries as they flee from similar types of inhuman practices in their countries of origin.

The horrific use of torture in the Middle East and in Northern Africa by violent extremist groups is another cause of concern. The images of civilians being tortured and mutilated by terrorists constitute the worst forms of human cruelty. Reports of women, children and men being subjugated to different forms of inhuman and degrading treatment including rape, summary executions and beheadings of captives are reminiscent of the Dark Ages.

In order to eliminate torture, it is important to ensure the universal ratification of the Convention of Torture. Member States of the UN should also ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture allowing for "regular visits to places of detention" to unveil the use of torture at prisons and detention centres. It is important that unannounced inspections are made by monitoring bodies on a regular basis to unveil the use of torture at different locations and to serve as a

deterrent. Effective laws and policies are key to ensuring the creation of preventative mechanisms enabling governments to comply with international norms and procedures.

It is likewise important that politicians and world leaders refrain from issuing statements justifying the use of torture under special circumstances. Statements justifying the use of torture for interrogation purposes do not serve the cause of human rights, justice and rule of law. It does not belong in our modern societies and cannot be justified in any form whatsoever. The use of torture poisons our mindsets and pollutes democracy. Governments should not turn a blind eye to torture. It needs to be condemned at the highest level by world leaders. By justifying the use of torture, a culture of impunity will emerge. Victims of torture deserve justice and reparations for crimes inflicted upon them. Torture knows no borders. It is an evil that needs to be eliminated in all of its forms as it constitutes the worst form of human cruelty.

The writer is Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue.

A WORD A DAY

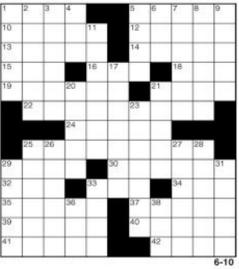


DUENDE
SPANISH

The ability to attract others through personal magnetism and charm; a quality of passion and inspiration

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ACROSS | 33 Nittany Lions' sch. | 7 Mexico's Juarez |
| 1 Cheer start | 34 Lumberman's tool | 8 Real estate account |
| 5 Judicial garb | 35 Give an address | 9 Exorbitant |
| 10 Some signs | 37 Long stories | 11 Become serious |
| 12 Namely, in Latin | 39 Kind of pool | 17 Futile |
| 13 Boat's load | 40 Brief job | 20 "Beat it!" |
| 14 Biden's successor | 41 Kick off | 21 Boston entree |
| 15 Back | 42 Forest growth | 23 Erase, as videotape |
| 16 Do cafe work | | 25 Verve |
| 18 Hot blood | | 26 Secondlargest country |
| 19 Eye parts | DOWN | 27 Slow work |
| 21 Telegraph period | 1 Outspoken | 28 Houston team |
| 22 Bad thing to criticize | 2 Sights | 29 Places |
| 24 King or czar | 3 "Romeo and Juliet" setting | 31 Comfy homes |
| 25 Fall guy | 4 Director Lee | 33 Trapper's item |
| 29 Unwanted email | 5 Tears | 36 Mariner |
| 30 Make blue | 6 Pindar poem | 38 Cash dispenser |
| 32 Sewing aid | | |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

S P E A R G O R E R U N
C A R G O A T O N E
R E N E W D O Y L E
E L I E V I N C E D
A L E D O C A S S
M A L T W A R M S
O A R L A P
A M P E D Y A W N
R U B T E D N E O
E R A S U R E E L M
C O R E R V I L L A
A R D E N I D L E D
P A I N S L O A D S

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

