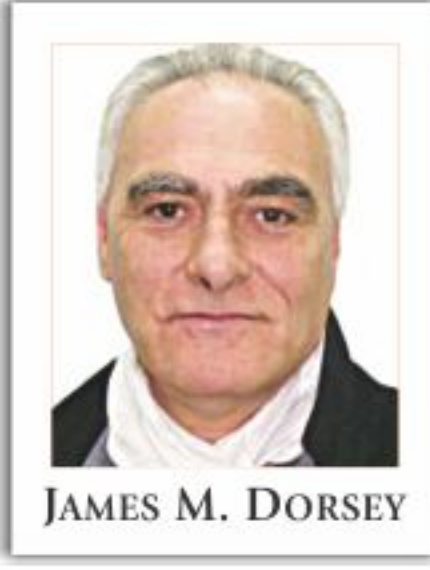


# Gulf crisis set to escalate



JAMES M. DORSEY

THE Gulf crisis that pits Saudi Arabia and the UAE against Qatar is set to escalate with Doha certain to ignore Monday's deadline that it complies with demands that would undermine Qatari sovereignty and humiliate Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at a time that he is riding high on a wave of Qatari nationalism sparked by the Gulf crisis.

Four weeks into the crisis, the demands appear to have been crafted for what is becoming a longer battle that the two Gulf states hope will end with Qatar, with or without Sheikh Tamim, adopting policies crafted in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have declared the demands to be non-negotiable, offered Qatar no face-saving way out of the crisis, and appear to have designed them to be deliberately insulting.

The Saudi-UAE-led coalition against Qatar is likely to further tighten the boycott of Qatar once the Monday deadline passes. However, UAE State Minister for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash's prediction of a parting of ways, which ultimately could include Qatar leaving the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that groups the Gulf's monarchies, would neither reduce tensions nor end the crisis. Neither would an effort to suspend Qatar's membership of the Arab League.

Saudi and UAE perceptions of Qatari policies as a threat to the survival of their regimes would not be allayed by a divorce that would allow Qatar to continue to chart its own course. It is those perceptions that drove the two countries to launch their zero-sum game. Moreover, a Qatar capable of defying its more powerful neighbours would put on public display limits to Saudi and UAE power.

The lesson of the past weeks is that Qatar can survive the boycott as long as countries like Turkey and Iran help it meet its food and water requirements; it retains access to international shipping lanes; maintains its oil and gas exports; and has uninterrupted, normal dealings with the international financial system.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar have so far exempted oil and gas from their fight. Qatar continues to pump natural gas to the UAE through a partially Emirati-owned pipeline. Dubai is dependent on Qatar for 40 percent of its gas.

Similarly, Saudi Arabia has been careful not to disrupt the tanker market and complicate Qatar's energy exports by blocking shared vessel loadings. Such a move would create logistical challenges not only for Qatar but also for the kingdom's own clients who would be forced to reorganise dozens of

unwilling to follow the Saudi-UAE lead, and many in the international community are irritated by the two countries' approach that threatens to complicate the fight against the Islamic State, risks volatility in energy markets, and increases instability in what is already the world's most unstable region.

Despite denials, Saudi Arabia and the UAE's take-it-or-leave-it approach appears to include the option of fostering an environment conducive to regime change if Qatar proves capable of circumventing the boycott

the brutal 2013 Egyptian coup that brought general-turned-president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi to power could be repeated in Qatar in some form or fashion.

Saudi and UAE tactics as well as some of the demands that include halting support for militants and Islamists, closing a Turkish military base in the Gulf state, reducing relations with Iran, and shuttering Qatar-sponsored media, including the controversial *Al Jazeera* television network, could however prove to be a double-edged sword.

In a move that likely contributed to turn-

In the case of the Houthis, Qatar likely maintained clandestine contacts while joining the Saudi-led fight against them given Qatar's repeated efforts over a period of more than a decade to mediate between the rebels, the Saudi-backed Yemeni government and the kingdom. Qatar negotiated since 2004 various ceasefires in intermittent wars between the government and the Houthis only to see them thwarted with the support of Saudi Arabia.

Former US diplomats in cables to the State Department while serving in Yemen and more recently in interviews suggested that Saudi Arabia's obsession with the Houthis predates the rebels' closer relationship with Iran since the invasion began in 2015. If anything, Saudi obsession drove them further into the hands of the Iranians.

Moreover, closer analysis of the Saudi and UAE demands creates the impression that certainly in the case of the kingdom the pot at times is blaming the kettle. Abd Al-Wahhab Muhammad Abd Al-Rahman Al-Humayqani, the only Yemeni on the Saudi-UAE list of alleged terrorists associated with the two Gulf states' demands, is a US Treasury designated terrorist linked to Al Qaeda who reportedly lives at least part-time in the Saudi capital.

The Treasury designation in 2013 did not prevent the Saudis from including Al-Humayqani in the delegation of the Saudi-backed government to failed peace talks in 2015 or from serving as an advisor to Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who is resident in the kingdom.

All of this makes hopes for a negotiated solution of the Gulf crisis all but an illusion. Maintaining the status quo is not an option for Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Escalation of the crisis is risky not only for the Gulf states themselves but also for the international community. Yet, pulling the protagonists back from the brink without loss of face is a non-starter as long as both sides of the divide target absolute victory at whatever cost.



The demand by Saudi Arabia and three other Arab states for Qatar to shut down *Al Jazeera* and other media outlets has drawn international condemnation.

PHOTO: AFP

cargoes. It could also reduce the number of available vessels and drive up shipping costs.

Qatar hopes that its ability to defy the boycott will force Saudi Arabia and the UAE to tighten the boycott in ways that could backfire. Potentially, that could happen if Saudi Arabia and the UAE act on a threat to take a you-are-with-us-or-against-us approach towards their trading and commercial partners. That would put to the test, Saudi Arabia and the UAE's ability to impose their will on others.

So far, it's not been easy going for Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Qatar refuses to bend, most Muslim countries are

for an extended period of time.

State-controlled media in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE also contributed to undermine Sheikh Tamim's position, parallel to the Gulf states' almost unprecedented attacks on Qatar's ruling Al Thani clan, through interviews of little known dissident family members and military officers opposed to the emir's policies.

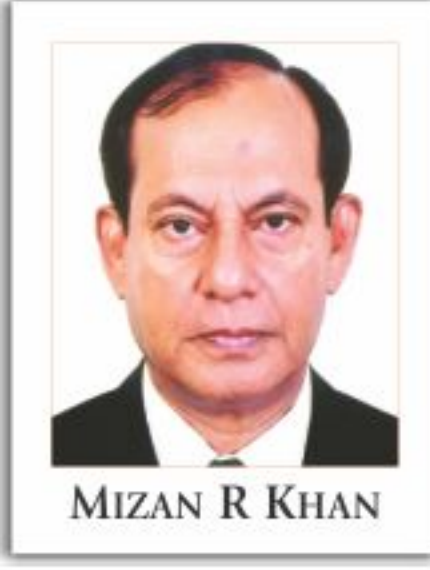
The Saudi and UAE strategy risks painting the two countries into a corner with Qatari support for Sheikh Tamim complicating suggestions voiced by a prominent Saudi journalist with close ties to the government and a Washington-based Saudi lobbyist that

ing Qatari public opinion against them, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, citing unsubstantiated allegations that the Gulf state supported Houthi rebels, expelled their nemesis from the Saudi-led military coalition fighting the insurgents in Yemen a day after six Qatari soldiers were wounded defending the kingdom's southern flank.

The two Gulf states implicitly included Houthi rebels in Yemen in their demand that Qatar break off its relations with militants and Islamists. While there is little doubt that Qatar at times went too far in nurturing those relationships, it is equally clear that some of them enjoyed tacit Western and Saudi backing.

The writer is a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, co-director of the University of Würzburg's Institute for Fan Culture, and the author of *The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer* blog and a book with the same title.

# The rising stakes for ocean governance



MIZAN R KHAN

WORLD oceans play the crucial role of a life support in poverty alleviation, food security, human health, and curbing climate change. But our oceans are increasingly being threatened and degraded by human-induced climate change, natural disasters, depletion of fisheries, loss of biodiversity, etc.

Ocean governance in recent years has become an important area of global diplomacy. The process began with the UNEP-initiated Regional Seas Program (RSP) back in 1974. Today, more than 140 countries participate in 13 RSPs including the South Asia RSP. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 emphasised the "need for a new approach to development and regulation of marine environment and coastal zones." Then came the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea III (UNCLOS) in 1982, after two unsuccessful attempts before.

The latest high-level UN Ocean Conference held early last month was a move along the envisaged new approach. The event at the UN headquarters attended by 4,000 delegates, which included a number of heads of state and government, was meant for supporting the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, which aims to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas

and marine resources for sustainable development." This conference was the first in a series planned to address all the SDGs. SDG 14 consists of 10 targets, related to pollution management, ocean acidification, control of plastic waste and overfishing.

The meeting produced three outcomes: an agreed Call for Action, a registry of voluntary commitments, and key messages from the partnership dialogues. The Call for Action reconfirms the commitment of UN member states to the implementation of SDG 14, and to mobilise adequate resources. The registration of 1,328 voluntary commitments by governments and other stakeholders was celebrated as a major achievement. Finally, the partnership dialogues were instrumental in facilitating knowledge and experience-sharing among conference participants, and clarifying inter-linkages between SDG 14 and other goals.

During the last four decades a framework of integrated ocean governance has been evolving, with three elements: laws, institutions and mechanisms of implementation. The legal element is composed of international and regional conventions and programmes which establish rules and norms for ocean management, the most prominent being the UNCLOS. These provisions must be incorporated by states in their national legislations. The institutions are meant for ensuring coordination and cooperation among nations for implementation of legal elements.

Among others, these include the International Seabed Authority as custodian of the High Seas, Commission on Limits of the Continental Shelf, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, UN Consultation Process, Oceans and Coastal Areas Network, etc.

The means of implementation range from local and national community-based co-management structures to international mechanisms like the UN General Assembly's annual review of ocean affairs. This element also includes financial support and capacity building for ocean management in the developing coun-

tries. For example, SDG 14 target 7 relates to increasing economic benefits to small island states and least developed countries. In the June event a partnership dialogue was dedicated to exploring how this target can be achieved including means of its realisation. Also, there were discussions about blue economy and the change on the global marine environment, an issue largely overlooked in climate diplomacy. The oceans—which produce half of all our oxygen, regulate the earth's climate, and are home to thousands of species—have been our best ally in efforts to curb climate change. One estimate says about 93 percent of all the heat people have added to the planet since the 1950s has been absorbed by the oceans. A 2015 analysis by the Grantham Institute shows that if the same amount of heat that was added to the top two kilometres of the oceans between 1955 and 2010 had instead been added to the bottom ten kilometres of the atmosphere, the temperature on earth would have gone up by 36 degrees Celsius.

A high-profile feature at the conference was a video statement of the UN Messenger of Peace Leonardo DiCaprio, who argued that "if given a chance, nature can rebound," and called for the conclusion of a "Paris Agreement for the ocean" with ambitious and measurable goals to protect it from degradation and over-exploitation.

Snow level at both the poles has been at its lowest in recent years. Conflicts are likely to arise from potential availability of natural resources, with serious geopolitical implications. As Arctic ice continues to shrink, some nations see prospects of navigation, oil, gas and mineral resources. This is already generating tensions and divisions in the 16-member Arctic Council. Though the US did not ratify the UNCLOS,

despite efforts by Clinton in her tenure as Secretary of State, the US is showing renewed interest in ocean governance. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) are emerging as new maritime powers, raising their stakes in ocean governance. Russia is already there in hopes of controlling sea lanes and exploiting mineral resources in the Arctic whose potential is predicted to be quite high. Also, there is no clarity yet on issues of migrating exclusive economic zones (EEZs), or the future legality of EEZs of some small island states facing death due to current and future sea level rise.

Bangladesh has historically been a sea-faring nation, with its access to the Bay of Bengal in the south. She has been found to be among the world's 20 fishery-rich nations. With the successful delimitation of EEZ with the two neighbours, India and Myanmar, Bangladesh is in a position to pursue her interests unhindered in her EEZ and beyond. For this purpose, Bangladesh needs to develop a strategic plan based on stakeholder consultations and effective institutions to ensure her resource and maritime security. The key is rapid capacity building with appropriate technologies, adequate manpower and aquanauts to face the emerging challenges of ocean governance.

The writer is Professor of Environmental Management, North South University.



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SOURCE: PERC.ORG

## A WORD A DAY

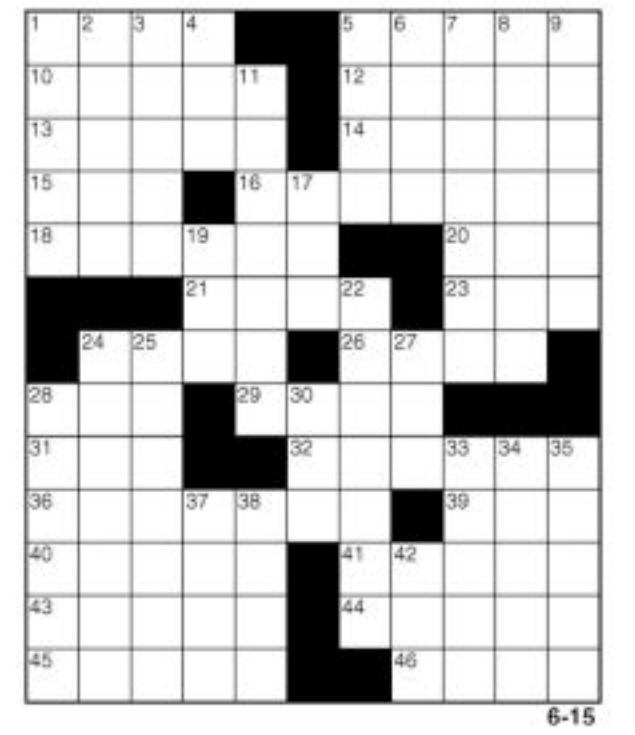


Too great to be expressed in words

INEFFABLE  
Adjective

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Lauer of "Today"
  - 5 Blueprint humor
  - 10 Bitter humor
  - 12 Not dissonant
  - 13 "Keen!"
  - 14 Polygon corner
  - 15 Break off
  - 16 Half of a double header, often
  - 18 Convertible couch
  - 20 Acquire
  - 21 Alan of "M\*A\*S\*H"
  - 23 Slalom maneuver
  - 24 Write an app
  - 26 Speedy
  - 28 Keyboard key
  - 29 "Doggone!"
  - 31 Western Indian
- DOWN**
- 1 Sought ore
  - 2 Concert site
  - 3 Sycophant
  - 4 Booming stuff
  - 5 Order to Fido
  - 6 Early video game
  - 7 Hires
- ACROSS**
- 32 Something you shouldn't quit
  - 36 Rec spot in an institution
  - 39 Need to pay
  - 40 Leek's cousin
  - 41 Writer Glasgow
  - 43 Washer cycle
  - 44 Virtuous one
  - 45 Wise guys
  - 46 Harry's wife
- DOWN**
- 8 Most placid
  - 9 Cold showers?
  - 11 Sang in the Alps
  - 17 Throw in
  - 19 Misbehaving
  - 22 Steep-roofed dwellings
  - 24 City of Sicily
  - 25 Complying
  - 27 Some amount of
  - 28 Henry VIII and family
  - 30 Hoopla
  - 33 "Maleficent" star
  - 34 Track great Jesse
  - 35 Natural gifts
  - 37 Token of love
  - 38 Till bills
  - 42 Research setting



## YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

MOLARS CLAW  
ARARAT LOGO  
REGGIE ICON  
UNPACK  
VILE SHINE  
VIDEO TAKEN ON  
LEO IRE GOD  
LAKEBED USE  
ALIVE SPEED  
NOTARY  
SIGN MARTIN  
ARUN PRINCE  
GAPE SEATED

## BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER



## BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

