

RELEASE IN
PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 6, 2012 12:06 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Worth reading when free : ANALYSIS-Some Gulf rulers wary of U.S. shifts on Islamists, Iran

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: Yousef Al Otaiba [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, September 05, 2012 04:44 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Fw: Worth reading when free : ANALYSIS-Some Gulf rulers wary of U.S. shifts on Islamists, Iran

B6

Pretty accurate analysis, in line with our previous conversations on US reputation in the region.

Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

-----Original Message-----

From: "Ashraf Fouad Makkar (Mubadala)" [redacted]
Date: Wed, 5 Sep 2012 16:44:18
To: <kalmubarak[redacted]>; <otaiba7[redacted]>; <ANWARGARGASH[redacted]>; <Reem.ALHashimy[redacted]>; <minister[redacted]>
Cc: <aasayegh[redacted]>
Subject: Worth reading when free : ANALYSIS-Some Gulf rulers wary of U.S. shifts on Islamists, Iran

> ANALYSIS-Some Gulf rulers wary of U.S. shifts on Islamists, Iran

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> DUBAI, Sept 5 (Reuters) - The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood and its ideological affiliates in the Arab Spring uprisings has stoked fears among Gulf Arab governments that the United States may one day abandon its traditional allies as it warms up to Islamists.

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> While the ruling families in the Gulf are currently vital U.S. allies who buy large amounts of American military hardware and facilitate a significant U.S. military presence, some are apprehensive Washington may apply pressure on them to accommodate Islamists who could end up challenging their exclusive rule.

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> In a number of colourful online outbursts, Dubai's outspoken police chief Dhahi Khalfan has warned of an "international plot" to overthrow Gulf systems of government with Western complicity. The Brotherhood, manipulated by the United States, is working to take over the Gulf by 2016, he said.

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- > "Today the Americans are mobilising the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab nation, for the benefit of America, not the Arabs," he wrote on his Twitter account on Sunday. "There is an American plan that has been drawn up for the region."
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- > Though Khalfan insists his tweets are his personal views, analysts and diplomats say they reflect largely unspoken concerns among the United Arab Emirates' ruling elite about the regional popularity of the Islamists and the possibility that the West will sympathise with them as political underdogs.
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- > They also reflect fears among the region's Sunni Muslim rulers that, despite being Sunni itself, the Brotherhood is soft on their arch enemy Shi'ite Iran. Egypt's Islamist President Mohammed Mursi tried to dissipate such fears at a Tehran conference last week by condemning Iran's ally Syria and urging attendees to back rebels trying to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad.
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- > Despite pockets of Western-style liberalism in cities like Dubai, most Gulf ruling elites seek to project an image of Islamic conservatism.
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- > So the threat they see is not religious or social but political: the Brotherhood advocates playing by the rules of parliamentary politics as a path to government, threatening inherited rights to rule and state-backed clerical establishments.
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- > An opposition movement that gains ground in Gulf states could perhaps find the U.S. administration newly disposed to speak out in its favour.
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- > Such an opposition has already emerged in the UAE, where more than 50 Islamists linked to Brotherhood thinking have been arrested since late last year. So far Washington has kept mum.
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- > "While the U.S. security umbrella protects the UAE against threats from Iran, Washington would be much more reluctant to support a widespread crackdown against a local opposition movement," said analyst Ayham Kamel of the Eurasia Group.
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- > "This is making the political leadership in the UAE much more nervous about domestic threats," he said.
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- > The Brotherhood also has potential to draw support from Gulf Arabs who may see their countries' foreign policies as overly pro-Western and are concerned about the social influence of their large Asian and Western expatriate communities.
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- > SEEKING U.S. REASSURANCE
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- > Washington was initially hesitant to openly support the uprisings that toppled Tunisia's Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, partly because of concerns they could bring Islamists to power.
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- > President Barack Obama's administration has since overcome its reluctance, and has made extensive efforts to engage Egypt's Brotherhood over the past year.
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- > Analysts say Washington is simply pursuing realpolitik given the new power centres in the region.
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- > "I don't think the West is keen on having a bunch of Islamists coming to power in the Gulf anytime soon," said Michael Stephens, researcher at the Royal United Services Institute based in Doha. "It's more the case that Washington is working with who they can work with, because Islamists are in power and they have to be dealt with."
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- > U.S. officials said privately that they addressed the Gulf's concerns last year after Mubarak fell and that subsequent conversations have not focused on the issue. They declined to go into specifics.
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- > "Gulf governments realise both the United States and Iran will want to have relations with the new regimes," said Ghanem Nuseibeh, senior analyst with Cornerstone Global. They just needed to be reassured that those regimes' gain was not their loss, he said.
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- > Diplomats said they were confident that building good ties with the Brotherhood was unlikely to strain the long-term strategic relationship between the U.S. and Gulf states.
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- > "They (the Gulf states) need the Americans to protect them against Iran. Iran is the biggest worry for them in the whole region right now," one Gulf-based Western diplomat said, asking not to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue.
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- > YES, BUT ...
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- > Still, rumblings persist.
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- > Saudi Arabia, which has long seen itself as insulated from political Islam because of its promotion of more conservative Salafi Islam, is feeling less secure these days, said Abdulaziz Alkhamis, a London-based Saudi analyst.
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- > "After the Arab Spring they (the Islamists) are rising again. They start to use Islamist political rhetoric to gain publicity in the Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia," he said.
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- > Prominent clerics such as Awadh al-Garni and Salman al-Odah, viewed as sympathetic to the Brotherhood, have become more outspoken, cheering Islamist gains in social media.
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- > Brotherhood-linked Islamists are well-established in Kuwait, where parliamentary politics is most advanced in the Gulf. And in Bahrain the government has drawn closer to the Minbar party, another group inspired by the Brotherhood, as it shores itself up against a protest movement dominated by Shi'ite Islamists.
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- > The angst over what the United States plans for the region is at its most public and visceral in Bahrain, whose government Obama has urged to enter dialogue with leading Shi'ite opposition group Wefaq, citing the group by name.
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- > Sunni clerics and commentators in official media regularly raise the fear that Washington, currently at odds with Tehran over its nuclear programme, is plotting to create a Wefaq-led government in a regional reordering of power that would open a new page of cosy ties with Iran.
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- > TV presenter Sawsan al-Shaer denounced a "Satanic alliance" between Tehran and Washington in an article in the al-Watan daily last month, claiming Wefaq was a "Trojan horse, used by the U.S. administration and Iranian regime to redraw the region."
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- > The wild card in the region is Qatar. It has actively promoted the Brotherhood and its affiliates, giving them coverage widely seen as positive on its satellite broadcaster Al Jazeera.
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- > At an early stage in the uprisings Doha stuck its neck out much further than other Gulf states in its support for protests in Egypt and Tunisia, and then rebel movements in Libya and Syria, supporting those among them close the Brotherhood.
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- > Earlier this year the Dubai police chief railed against Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi, a popular Brotherhood-linked Egyptian cleric based in Doha who criticised UAE policy towards Islamists on Al Jazeera. Khalfan threatened to arrest the cleric if he ever entered the country.
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- > Alkhamis said opinion in Saudi Arabia was split over whether Qatar's close links to the Islamists was a smart move to keep a close eye on a rising movement whose historical time has come, or a ruse to sow discord for its neighbour and sometime rival.

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> "The Qataris say that if we don't have the Brotherhood (operating) openly then they will go underground and that it's not against Saudi Arabia, but the Saudis are not happ [20120905 141957 GMT]
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> y with this," Alkhamis said pointing to Qatar-backed Islamist seminars. "Some think the Qataris are not an honest friend, but have an agenda."
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> (Additional reporting by Andrew Quinn in Washington and Raissa Kasolowsky in Abu Dhabi; Editing by Sami Aboudi and Sonya Hepinstall) [20120905 141957 GMT]
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> GULF-USA/ISLAMISTS (ANALYSIS) | C | D | E | M | O | U | MTL | GRO | SOF | OIL | BNX | AFA | CSA | LBY | RWSA | RWS | REULB | GNS | RNA | G | RBN | GFN | SXNA|GULF-USA/ISLAMISTS (ANALYSIS)=2 | C | D | E | M | O | U | MTL | GRO | SOF | OIL | BNX | AFA | CSA | LBY | RWSA | RWS | REULB | GNS | RNA | G | RBN | GFN | SXNA|chained
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