



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات  
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies

The Ninth Annual

# Gulf Studies Forum

The Ukraine Crisis, Regional and International Competition,  
and the Future of Energy and Security in the Gulf

22-23 October 2022

[About the Forum](#) | [Timetable](#) | [Participants](#) | [Abstracts](#) | [Session Chairs](#)





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# About the Forum

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022, has had political, security, and economic repercussions across the globe. After Europe, the Gulf region is set to be one of the worst-affected, both in security terms and with respect to energy and food. Europe and the US have looked to the Gulf's oil and gas supplies to make up for any shortage resulting from disruption of Russian exports and to help combat the price inflation now threatening the world economy. On the other hand, the crisis has revealed tensions at the heart of many long-standing alliances – particularly with the USA, which has been disappointed by GCC states' attempts to remain neutral on the conflict. Iran has begun to present itself as a possible solution to global energy shortages, increasing pressure on the GCC states to adopt a clearer position on the Ukrainian crisis. Rapid rises in the prices of cereals and other agricultural products, meanwhile, are threatening Gulf food security.

## **Diversifying International Relations: Does It Offset or Exacerbate the Security Dilemma?**

At a time when all countries are scrambling to realign their interests in accordance with the changing international system and the rising intensity of inter-state competition, the Ukrainian crisis has tested the strength of the Gulf-US alliance and the ability of the Gulf states to balance their relationships with Washington and Moscow. The GCC states' determination to remain neutral and avoid antagonising either side reflects their ties to Russia: the official statements issued by various GCC governments have all limited themselves to calling for an 'end to escalation' in the Ukrainian crisis, despite the fact that all GCC states voted for the UN resolution condemning Russia's behavior. The UAE, which is a member of the 2022-2023 Security Council, abstained on a US-drafted UNSC resolution condemning the invasion of Ukraine and demanding Russian withdrawal. Russia, meanwhile, has supported an Emirati resolution to classify the Houthis as a terrorist organization and expand the current ban on delivering weapons to Yemen.

The GCC position may come as something of a surprise because all of them rely heavily on the USA to guarantee their security, whether directly or through arms sales: the USA accounts for around 45% of all arms sales to the Gulf. Both the Yemen conflict and tensions with Iran have meant that US imports have played a key role in strengthening the Gulf's defenses. Between 2012 and 2021, Saudi arms imports have increased by 27%, with purchases from the US specifically shooting up by 106% in the same period. The USA retains extensive military infrastructure in the region, particularly maritime infrastructure intended to protect the flow of shipping (especially oil and gas) through the Gulf.

The recent US reorientation towards the Indian Ocean, however, has undermined the GCC states' confidence in Washington's willingness to guarantee their security, a concern that was compounded by the Trump administration's refusal to provide sufficient support to Saudi Arabia following the attacks on ARAMCO facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais. Growing pressure from Congress to tie arms sales to Gulf countries, and particularly Saudi Arabia, to human rights issues has prompted these countries to look for alternatives. In 2020, under the OPEC Plus agreement, Riyadh and Moscow agreed to work together to regulate international oil markets. Between 2016 and 2021, the volume of bilateral trade between Russia and the GCC rose from around \$3 billion to \$5 billion, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE accounting for the majority. Although the GCC states still consider the USA to be their main ally, their position on Ukraine reflects their desire to diversify their international relationships.

## Security, Energy, and Investment

Alongside the USA and Russia, Saudi Arabia is one of the biggest oil producers in the world, and the biggest oil exporter. Currently it pumps out some 10.5 million barrels daily, and is capable of ramping production up to 12 million. Taken together with the UAE and Kuwait, it has an estimated production capacity of 2.2 million barrels a day. Nonetheless, Riyadh has rebuffed US requests to increase production in order to check spiraling price inflation in the aftermath of the Russian invasion, citing the 2020 OPEC Plus agreement with Russia, in which it committed to keeping production low. Is Riyadh simply keen on maintaining its new ties with Moscow, or is this also an expression of a deteriorating relationship with Washington at a time when Biden has snubbed Muhammad bin Salman and allowed publication of a dossier blaming the Crown Prince for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi?

At the same time, many European countries – first and foremost Germany – have begun looking for alternatives to Russian gas and oil in the Gulf. Germany has recently signed a new agreement with Qatar, the world's biggest gas exporter, to this end.

US and European sanctions on Russia are also expected to hit GCC investments in the country, which have been growing rapidly in recent years. The UAE is Russia's biggest commercial partner in the Gulf, accounting for some 55% of Russian-Gulf trade; non-oil bilateral trade between the two countries is valued at around 2 billion dollars, representing growth of more than 80% compared to 2020. Russian-Emirati bilateral investment is also the highest in the Arab World, with Emirati investment in Russia making up around 80% of all Arab investment and Russian investment in the UAE around 90% of all Russian investment in the Arab world. Although Gulf investors have

not fled Russia en masse as have their Western counterparts, anxieties about the possible impact of Western sanctions are sure to hit investment, and those with money in the country are likely to suffer serious losses if the crisis continues.

## Rising Food Prices

The Gulf states stand to benefit enormously from rising oil prices, which in the aftermath of the Russian invasion have shot up beyond \$100/barrel (after two years of price collapse during the Covid-19 pandemic). With oil revenues providing the majority of state income, price increases have an immediate effect on state budgets and help accelerate diversification of their economies. But while an extra \$10/barrel translates to an additional \$65 billion flowing into state coffers annually, the GCC also has to contend with rising import prices, including food and medicine.

Although the GCC states are obviously less vulnerable to price fluctuations than other Middle Eastern countries thanks to their high incomes and small populations, both the UAE and Oman import large quantities of grain from Ukraine and Russia. Saudi Arabia has grown more dependent on Russian grain as well, having first opened its markets to Russian imports in 2020 and increased their volume several times over the course of 2021. Nonetheless, the chances of a short-term supply crisis are low, and rising oil revenues should allow the GCC states to keep up with rising food prices – even in Oman, where prices have been the subject of protests in recent weeks.

Some GCC states that have already had to contend with challenges to food security during the Covid-19 pandemic have built up large reserves of foodstuffs in order to reduce the threat posed by supply chain problems. It is important to remember, however, that food production is very limited in the GCC, with agriculture accounting for only 1.4% of GDP, while consumption levels are high. According to some reports, between 2010 and 2020 the volume of GCC food imports rose from \$25.8 billion to \$53.1 billion. In light of the willingness of some countries to suspend food exports during the pandemic – Vietnam, for example, the third-biggest rice exporter worldwide – the GCC states will need to reconsider their food security strategies in the near future.

## The Iranian Nuclear Deal

Despite the global focus on the Ukraine crisis, the Vienna negotiations on the Iranian nuclear deal have continued throughout this period. In fact, developments in Ukraine have encouraged the



negotiating parties to try to speed up the process in the hope that Iranian oil might help mitigate the effects of the crisis on the energy supply. Iran has taken the opportunity to offer its support in this regard, taking advantage of Saudi reticence. Russia is not willing to allow this to happen, and has made a new nuclear agreement conditional on Russian trade with Iran being exempted from US sanctions. According to some commentators, Russia introduced this condition only after the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister to Moscow on 5 March 2022. In exchange for Russian help in foiling a new nuclear deal, Israel has reportedly been putting pressure on Ukraine to agree to Russian conditions.

By most estimates, by May 2022 Iran will be capable of adding a million barrels of oil to the daily supply and another 800,000 by the end of the year. According to Bloomberg, it has 103 million barrels in storage it could quickly ship to Europe, which would add around 1.3 million barrels/day to the global market within a very short time. In January 2022, Iran announced that its oil exports had risen by 40% in the previous year, and that it was now producing 2.4 million barrels a day. Javad Owji, the Iranian Oil Minister, claims that Iran could produce 3.8 million if sanctions were removed.

## Heightened Global Competition

Although the conflict between Russia and the West is playing out in the heart of Europe, China's position has been a major determinant of the direction it has taken. Beijing has tried to balance its strong commercial relations with Russia and its relationship with the West, avoiding taking an unambiguous position on the current crisis. The Gulf states, and in particular Iran, have been closely following Chinese diplomacy in this regard. All countries in the Gulf have sought stronger relations with China over the last few years. Iran signed a strategic cooperation agreement in March 2021, which included \$400 billion in Chinese investment in Iran over the next 25 years. The GCC states, on the other hand, have also developed extensive trade links with China in the energy and arms sectors. The volume of annual GCC-Chinese trade is now around \$180 billion. In 2019, China replaced the EU as the GCC's main trading partner. Despite growing US pressure to distance themselves from China, the GCC states are likely to continue to develop this relationship in coming years.



# Timetable

# Day One

## Saturday, 22 October 2022

(Main Auditorium)

9:30-10:00	<b>Registration</b>
10:00-12:00	<b>Opening Remarks &amp; Session 1</b> <b>The Impact of the Ukraine Crisis on Gulf International Relations (1)</b> <b>Chair: Rashid Hamad Al-Nuaimi</b> <b>Abdullah al-Shaiji:</b> How Does Russia's war on Ukraine affect US-Gulf Relations? <b>Majed Al Turki:</b> The Regional and International Repercussions of the Russian-Ukrainian Crisis: A Reading of Riyadh's Position <b>Giorgio Cafiero:</b> Implications of the Ukrainian Crisis for Relations between Arab Gulf States and Russia
12:00-12:15	Break
12:15-13:45	<b>Session 2</b> <b>The Impact of the Ukraine Crisis on Gulf International Relations (2)</b> <b>Chair: Ghanim Al-Najjar</b> <b>Jonathan Fulton:</b> The Ukrainian Crisis and the Future of Gulf Relations with China <b>Fatiha Dazi-Héni:</b> The Ukrainian Crisis and Geopolitical Shifts in the Arab Gulf Region <b>Courtney Freer:</b> Repercussions of the Ukrainian Crisis on Relations between GCC States and the EU
13:45-15:15	Lunch Break

<p>15:15–16:45</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session 3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Impact of the Ukraine Crisis on Gulf Regional Relations</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Mohammed Al-Mesfer</b></p> <p><b>Bulent Aras &amp; Şaban Kardaş:</b> The Implications of the Ukraine crisis on Relationship between the GCC countries and Türkiye</p> <p><b>Mahjoob Zweiri:</b> The Russian War on Ukraine and the Future of the Nuclear Agreement with Iran</p>
<p>16:45–17:00</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Break</p>
<p>17:00–18:00</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public Lecture</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Faisal Abu Salib</b></p> <p><b>Charles A. Kupchan:</b> The Ukraine War and Its Geopolitical Implications</p>

# Day Two

## Sunday, 23 October 2022

(Auditorium 2)

<p>9:30-11:00</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session 4</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Future of Relations between Japan and the Arab Gulf States in Light of the Ukraine Crisis</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Abdullah Baabood</b></p> <p><b>Kazuo Sunaga:</b> Japan's Foreign Policy towards Arab Gulf States in Light of the Ukrainian Crisis</p> <p><b>Koichiro Tanaka:</b> The Impact of the Ukrainian Crisis on Energy Security in Japan and the Role of Arab Gulf States</p> <p><b>Satoru Nakamura:</b> Is a New Chapter in Qatar-Japan Relations on the Horizon in Light of the Ukrainian Crisis?</p> <p><b>Kazuto Matsuda:</b> Relations between Japan and GCC States from the Japanese Perspective</p>
<p>11:00-11:15</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Break</p>
<p>11:15-12:45</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session 5</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Impact of the Ukraine Crisis on Energy Security and the Role of the Arab Gulf States</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Hatim al-Shanfari</b></p> <p><b>Mustafa al-Bazarkan:</b> A Global Hybrid Energy System: Energy Opportunities and Challenges in the Arab Gulf Region in Light of the Ukrainian Crisis</p> <p><b>Naji Abi Aad:</b> The Impact of the Ukrainian Crisis on Global and Gulf Gas Production</p> <p><b>Nikolay A. Kozhanov:</b> Repercussions of the Ukrainian Crisis for Energy Security in the Arab Gulf Region</p>
<p>12:45-13-45</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch Break</p>

<p>13:45-15:15</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session 6</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Impact of the Ukraine Crisis on the Economies of the Gulf</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Habib Allah Turkistani</b></p> <p><b>Thomas W O'Donnell &amp; Laurence al-Hinawi:</b> Impact of the Russian-Ukrainian War on Global and Gulf Energy Markets</p> <p><b>Ayhab Saad:</b> Impact of the Ukrainian Crisis on Inflation in GCC States</p> <p><b>Rachid El Bazzim:</b> Gulf States and the Ukraine War: Between Climate Commitments and Energy Security Anxieties</p>
<p>15:15-15:30</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Break</p>
<p>15:30-16:30</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session 7</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Impact of the Ukraine Crisis on Food Security in the Gulf</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Zafar al-Ajami</b></p> <p><b>Mohammad al-Saidi:</b> The Ukraine War and the Food Security Crisis: The Impact on Arab Gulf States</p> <p><b>Annamaria Mazzoni:</b> Water, Food, and Energy Security in Crisis: Qatar Confronts the Ukrainian Crisis</p>





# Participants

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# Abstracts





**Abdullah al-Shaiji**

Professor of International Relations at Kuwait University, where he previously chaired the Political Science Department. He has published several books and research papers in peer-reviewed journals. His most recent books are *Gulf Cooperation Council Crises: Roots, Causes, Overtures, Prospects* (2011–2018) and *US Presidents' Doctrines: From George Washington to George Bush-1789-1992* (Vol. I, 2019) and Vol. II: From Clinton to Trump (2021). He received his PhD in Political Science from the University of Texas in Austin.

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## **How Does Russia's war on Ukraine affect US-Gulf Relations?**

The paper demonstrates the neutrality of the Gulf states since Russia invaded Ukraine, focusing on the large oil producers that are able to increase production, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and to some extent Kuwait and Qatar. It discusses the challenges and pressures faced by the GCC countries regarding this war, which they have refrained from condemning. Furthermore, the Gulf states have not joined the sanctions on Russia and have committed to not intervene or provide support to Russia (as Iran does by providing drones), nor to play a mediator role in the war (as Turkey has attempted to do). However, President Biden and his administration responded swiftly to the OPEC decision (to slash oil production) and directed sharp criticism at Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Supported by both the Democratic and Republican parties in Congress, Washington made threats to sue OPEC countries to reduce oil production and prices, accusing Riyadh of moving towards an alliance with Moscow. Contrary to the claims of Riyadh and the OPEC General Secretariat Biden described OPEC's decision as short-sighted and politicized, rather than technical, going so far as to ask congressional representatives to reconsider the alliance with Saudi Arabia, and even freeze weapons deals. The paper argues that these developments represent a setback in US-Saudi strategic relations, and with it the UAE and that provoking the US in this way is a risky game for the Gulf. Washington has many cards to play in response to provocation from trusted allies such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In this context, the paper seeks to answer following question: Has Gulf neutrality become a burden on relations with its US ally and protector?



## Annamaria Mazzoni

Associate Researcher at the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute. She works in the Environment and Sustainability Centre as an environmental economist, sustainability specialist, and policy analyst. Her research focuses on climate change and sustainability issues related to natural resource management in arid environments, with a concentration on water and food security and sustainable development. She received a PhD in economics from the University of Turin and Collegio Carlo Alberto in Italy.

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### **Water, Food, and Energy Security in Crisis: Qatar Confronts the Ukrainian Crisis**

This paper contends that the Ukraine crisis is likely to reshape alliances around the world, including within Arab Gulf states. It asserts that GCC states have not responded to the crisis as a united bloc due to old and new diplomatic disputes, such as the blockade of Qatar (2017–2021), and the diversity of interests and relations between Gulf states and their allies. The paper explores how the Ukraine crisis may reshape intra-GCC ties and Gulf states relations with other Arab states, looking at the issue through the lens of water, food, and energy. The paper starts with the possibilities triggered by the blockade and the Covid-19 pandemic, which enabled Qatar to take advantage of its soft power and its LNG revenues to balance inflation against food prices, as well as its power to achieve food security. Since 2018, high local food production has put Qatar in a position to export some food products, such as dairy products. Nevertheless, challenges persist: the lack of water is still a major barrier and the same is true of grain imports. Accordingly, exposure to climate change and water threats remain high. The paper evaluates food diplomacy and multilateral trade management and cooperation between Qatar and other Arab states, with due regard for the requirements of continued sustainability. These, along with the repercussions of the Ukraine crisis, remain pressing issues.



**Ayhab Saad**

Assistant Professor at the Development Economics Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. In 2014 and 2015, he was an assistant professor at Birzeit University. His recent research focuses on trade liberalisation and local institutions, the impact of economic liberalisation on corporate innovation and productivity, and the impact of intra-firm trade and the productivity of multinational corporations, as well as economic integration in the Middle East and North Africa. He received his doctorate in economics and political science from the University of Michigan in 2014.

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## **Impact of the Ukrainian Crisis on Inflation in GCC States**

The Ukrainian crisis has distorted global supply chains, which in turn have spurred rising prices for food and fuel as well as increasing inflation worldwide, with rates reaching a decade high of 5.2 per cent. But with their low populations and high incomes, Arab Gulf states used part of the returns on high oil prices to offset spikes in food and commodity prices, particularly since these states are exposed to risk due to their reliance on Russian and Ukrainian wheat imports. This paper consequently examines the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on inflation in GCC states. Whenever possible, the paper uses disaggregated price data for GCC markets with the goal of exploring inflation after the Ukrainian crisis and its impact on GCC markets. The use of precise data makes it possible to disentangle the war's impact on inflation in GCC states from other factors, especially those related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The paper also aims to understand the differential impact of inflation in GCC states and whether such it exists. Finally, the paper looks at GCC government responses and policies pursued to mitigate the war's effect on inflation in the region.



**Bulent Aras**

Expert in opinion polling and visiting professor in international relations at Qatar University. Previously, he was a professor of international relations at the School of Advanced International Relations Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University and an advisor to many international organizations such as Oxford Analytica, Human Rights Watch, and the International Center for Black Sea Studies. He has written many books and studies and published research papers in many international peer-reviewed journals, including *Palestinian Israeli Peace Process and Turkey* (Novascience, 1998); *New Geopolitics of Eurasia and Turkey's Position* (Frank Cass, 2002); *Turkey and the Greater Middle East* (TASAM, 2004); and *Oil and Geopolitics in the Caspian Sea Region* (Praeger, 1999).

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## **The Implications of the Ukraine crisis on Relationship between the GCC countries and Türkiye**

The Ukraine war changed the geopolitical landscape in Eurasia and beyond. Türkiye has found itself in the centre of the crisis as a country pursuing positive and beneficial relations with both Russia and Ukraine. Ankara further felt the heat when both sides put pressure on regulation of the use of Turkish straits for both parties' ships. Turkish policy makers were quick to inform both sides that they consider the crisis a war-like situation, and it will close the straits to war ships. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has pursued a mediation agenda since the outset of the invasion with little progress initially. The deepening of the crisis opened the door to possible understandings, including the grain deal that assured transportation of Ukrainian grain export to the regions that suffer from food insecurity brokered by Türkiye and the UN. The Ukraine crisis has increased Erdogan's regional leverage, which he will no doubt utilize in relations with the GCC as Türkiye searches for foreign investment to tackle the currency crisis at home. It will soon become clear whether or not this regional leverage will result in strong political and economic relations with the GCC countries. However, it is certain that the ongoing normalization between Türkiye and both the UAE and Saudi Arabia will be taken to a new level considering the new self-confidence within ruling cadres in Türkiye. This presentation will discuss the relations between Türkiye and the GCC in a dynamic and changing geopolitical atmosphere post-Ukraine crisis.



**Charles A. Kupchan**

Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and Professor of International Affairs at Georgetown University in the Walsh School of Foreign Service and Department of Government. He previously served as a special assistant to the president and the senior director for European affairs on the National Security Council in the Barack Obama administration. He was also the director for European affairs on the National Security Council during the Bill Clinton administration. He has been a professor and scholar at several universities in the US, including Princeton, Harvard, and Columbia, as well as at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, the Centre d'Étude et de Recherches Internationales in Paris, and the Institute for International Policy Studies in Tokyo. He has authored numerous books, most recently *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World*, published in 2020 by Oxford University Press.

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## **The Ukraine War and Its Geopolitical Implications**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine represents a geopolitical watershed, rekindling militarized rivalry between Russia and the West. Moscow's strategic partnership with Beijing and the already building tension between the United States and China raises the specter of mounting geopolitical rivalry between the West and a Sino-Russian bloc stretching from the Western Pacific to Eastern Europe. As competition between these two blocs builds, much of the rest of the world is poised to avoid choosing sides, making way for a global landscape that is more multipolar than bipolar in character and practice. In this emerging landscape, the United States will focus on promoting geopolitical stability in Eurasia, continuing its strategic pullback from the broader Middle East. States in the Gulf region will have greater autonomy and options, especially as China's commercial and geopolitical involvement grows. The region's fossil fuel exports become more important in the short term due to shortages and price increases but become a diminishing source of leverage over time as the world reduces reliance on fossil fuel. De-globalization takes place in select sectors, but global economic interdependence continues. A key uncertainty moving forward is the political health of the West. Multipolarity, ideological discord, and the travails of liberal democracy will make global governance particularly hard to come by. This gap between the demand for and the supply of global governance is likely to be a defining feature of the emerging global landscape.



**Courtney Freer**

Non-Resident Fellow in the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution and an assistant professor at the Middle East Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She specialises in the domestic politics and foreign policies of GCC states, as well as intra-Gulf relations. She also studies the role of political Islam in the Gulf states and the Middle East more broadly. She is the author of *Rentier Islamism: The Influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gulf Monarchies*, published by Oxford University Press in 2018.

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## **Repercussions of the Ukrainian Crisis on Relations between GCC States and the EU**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 provoked a range of reactions. Among EU states, it has served to foster a sense of unity more so than it has among Arab Gulf states thus far. This paper argues that as the conflict persists, alliances, economic considerations, and conditions on the ground will shift accordingly, creating new arrangements and facts between EU member states and Arab Gulf countries. The paper uses the Ukrainian crisis as a lens to understand changes in relations between the EU and members of the GCC in two areas: economic, by highlighting the energy sector and the prospects for a free trade agreement; and diplomatic, by examining new regional and cross-regional arrangements as well as shifts within GCC member states since February 2022. The paper looks at how the Ukrainian crisis has led to changes in relations and priorities between EU and GCC states, allowing an understanding of how various regions of the world view the crisis in light of domestic and regional considerations.





**Fatiha Dazi-Héni**

Professor of History and International Relations at the Political Institute of Lille and was previously a senior analyst at the Directorate of Strategic Affairs in Paris. Her research focuses on the issues of state and society in the Arabian Peninsula and security and strategic issues. She is the author of *L'Arabie saoudite en 100 questions*, published in 2017 by Éditions Tallandier.

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## **The Ukrainian Crisis and Geopolitical Shifts in the Arab Gulf Region**

This paper explores the disagreements and convergences between Arab Gulf states and Western states generated by the Ukrainian crisis. It discusses the impacts of the crisis, which has made the Middle East, in particular the Gulf region, a key provider of oil and gas to Western economies following the imposition of economic sanctions on Russia. The paper argues that despite Gulf states' refusal to punish Russia, they are nevertheless primed to occupy a central strategic place for EU states, even as the US is making efforts to reconfigure its regional security interests. The paper posits that given Moscow's increased exports of inexpensive oil and gas to Asia (China, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka), Arab Gulf states remain the chief alternative suppliers of gas and oil to Europe. But this may spur an irreversible rivalry between Russia and Arab Gulf states in Asian oil markets, which account for the largest share of the global fossil fuel market. The paper offers an analysis of the geopolitical implications of the Ukrainian crisis, concluding that there is an urgent need for the West, the US, and the EU to renew and reaffirm security talks and geopolitical and economic cooperation with Arab Gulf states. Improved levels of economic and technological cooperation on renewable energy in addition to fossil fuel and broader security talks could enhance a growing strategic partnership between the two sides.



**Giorgio Cafiero**

Founder and CEO of Gulf State Analytics in Washington DC, which offers consultancy services on geopolitical risk. His research interests include geopolitical and security trends in the Arabian Peninsula and the broader Middle East. He is a regular contributor to several publications and from 2014 to 2015 worked as an analyst at Kroll. He received an MA in international relations from the University of San Diego in the US.

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## **Implications of the Ukrainian Crisis for Relations between Arab Gulf States and Russia**

The crisis in Ukraine, which erupted on 24 February 2022, triggered a geostrategic earthquake, and member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council are making diligent attempts to cope with its aftershocks. This paper examines the varying efforts of all six GCC states to deepen their ties with Moscow in recent years, particularly in the wake of Russia's direct military intervention in Syria in 2015. The paper argues that Arab Gulf states are turning to Russia to enhance their power by establishing relations in the fields of energy, investment, and tourism. In so doing, they are adapting to new geostrategic facts created by the relative decline of US hegemony and the rise of "alternative powers." The paper also discusses Gulf Arab states' aspirations for greater independence from Washington while simultaneously maintaining a close partnership with the US, which for decades was the main guarantor of security for all GCC states. The paper interprets Saudi Arabian and Emirati neutrality on the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 in this light, concluding that the relative neutrality of the GCC, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, can be attributed to ongoing attempts by the two states' leaders to adapt to a multipolar order in which Russia is perceived to be one pole. The paper asserts that the Ukraine shock requires Saudi Arabia and the UAE to act with prudence in a new international environment shaped by the growing divide between East and West and steadily deteriorating geopolitical stability.



**Jonathan Fulton**

Assistant Professor of Political Science at Zayed University in Abu Dhabi and a senior non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council. His research focuses on Chinese relations with Arab Gulf states, Arab Gulf international relations, and international relations in East Asia. He is the editor of the *Routledge Handbook on China–Middle East Relations*, published by Routledge in 2021.

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## **The Ukrainian Crisis and the Future of Gulf Relations with China**

This paper discusses the impact of China's rise on the strategic landscape of the Arab Gulf region since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis in February 2022. It looks at the efforts of Gulf Cooperation Council states, both individually and collectively, to establish deeper ties with China through diverse economic, political, and security partnerships, whether official or unofficial. Iran, too, has relied heavily on China to prop up its economy since the US withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2018, while in recent years, Iraq has worked to increase its engagement with China through major trade, energy, and infrastructure contracts. In this context, the paper argues that Beijing has become a vital partner for all GCC member states, as well as Iraq and Iran. The paper discusses the future of Gulf relations with China in light of the Ukrainian crisis and its strategic impact on the Gulf region.



**Kazuo Sunaga**

Specially Appointed Senior Fellow at Japan's National Institute for Defence Studies. He was appointed Japanese ambassador to Qatar in 2019 and has substantial political expertise in Japanese foreign policy towards ASEAN and Arab Gulf states. He published "Qatar: Wisdom to Live through Turbulences in the Middle East," published in the Journal of Middle Eastern Studies in 2021.

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## **Japan's Foreign Policy towards Arab Gulf States in Light of the Ukrainian Crisis**

Japan is forging friendly, cooperative relations with Arab Gulf states, in which trade in oil and natural gas has played a key role for decades. This paper asserts that in light of the Ukrainian crisis, Japan has realised the growing strategic importance of Arab Gulf states. Accordingly, it should build multidimensional relations with these states in the future in various fields including diplomacy, security, and new technologies like renewable energy, in addition to the existing conventional cooperation. The paper shows that the Ukrainian crisis and its repercussions have served to remind the international community of the importance of guaranteeing a rules-based international order instead of a reliance on force. The paper discusses the adverse impacts of the rising costs of energy and food and supply disruptions, which clearly demonstrate the risks of an increasingly globalised, interconnected world. Japan and the Gulf states are not immune to such dangers. The paper argues that freedom and openness in the Indian and Pacific Oceans — a fundamental vision of Japanese diplomacy — could be useful for developing Japan's relations with Arab Gulf states in the future. More specifically, Japan's strategy aims to achieve peace and stability in the Indian and Pacific Oceans by making it a free, open zone to guarantee an international order based on the rule of law, freedom of navigation, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and strong free trade. The paper concludes that there is need for greater dialogue between Japan and the Gulf states to meet the challenges arising from Asia and the Middle East.



**Kazuto Matsuda**

Doctoral student at Sophia University in Japan with diplomatic and research experience in various environments, including Japan, the UK, and Qatar. He received his MA in international relations from the University of Edinburgh in the UK, writing his thesis on the impact of hydrocarbons on intra-Arab Gulf relations since 1973.

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## **Relations between Japan and GCC States from the Japanese Perspective**

Studies of contemporary Japanese-Gulf relations typically, if not exclusively, focus on the perspective of the GCC states. Accordingly, the increasing turn of GCC states to the East instead of West is interpreted as the desire for greater economic and trade cooperation. This paper asserts that this analytical lens has marginalised and disregarded Tokyo's perspective on relations between Japan and Arab Gulf states. It therefore spotlights Tokyo's policy stance towards Gulf states, arguing that given the threats posed to Japan's energy security by the Ukraine crisis, Japan is playing an increasingly proactive role in forging political and economic ties with resource-rich GCC states, particularly for hydrocarbons. Shifts in Tokyo's policy aim first and foremost to enhance Japan's energy security, as clearly demonstrated by its stronger engagement with Gulf states. Domestically, partnerships between the public and private sectors in the field of energy security have also been strengthened. The paper concludes that Tokyo's proactive turn towards the GCC states indicates that it is willing to strengthen long-term cooperation with Gulf states.



**Koichiro Tanaka**

Professor at the Graduate School of Media and Governance at Keio University and head of the JIME Centre at the Institute of Energy Economics in Japan. He has occupied several positions, among them the chair of the Iranian program at the Japanese Institution for Middle East Economics. He was the political affairs officer in the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan and worked with the Foreign Ministry as a special assistant to political affairs at the Japanese embassy in Iran.

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## **The Impact of the Ukrainian Crisis on Energy Security in Japan and the Role of Arab Gulf States**

With the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis in February 2022, major Western energy consumers and Japan faced a dilemma. The sanctions on Russia, imposed to compel it reconsider its attack on Ukraine, created a pressing need for alternative fossil fuel sources to fill in the emerging gap, even at higher prices for Europe and even as it sought to sustain its commitments to carbon neutrality. This paper argues that Japan will sustain less of an economic burden because of the relatively trivial share of hydrocarbons sourced from Russia. Nevertheless, it will face high prices in the global market, particularly when European states are able to wean themselves from Russian fuel as global competition heats up to meet the demand for liquefied natural gas. This paper examines the impact of the crisis on Japan's energy security and explores possible future relations with states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, particularly Qatar. Nevertheless, it argues that the likelihood of Japan again seeing the region as a regular source of natural gas is slim given the reluctance of the government and private sector to admit their failure in recent years to renegotiate long-term, unfavourable contracts concluded with suppliers in the region. In turn, this paper speculates that in order to achieve energy security, Japan is likely in the medium to long term to explore energy cooperation with states like Qatar.



## Laurence al-Hinawi

Researcher on Gulf Studies and previously a researcher at the Technical University of Darmstadt in Germany. He has authored numerous publications, including the Arabic translation of Rolf Steininger's *Germany and the Middle East Since Kaiser Wilhelm II's Visit to the Levant in 1898 to the Present Day* (National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature, Kuwait, 2018) and *Civil Society in the Arab Context: The Case of the Kuwaiti Diwanias* (Technical University of Darmstadt, 2014).

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### Impact of the Russian-Ukrainian War on Global and Gulf Energy Markets

Russia's war in Ukraine has thrown the European security order into crisis while an economic war in the energy sector is pitting Russia against Ukraine's US-led allies. This paper discusses the conflict in the oil and gas market over the medium and long term, with a focus on the impact of the economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the US and its allies. These sanctions could impact Russia's place in the energy sector, making it a second-tier player unable to operate freely. The paper examines how GCC states could put themselves at the centre of today's chaotic market to enhance their short- and long-term centrality in the European, Indian, and possibly Chinese markets lost by Russia, which would strengthen their economies. The paper argues that purchasers of oil and gas from GCC states, particularly European states, need to recalibrate their energy strategies.



**Mahjoob Zweiri**

Director of the Gulf Studies Centre and an associate professor of the history of the contemporary Middle East at Qatar University. He was previously the chair of the Department of Humanities (2011–2016). He served as a professor in the Islamic studies program and the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan (2007–2009) and was a research fellow and later director of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Durham University in the UK (2003–2006).

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## **The Russian War on Ukraine and the Future of the Nuclear Agreement with Iran**

Although the Russian war on Ukraine is geographically far-removed from the Arab Gulf, the conflict has cast a shadow over the region touching multiple fields. One clear impact of the war was a delay in announcing the outcome of the Vienna talks on the Iranian nuclear program. This paper discusses how Russia successfully delayed the announcement by making it contingent on not influencing its ties with Iran, sparking a compound crisis, first between Moscow and Tehran, which had hoped to quickly announce the deal to alleviate economic pressures, and secondly between Moscow and the EU and US, with the latter parties seeing the move as Russia using its power to hinder the agreement. This paper asserts that the ongoing war in Ukraine created an opportunity to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement, but that opening was nevertheless tied to Russia's opposition to the revival of the agreement. The return to the nuclear accord of 2015 raises important questions for the Middle East, in particular regarding the potential impact of the deal on Gulf-Iranian relations, which is now apparent in Saudi-Iranian negotiations, and the implications for the Abraham Accords between the UAE and Bahrain on one hand and Israel on the other. Iran's return to the energy market also opens the door on a new competitive reality between and Iran and Arab Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia in the field of oil and Qatar in natural gas.





**Majed Al Turki**

President of the Center of Information and Arabian Russian Studies in Riyadh, a Board member of the National Center for Youth Research, a member of the Permanent General Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Kazakhstan, and the Saudi Communication and Media Association. He has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals on Saudi-Soviet relations. He received a doctorate in political science from Almaty University in Kazakhstan in 2002 and a doctorate in political science from Moscow University in 2004.

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### **The Regional and International Repercussions of the Russian-Ukrainian Crisis: A Reading of Riyadh's Position**

This paper discusses the impact of the Russian and Ukrainian crisis on Saudi Arabia's regional and international relationships. It delves into Saudi policy, which has sought to remain neutral towards the Russian invasion of Ukraine, calling for a political and diplomatic solution. The paper argues that the conflict has prompted Saudi Arabia to take several decisions that appear to represent a reconsideration of its political and diplomatic relations, the last of which was its support for the OPEC + decision to reduce oil production by two million barrels per day, angering its US ally. It provides a reading of the Saudi position on the crisis and its determinants, demonstrating how the Saudi response has been reflected in its relations with strategic allies, especially the US and the EU. Finally, the paper discusses the prospects for Saudi political and diplomatic rapprochement with Russia, contemplating the future of a Saudi understanding with Russia within the OPEC + framework.



**Mohammad al-Saidi**

Assistant Professor of Public Policy in the Department of International Affairs at Qatar University. He has worked on projects and published papers on Yemen, the Gulf, East Africa, and Jordan on issues ranging from development and the environment to water resources, management, and sustainable transitions.

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## **The Ukraine War and the Food Security Crisis: The Impact on Arab Gulf States**

The Ukraine war has triggered a severe global food crisis. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has resulted in serious supply disruptions and agricultural price increases, directly affecting countries of the Middle East due to their high dependence on food imports from Russia and Ukraine. This food crisis coincides with a period of high vulnerability caused by multiple shocks in recent years, including the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper highlights the impact of the Ukraine war on food security in Middle Eastern countries, with a special focus on the role of the Arab Gulf states in addressing this matter. It documents a looming crisis with serious risks for the politically fragile countries in the Middle East. Furthermore, countries highly dependent on food imports from Russia and Ukraine have been forced to mitigate the accelerating costs of food subsidies and to replace some imports as the grain shortage persists. However, as the example of the Gulf States shows, state responses can still play an important role in steering the outcomes of the current food crisis. Alongside classic responses such as trade controls, supply diversification, public support and aid, this paper argues that the position of the Arab Gulf countries will play a crucial role in mitigating some aspects of the crisis in the Middle East through regional cooperation and aid related food security and fiscal stability.



## Mustafa al-Bazarkan

Head of the Centre for Energy Information and Research since 2017. He was formerly an economic consultant and researcher at the Iraq Centre for Information and Research and the economics editor for *al-Arab al-Dawliya* and wrote a daily column for the same paper. He has given numerous lectures on oil and gas at international conferences in Iraq and elsewhere in the Arab region, as well as in Europe.

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### **A Global Hybrid Energy System: Energy Opportunities and Challenges in the Arab Gulf Region in Light of the Ukrainian Crisis**

The world had barely emerged from the global Covid-19 pandemic, which cost the global economy more than \$20 trillion, when it fell into the Ukrainian crisis, which has forced the EU to adopt a new, totally unanticipated strategy to end its reliance on Russian oil and gas. The sanctions imposed on Russia are the harshest in the history of sanctions, designed to exhaust its economy; their impact has been felt not only in Russia, but on the global economy, and particularly the economies of EU states. Prior to the war, the EU imported more than 3 million barrels per day of Russian oil and 155 billion cubic meters of gas. This paper examines the EU's efforts to find alternatives to Russian oil, arguing that the war in Ukraine will reshape the global energy order anew. This represents a promising opportunity for Arab Gulf oil- and gas-producers and exporters, which possess productive capacities beyond those of other producers like the US. In turn, this could guarantee sustainable economic and human development to anchor large enterprises for the production and export of oil and gas in the Gulf states. The paper asserts that this can be made possible by diversifying international partnerships and strengthening equitable economic and political relations to achieve the interests of all parties, but it requires confronting the emerging challenges in the energy market.



**Naji Abi Aad**

Executive director of Beirut-based Petroleb Energy since 2012. Before that he served as a senior advisor to the CEO of Qatar Petroleum International. He has contributed to numerous reports and studies on energy issues in the Middle East and has published several academic papers, most recently "Natural Gas in the Arab Gulf States: Growing Consumption and Major Future Challenges," published in 2018 in *Istishraf*.

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## **The Impact of the Ukrainian Crisis on Global and Gulf Gas Production**

This paper discusses the impact of the Ukrainian crisis on global and Gulf gas production. The crisis has disrupted the global production of natural gas, particularly in the European market, which was heavily reliant on Russian gas, exposing the scarcity of global gas supplies. The paper argues that with the interruptions to Russian gas supplies to several European states, the continent was compelled to take energy-saving measures to reduce its dependence on Russian gas in favour of other energy sources, particularly coal and nuclear energy, with a special interest in renewables. The paper expects Europe to rely more heavily on LNG, in order to enhance the security of its gas supplies, and to import LNG, especially from the US, Qatar, Australia, Mozambique, and Canada. The paper argues that natural gas is likely to continue to play an important role in energy consumption and electricity generation in the EU until 2030, after which its use will decline in keeping with the EU's commitment to climate neutrality by 2050. Accordingly, the paper asserts that Europe will begin to develop its substantial shale gas resources, particularly if serious technological progress is made to limit the environmental impacts of this non-conventional source of gas.



## Nikolay A. Kozhanov

Associate Research Professor at the Gulf Studies Centre of Qatar University. He was previously a visiting fellow at Chatham House's Russia and Eurasia program. His research focuses on the political geography of energy in the Gulf and Russian foreign policy in the Middle East, as well as the Iranian economy and international relations. He is the editor of *Russian Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East: New Trends, Old Traditions*, published in 2022 by Hurst.

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### Repercussions of the Ukrainian Crisis for Energy Security in the Arab Gulf Region

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has impacted energy security in the Arab Gulf region. This paper argues that the war has shifted the international community's focus from demand security to supply security, which has in turn led Western states to look to oil-producing states in the Gulf as a potential alternative to Russia in the European energy market. Rising oil prices, a trend encouraged by the Ukrainian crisis, have not only impacted oil producers, which were hit by the Covid-19 pandemic; they have had a positive impact on global macroeconomic indicators. International oil companies' exit from Russia is likely to send them towards the Arab Gulf region, with its promises of active engagement from domestic national oil companies. The paper posits that this may spur Gulf producers to alter their pricing policy. Saudi Arabia led the way when it cut prices in June 2022 for Europe and Asia. The paper discusses how Gulf producers' disinclination to cooperate with oil consumers to slow or even reverse rising oil prices is leading consumers to look for alternatives to change the situation in their favour. The paper also discusses the impact of the Ukrainian crisis on domestic energy and economic security in Gulf states, arguing that it will not be positive given rising costs of fuel, high inflation and the high cost of production inputs, in addition to high oil revenues.



**Rachid El Bazzim**

Research Professor at Ibn Zohr University in Agadir, Morocco. He was previously a professor of public law at the Faculty of Legal, Economic, and Social Sciences at Hassan I University. He has published numerous studies on energy in Arab Gulf states, most recently "Gulf States and Challenges of Shifts in the Energy Sector," published in *Siyasat Arabiya* in 2019 and "Exploring the Future of the Energy Shift in the Arab World: The Case of Morocco," which appeared in *Istishraf* in 2018.

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## **Gulf States and the Ukraine War: Between Climate Commitments and Energy Security Anxieties**

The repercussions of the Ukraine crisis have been felt throughout energy markets as the world woke up to the cost of its reliance on fossil fuels. This became apparent as Europe hastily sought to diversify its energy supplies, which again prompted questions about the place of Arab Gulf states in global energy markets. This paper discusses Saudi Arabia and the UAE's stance on increasing oil production, which puts them at odds with the US, with both of them showing a reluctance to align themselves to the position of any individual party on Ukraine. The paper attributes this to trade interests, the Yemen war, and the issue of human rights, which are all factors that led the two states to adopt a position of neutrality on the Ukraine crisis. The paper seeks to answer a series of questions about the implications of the Ukraine crisis for the energy sector and the role the Gulf states play. It also offers an analysis of the options available to Gulf states for dealing with the energy-related crisis and speculates about the future of climate commitments given the dominance of power relations and concerns about energy security. The paper concludes that Arab Gulf states' revenues from energy exports are likely to reach unprecedented levels. At the same time, these states will work to gradually reduce emissions and develop new export opportunities, particularly in hydrogen derivatives and low-carbon industrial goods.



**Şaban Kardaş**

Research Professor at the Gulf Studies Center at Qatar University. He has taught classes at Diplomacy Academy, Sakarya University, Police Academy, Military Academy, and TOBB University of Economics and Technology, where he is currently on academic leave. He received his doctoral degree in political science from the University of Utah. Dr Kardaş also holds a master's degree in international relations from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, and a second master's degree in European Studies from the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) in Bonn, Germany. He has published articles and book chapters on Turkish domestic and foreign policy, energy policy, and international security and has been an occasional contributor to international media.

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## **The Implications of the Ukraine crisis on Relationship between the GCC countries and Türkiye**

The Ukraine war changed the geopolitical landscape in Eurasia and beyond. Türkiye has found itself in the centre of the crisis as a country pursuing positive and beneficial relations with both Russia and Ukraine. Ankara further felt the heat when both sides put pressure on regulation of the use of Turkish straits for both parties' ships. Turkish policy makers were quick to inform both sides that they consider the crisis a war-like situation, and it will close the straits to war ships. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has pursued a mediation agenda since the outset of the invasion with little progress initially. The deepening of the crisis opened the door to possible understandings, including the grain deal that assured transportation of Ukrainian grain export to the regions that suffer from food insecurity brokered by Türkiye and the UN. The Ukraine crisis has increased Erdogan's regional leverage, which he will no doubt utilize in relations with the GCC as Türkiye searches for foreign investment to tackle the currency crisis at home. It will soon become clear whether or not this regional leverage will result in strong political and economic relations with the GCC countries. However, it is certain that the ongoing normalization between Türkiye and both the UAE and Saudi Arabia will be taken to a new level considering the new self-confidence within ruling cadres in Türkiye. This presentation will discuss the relations between Türkiye and the GCC in a dynamic and changing geopolitical atmosphere post-Ukraine crisis.



**Satoru Nakamura**

Associate Professor of history and politics at Kobe University in Japan and was a visiting researcher at Qatar University in the fall of 2014. He has authored a number of publications on the Arab Gulf and has edited several books, including *Preventive Diplomacy in the Middle East Region*, published by Shinzansha in 2012.

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## **Is a New Chapter in Qatar-Japan Relations on the Horizon in Light of the Ukrainian Crisis?**

This paper discusses Qatari-Japanese ties. Bilateral trade relations between two countries expanded markedly until 2013 and then extended to other areas such as technology, cultural exchange, and security dialogue. This paper argues that the changes wrought by the Ukrainian crisis offer an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between the two states, particularly since it gives Qatar the chance to expand its LNG exports. At the same time, there is a growing international trend, especially among the major powers, to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, which makes it incumbent on Qatar to plan for the shift to the carbon-neutral age. The paper argues that the crisis offers an opportunity to enhance Japanese-Qatari cooperation. Particularly since Qatar is looking to diversify its economy, cooperation would allow it to take advantage of Japanese expertise in energy planning and technological development for carbon neutrality. The paper concludes that both Qatar and Japan are experiencing a dynamic transformation that requires continued dialogue to restructure their multipronged cooperation, especially in energy and security. Both countries are capable of developing a vision to achieve their common interests that serves their aspirations for enterprise diversification and managing unanticipated diplomatic and geopolitical risks.





**Thomas W O'Donnell**

Academic, analyst and consultant on the global energy system. He has taught courses on energy and resources in international relations and development at several international universities, including the University of Michigan, Ohio State University, New School University, and the Studley Institute of International Affairs. He has also worked as a researcher at several research centers, including the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, a Fulbright Scholar, and a Visiting Professor at the Center for the Study of Development at the Central University of Venezuela.

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## **Impact of the Russian-Ukrainian War on Global and Gulf Energy Markets**

Russia's war in Ukraine has thrown the European security order into crisis while an economic war in the energy sector is pitting Russia against Ukraine's US-led allies. This paper discusses the conflict in the oil and gas market over the medium and long term, with a focus on the impact of the economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the US and its allies. These sanctions could impact Russia's place in the energy sector, making it a second-tier player unable to operate freely. The paper examines how GCC states could put themselves at the centre of today's chaotic market to enhance their short- and long-term centrality in the European, Indian, and possibly Chinese markets lost by Russia, which would strengthen their economies. The paper argues that purchasers of oil and gas from GCC states, particularly European states, need to recalibrate their energy strategies.

## Session Chairs

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### Abdullah Baabood

Omani researcher and academic. He was previously the director of the Centre for Gulf Studies at the College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University and the director of the Gulf Research Centre at the University of Cambridge. He received his doctorate in international political economy from the University of Cambridge in the UK, as well as an MA in business administration and an MA in international relations.

### Faisal Abu Salib

Professor in the Political Science Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, at Kuwait University and the director of the Centre for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies at the same institution. He received his doctorate in political science from the University of Manchester in the UK in 2009. He was previously the chair of the American studies unit in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Kuwait University. He has published papers and books on US foreign policy in the Gulf region.

### Habib Allah Turkistani

Professor of Business Administration and International Marketing at King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia. He has held several academic positions and was previously the secretary of the Market Research and Consulting Institute and the head of the office for administrative studies and marketing for the university's business administration. He founded the Market and Economic Research Group and has authored several studies on strategic administration and planning, human resource development, and academic training and marketing. He received his doctorate from Lancaster University in the UK.

### Ghanim Al-Najjar

Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University, founder of the Center for Strategic and Future Studies at the same university, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. He has been a visiting Professor at several Universities, lectured in many foreign and Arab universities, and is an international expert in many international organizations. He published extensively on human rights and political science.

## Hatim al-Shanfari

Researcher and academic. Chairman of the Board of Directors of Gulf Investment Services Holding Company in the Sultanate of Oman, Chairman of the Board of Directors of First Mazoon Fund, Chairman of the Board of Governors of Al-Saad International School and a member of the Faculty of Economics at Sultan Qaboos University. He was a member of the Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Oman and a member of the Advisory Board of the Management Centre at the American University in Cairo. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Strathclyde in Scotland.

## Mohammed Al-Mesfer

Retired professor at the University of Qatar, he obtained his PhD in political science from New York State University in 1984. He has been a Qatari diplomat and has published many books, studies and research papers in a number of Arab peer-reviewed journals, most recently *International Organizations: History, Politics, Economy, Law, Administration*, Qatar University Press, 2021 (in Arabic); and the book *Gulf-Gulf relations: the dilemma of a strategic vacuum and fragmentation (1971–2018)*, Al-Jazeera Studies Center, 2018 (in Arabic). He contributes regularly to the Qatari and Arab press.

## Rashid Hamad Al-Nuaimi

Director of the Qatar Armed Forces Strategic Studies Centre. He previously held several positions, including the director of the office of the Air Force Commander and liaison officer to the Gulf Cooperation Council in 2009. He has published many studies on security issues in the Arab Gulf States and contributed as a speaker in international conferences. He holds a PhD in International Relations.

## Zafar al-Ajami

Executive Director of the Gulf Observer Group and a retired staff colonel with the Kuwait air force. He received his doctorate in Arab Gulf security. He has published books and several papers in refereed Arabic journals, most recently "Arab Gulf Security: Development and Issues from the Perspective of Regional and International Relations" (2011), "History of the Kuwaiti Army" (2004 and 2011), and "The Kuwaiti Army in the Era of Mubarak al-Sabah 1896–1915" (2000). [Not clear whether these works are articles or books – if books please remove quotation marks and italicise titles]