



Arab Gulf Country Bulletins



12 - 17 May 2019

by

Nikola Zukalová



Kingdom of Bahrain

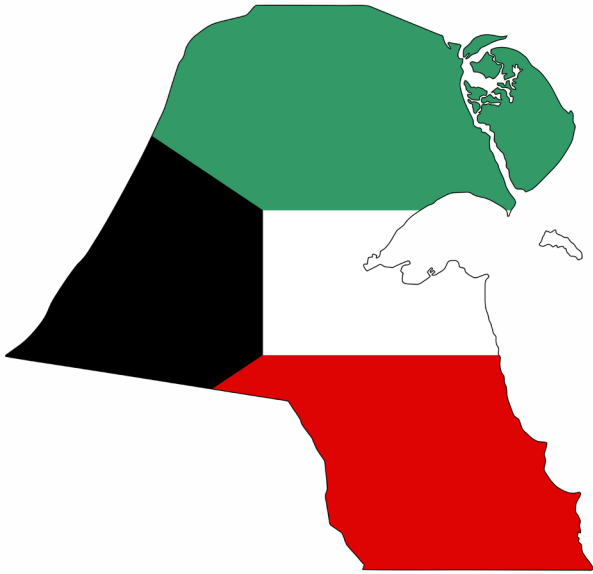


Sunday, 12 May—Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa arrived in Egypt, where he held talks with the country's President, Abdel Fatah El-Sisi. During the meeting the two leaders focused on the latest regional developments and ways to enhance cooperation and coordination. On the occasion, King Hamad commended Egypt's role in establishing regional security and stability.

Wednesday, 15 May—Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa chaired the joint meeting of the Cabinet and the Supreme Defence Council, focused at the latest developments. King Hamad was briefed on the recent rapid regional escalation, i.e. the heightened tensions with Iran and attacks on four commercial vessels in the Gulf of Oman and oil facilities in Saudi Arabia. King Hamad praised the high military readiness of the Kingdom's military and security forces. He also highlighted that the situation in Bahrain is stable, despite several attempts to meddle into the Kingdom's domestic affairs and exploit sectarianism to threaten the country's unity.



State of Kuwait



Sunday, 12 May — During the 7th Kuwait-Iraq Joint Committee Meeting, held in Kuwait and co-chaired by Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Iraq's Foreign Minister, Dr Mohammad Ali Al-Hakim, the two countries signed a number of agreements, Memoranda of Understanding and executive programmes to strengthen bilateral

relations and cooperation, notably on economic and developmental cooperation, avoiding double taxation and preventing financial evasion. Kuwait affirmed its support for Iraq's measures in the fight against terrorism and preservation of the country's security and stability.



Sultanate of Oman



Sunday, 12 May—Oman's Foreign Ministry announced that it will reopen the country's embassy in Iraq to develop the two countries' bilateral relations. The move comes nearly 30 years after the embassy was closed following Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Wednesday, 15 May—Oman's Capital Market Authority announced suspension of the 10% tax on dividends from 6 May for the period of three years with the aim of boosting foreign investments.



State of Qatar



Wednesday, 15 May—During the UN Human Rights Council Review on the situation in Qatar, the representatives of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt called on Qatar to stop funding terrorist groups, respect migrant workers' rights, remove barriers for Qataris and expatriates to perform Hajj and Umrah in Saudi Arabia, end arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances of Qatari nationals, including members of the Al-Thani ruling family, and expressed concerns over the situation of the Al-Ghufran clan. Qatar

for its part expressed concerns about the measures imposed on it in light of the Gulf Crisis and boycott by the three countries and the UAE since mid-2017.

Friday, 17 May—The state-owned energy giant, Qatar Petroleum (QP), won exploration rights in five offshore blocks in Argentina as part of two consortia. Qatar Petroleum won the exploration rights for three blocks in the Malvinas West basin as part of a consortium with an Exxon Mobil affiliate, where it will hold a 30% interest, and for two blocks in the North Argentina basin as part of a consortium of affiliate of the Royal Dutch Shell and the QP, which will have a 40% operating interest. Some of the exploration areas lie near the Malvinas Islands, which are currently under the control of the United Kingdom but are claimed by Argentina.



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Tuesday, 14 May—Two pumping stations of the world's largest oil exporter, the state-owned Saudi Aramco, were hit in the Kingdom by a drone attack, claimed by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen. The attack caused fire and left a minor damages to the Afif and Al-Duwadimi pumping stations in the north-west of the Riyadh region linked to the 1,200 km East-West Pipeline, the

main cross-country oil link between the main oil fields in the East of the Kingdom and the Yanbu port on the Red Sea. Saudi Aramco suspended the pumping of crude oil via the pipeline, with capacity of approximately 5 million barrels per day, but resumed the operations on Wednesday.

Tuesday, 14 May—The state-owned oil giant, Saudi Aramco, aims to increase its crude oil supply to Europe and the Mediterranean by 300,000 barrels per day within the next two years. The announcement came as Aramco seeks to secure new markets and expands its trading operations in Europe, with the new London office opening in the summer.



Tuesday, 14 May—South Korea and Saudi Arabia agreed to establish a joint nuclear power research centre in the Kingdom. The centre will enhance bilateral cooperation on the research and development of advanced nuclear reactor technologies and advance the Kingdom's know-how in the field as South Korea is the world's leader in the commercial nuclear power sector. During the 3rd Korea-Saudi Arabia Joint Nuclear Committee, both countries agreed to boost cooperation to establish the System-Integrated Modular Advanced Reactor (SMART), an integral-type small reactor, in the Kingdom, following a three-year preliminary study that reviewed the feasibility of constructing SMART reactors there. SMART was designed by the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI) specifically for countries that need small and medium reactors.

Friday, 17 May—Saudi Aramco will supply additional 2 million barrels of oil per month to India's state-run oil company, the Indian State Corp Ltd, from July to December, to compensate for the Iranian supplies to India amid the end of the 6-month US waivers on Iran's oil.



United Arab Emirates



Sunday, 12 May—Four oil tankers—two Saudi-, one UAE- and one Norwegian-flagged vessels—were attacked off the UAE port of Fujairah in the UAE's territorial waters in the Gulf of Oman, suffering material damages. So far, no one has claimed responsibility for the attacks. The three concerned countries' permanent missions to the United Nations sent a joint letter to the

Security Council about the incident, which is currently under investigation.

Wednesday, 15 May—The UAE Federal Court sentenced six Lebanese men for setting up a terrorist cell with links to the Lebanese Hezbollah, which were reportedly plotting an attack on an unspecified vital facility in the country. Two of the men were sentenced to 10 years in jail, the other four for life imprisonment.

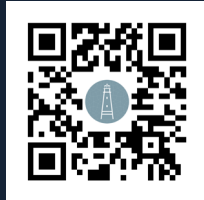
Wednesday, 15 May—Ali Saeed Mattar Al-Niyadi, Chairman of the UAE Federal Customs Authority, and Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al-Haqbani, Governor of the Saudi General Customs Authority, inked an authorised economic operator (AEO) agreement to ease trade between Saudi Arabia and the UAE through enhanced customs cooperation.⁷



Wednesday, 15 May—Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE's Armed Forces, travelled to Cairo with his delegation, where he held talks with Egypt's President, Abdel Fatah El-Sisi. During the meeting they discussed ways to advance the long-standing bilateral relations, the recent regional developments and joint efforts to address the sources of threat to regional security.



Subscribe to our Newsletter



or visit www.egic.info

The Arabian Gulf is rapidly becoming a geopolitical pivot. As a result, it is important to understand the internal and international dynamics unfolding in the region and the countries that compose it.

We at EGIC are proud to present “The Last Thing to Read this Week” segment which contains a small, carefully selected, batch of the most important events unfolding in the countries of the Arab Gulf to help you map the region’s trends.

