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The Last Thing to Read this Week

*by*

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## Kingdom of Bahrain

Sunday, 3 March—Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, received the Head of the European Union's (EU) Delegation to the GCC and its member states, Michele Cervone d'Urso. During the meeting they discussed current investment opportunities, ways to advance Bahrain-EU economic cooperation and expertise exchange.

Monday, 4 March—The United States' delegation, led by the US Treasury Deputy Assistant Secretary, Eric Meyer, was received by Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa. During the meeting, they reviewed economic cooperation and ways to enhance it.



Thursday, 7 March—Bahrain's Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, received the Deputy Commander of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), Lieutenant General Thomas W Bergeson, with his accompanying delegation. During the meeting they reviewed the US-Bahraini partnership, Prince Salman hailed the key role of the US in maintaining international peace and security. Later that day, Lt Gen Bergeson also met separately the Commander-in-Chief

of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), Field Marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, and the Commander of the Royal Guard, Major General Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, to review and discuss defence cooperation.



## State of Kuwait

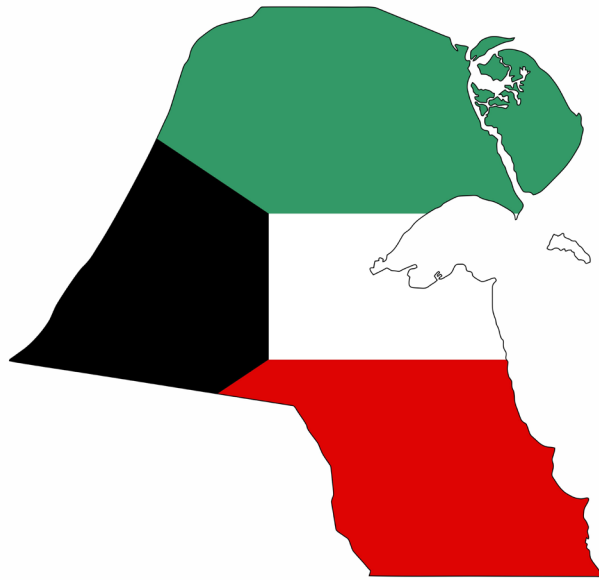
Sunday, 3 March—The Counter-terrorism Coordinator of the European Union, Gilles De Kerchove, and his accompanying delegation met several state officials during their two-day visit to Kuwait, notably Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. During the meeting they discussed security ties between the EU and Kuwait and ways to further develop them.

Monday, 4 March—Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Europe, Waleed Al-Khubaizi, and Kuwait's Ambassador to France, Sami Al-Sulaiman, participated in the 2nd Strategic Dialogue between Kuwait and France, held in Paris. The Meeting focused

Friday, 8 March—The Kuwaiti delegation, led by the Treasurer of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Abdullah Al-Humaidhi, visited Florence, Italy, seeking to enhance the economic relations between Kuwait and Italy.

on enhancing cooperation in political, cultural, and military fields among others and exploring investment opportunities.

Friday, 8 March—Between 19 and 20 March 2019, Kuwait City will host the 3rd European Union-Gulf Cooperation Council Business Forum, titled 'An Oasis of Opportunities,' promoting business opportunities between the EU and the Gulf countries. The Forum will include a number of high-level experts and speakers from both regions.





## Sultanate of Oman

Sunday, 3 March—Oman's delegation, led by the Commander of the Royal Army of Oman, Major General Matar bin Salim Al-Balushi, participated in the 18th Meeting of the Commanders of the Gulf Cooperation Council Land Forces in Riyadh. The Meeting discussed joint military action, ways to boost cooperation between the ground forces and the GCC defence integration.

Monday, 4 March—The Secretary General of Oman's Foreign Ministry, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamoud Al-Busaidi, and the Swiss Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Pascale Baeriswyl, held talks in Berne, Switzerland. They discussed bilateral cooperation and opportunities for enhancing them, particularly in investments and tourism in line with the diversification of Oman's economy and cooperation exchange of experiences between the public and private sector. They also reviewed some regional and international issues.

Thursday, 7 March—Oman's Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Yousef bin Alawi bin Abdullah, met with the United Nations' Special Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, to discuss the Yemen peace process and the preparations for the upcoming UN-sponsored consultations between the legitimate Yemeni Government and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels.





## State of Qatar

Monday, 4 March—The European Commission and Qatar marked a landmark Aviation Agreement, improving the set of standards and rules for flights between EU countries and Qatar in line with the EU's Aviation Strategy for Europe.

Monday, 4 March—Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov kicked off his Gulf tour in Doha. He met with a number of Qatari officials, including the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani. They discussed several regional issues, including conflicts in Libya, Syria and its return to the Arab League, the Middle East Process, the Gulf Crisis, the military deal between Russia and Qatar potentially including the Russian missile defence system S-400, and the US-Taliban talks in Doha. Both sides affirmed their interest in strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation, particularly



in trade and investments. During his Gulf tour, Mr Lavrov visited also Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, where he met with his counterparts and the countries' leaders.

Monday, 4 March—Qatar's Emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, arrived to Austria for a two-day visit, where he met a number of senior Austrian officials, including President Alexander Van der Bellen, and Chancellor Sebastian Kurz. They reviewed bilateral relations and discussed ways to enhance them in various fields,

notably energy, investments, trade and technology, and exchanged views on recent regional and international developments. The Chancellor and Emir witnessed the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding: between Qatar's Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Austria's Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs on economic, trade and technical cooperation, and between the Austria's Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism and the Qatar National Tourism Council on cooperation in tourism.



## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Tuesday, 5 March—The Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, met the United Nations' Special Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, and his accompanying delegation, in Riyadh. They focused on the UN efforts to implement the Sweden ceasefire agreement between the legitimate Yemeni Government and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels, which is crucial for the beginning of political negotiations to end the Yemen war.

Thursday, 7 March—The 28 Member states of the European Union unanimously rejected the European Commission's proposed list of 23 countries and territories with high risk of terrorist financing and money laundering, which had intended to include Sau-

di Arabia, four United States' territories, Nigeria and Panama. The Council cited a lack of transparency and resilience of the process for its decision. The Commission now has to prepare a new blacklist addressing the concerns of the member states.

coordination between the Shoura Council and the European Parliament and ways to bolster them. Alliot-Marie highlighted the Kingdom's key stabilising role regionally and internationally because of its sustainable development and counter-terrorism efforts.

Friday, 8 March— Prince Khalid bin Abdullah, a Member of the Saudi Arabia's Shoura Council, met in Brussels with Michele Alliot-Marie, Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with the Arabian Peninsula. They discussed parliamentary cooperation and



## United Arab Emirates

Sunday, 3 March—The UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, received United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, in the presence of the UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr Anwar Gargash, and Minister of State, Dr Sultan bin Ahmad Sultan Al-Jaber, to discuss the prospects for boosting bilateral cooperation and the recent regional developments, particularly the situation in Yemen.

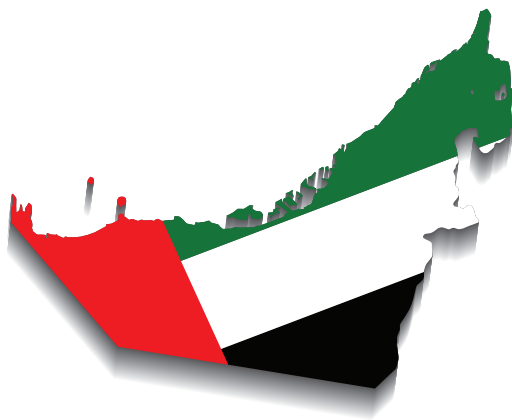
Monday, 4 March—The delegation from the US Treasury, led by Sigal Mandelker, the Under Secretary of the US Treasury, was received by the Chairman of UAE Banks Fed-

eration, Abdulaziz Al-Ghurair, and several CEOs of the leading Emirati banks. They focused on ways to improve the UAE-US cooperation and coordination in banking and financial services to contribute to economic prosperity and security.

Tuesday, 5 March—The United Kingdom's Chief of Defence Staff, General Sir Nicholas Patrick Carter, travelled to the UAE to discuss military and defence cooperation and met with several senior UAE officials, notably the Chief of Staff of the

UAE Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Hamad Mohammed Thani Al-Rumaithi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Matar Salim Ali Al-Dhaheri.

Wednesday, 6 March—The Pearl Petroleum Company Limited, the five-member consortium comprised of two private Emirati oil and gas companies, Crescent Petroleum (35%) and Dana Gas (35%), Germany's RWEST (10%), Austria's OMV (10%) and Hungary's MOL (10%), signed a 20-year Gas Sales Agreement with the Kurdistan Regional Government, to in-





crease gas supplies as part of the planned \$700 million expansion of the Kurdistan Gas Project. The deal will enhance electricity supply in the region and support its economic development as the consortium plans to supply additional 250 million of standard cubic feet of natural gas a day to fuel the major power plants in the region.



*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.*

