Twitter Thread by Barak Ravid



Barak Ravid
@BarakRavid



1 \ BREAKING: Saudi Arabia, Qatar & other Gulf states to sign tomorrow an agreement towards ending the Gulf rift. Jared Kushner who mediated between the parties traveled to Saudi Arabia to participate in the signing veremony which will take place during the Gulf leaders' summit

2 \ BREAKING: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister announced Saudi Arabia and Qatar will open their land, air and sea borders starting tonight ahead of the signing of the agreement tomorrow

3 \ Why it matters: Saudi Arabia and Qatar were under pressure by the Trump administration to sign the deal. Both countries see the signing of the agreement as a gesture to Trump & also as part of their effort to "clean the table" and prepare for the incoming Biden administration

4 \ The state of play: Kushner traveled to the Gulf Cooperation Council summit which will take place in Al Ula. White House envoy Avi Berkowitz and adviser Brian Hook who helped negotiate the agreement joined Kushner on his trip

5 \ The summit tomorrow will be the first time the Emir of Qatar Tamim Bin Hamad al-Thani visits Saudi Arabia since the crisis erupted in 2017. The leaders of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Kuwait are going to attend

6 \ The Leaders are going to sign an agreement which includes 3 confidence building measures: Saudi Arabia, UAE & Bahrain will lift air & sea blockade off Qatar, Qatar will withdraw all law suits against its Gulf neighbors & all parties will stop media campaign against each other

7 \ Behind the scenes: The deal was reached in principle during Jared Kushner's last visit to Saudi Arabia and Qatar several weeks ago during which he met the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and the Qatari Emir Tamim. Kushner has close relationships with both leaders

8 \ U.S. officials say that after meeting the Crown prince Kushner travelled to Doha with Hook but left behind in Saudi his close aides Avi Berkowitz and Adam Boehler. The four mediated between the Saudis and the Qataris over the phone in real time until a draft deal was reached

9 \ In the last few weeks final discussions where held with the Saudis and the Qataris to make sure they are committed to the understandings that were reached, the U.S. officials told me

10 \ The White House also lobbied the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt who all had reservations about the agreement, see Qatar in a very negative way and do not think the Qataris are sincere

11 \ The deal almost fell apart on Sunday when a last minute miscommunication created new tensions between the Saudis and the Qataris over the agreement, sources briefed on the matter told me

12 \ Kushner who was supposed to leave on Sunday afternoon postponed his trip. A source told me Kushner had to negotiate with the Saudis & the Qataris until the middle of the night on Sunday until a solution was found. He left Washington to Saudi Arabia early morning Monday

13 \ A senior diplomat from one of the Gulf countries told me the agreement is a step in the right direction and includes some positive developments but it is not the end of the Gulf rift

14 \ “Some of the issues were solved but the root causes for the rift – bad personal relationships between the leaders and big policy differences on Iran, Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood are still there”, the diplomat told me on the Saudi-Qatar deal

15 \ The U.S. maintains close ties with both Qatar and its rivals, but the Trump administration's several attempts to reconcile the parties were unsuccessful. The agreement would be a last-minute achievement for Kushner and the Trump administration before Jan. 20. END