

Impeachment of President Trump Now Much More Likely

The Trump-Qatar Scandal that Could End His Presidency

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

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Featured image: President Donald Trump and King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia sign a Joint Strategic Vision Statement for the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during ceremonies, Saturday, May 20, 2017, at the Royal Court Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (Official White House Photo Shealah Craighead)

On the morning of Monday July 10th, broke online from three reporters at *The Intercept* — **Ryan Grim, Ben Walsh, and Clayton Swisher** — the headline, [“Jared Kushner Tried and Failed to Get a Half-Billion Dollar Bailout from Qatar”](#), recounting events which could also have been titled (perhaps more interestingly) “Evidence Trump Sparked Saud Boycott of Qatar to Salvage His Fortune and that of Daughter Ivanka”. Here are key portions of that narrative, which will be introduced and accompanied by other details of this case, which add even more to the picture of the U.S. President’s using his political position so as to protect, and add to, the wealth of Donald Trump and, even more, of Ivanka Trump.



Jared Kushner (Source: [6sqft](#))

Ivanka’s husband, Jared Kushner, had used his [father Charles Kushner](#)’s fortune to buy, in 2007, at the highest price ever paid for any building in NYC, 666 5th Avenue at 53rd Street; and, now, this investment could turn out to have been so bad as to bankrupt his father’s, and his and his wife’s company, Kushner Properties:

On 13 March 2017, Bloomberg News reporters **David Kocieniewski** and **Caleb Melby** had bannered [“Kushners May Get \\$400 Million From Chinese on Tower”](#) and reported that a:

“planned \$4-billion transaction includes terms that some real estate experts consider unusually favorable for the Kushners. It would provide them with both a sizable cash payout from [China’s] Anbang Insurance Group for a property that has struggled financially and an equity stake in a new partnership” that “would make business partners of Kushner Cos. and Anbang, whose murky links to the Chinese power structure have raised national security concerns over its U.S. investments. In the process, an existing mortgage owed by the Kushners will be slashed to about a fifth of its current amount,”

thus enabling Kushner Properties to avoid being bankrupted by Jared’s 2007 purchase-decision. (Two days later, on March 15th, news became public that [Anbang declined the deal](#).)

Just weeks prior to that news-report, **Dow Jones** had headlined on 16 February 2017, "[One of Government's Largest Landlords Pays Millions Each Year to Trump Company](#)" and **Alexandra Berzon** and **Peter Grant** reported that:

President Donald Trump's company receives tens of millions of dollars a year from Vornado Realty Trust, which relies on the federal government for a significant portion of its revenue and is vying for new work from Mr. Trump's administration. ... Two of the most valuable real-estate assets in Mr. Trump's company, the Trump Organization, are 30% stakes in a pair of office buildings controlled by Vornado. ... Vornado decides how much Mr. Trump's company — the properties' only other owner — receives from the partnership each year. ... It is up to Vornado to decide how much of their incomes are held for capital upgrades and other long-term expenses and how much of the income is profit. Of that bottom-line figure, Vornado has to distribute 30% annually to Mr. Trump's company. ...

Vornado bought a 49.5% stake in the mixed-use tower at 666 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan from Kushner Cos., where Mr. Kushner at the time was chief executive. The next year, Vornado purchased retail space in the building for \$710 million. ... The company [Vornado], a major owner of buildings in Washington and other U.S. cities, counts the U.S. government as its largest tenant. ... Government vacancies, he [the head of Vornado] said on an investor conference call that year, are "the eye of the storm for our company."

So, 666 5th Avenue is no longer owned fully by Kushner Properties, but also by Donald Trump's major business partner, Vornado (which is heavily dependent upon decisions by U.S. President Trump), and both could be bankrupted if some other investors cannot be quickly found to take on the burden of Jared's 2007 decision to purchase that building. (After Anbang said no, the Kushners were really desperate.)

This brings us to The Intercept's July 10th report, that U.S. President Trump might have requested the Saudis to blockade Qatar so as to punish the family who own and control Qatar, the Thanis. It says:



Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani
(Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

Throughout 2015 and 2016, Jared Kushner and his father, Charles, negotiated directly with a major investor in Qatar, **Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani**, known as HBJ for short, in an effort to refinance the property on Fifth Avenue, the sources said.

Trump himself has [unsuccessfully sought financing](#) in recent years from the Qataris, but it is difficult to overstate just how important to Kushner the investment at 666 Fifth Avenue is for him, his company, and his family's legacy in real estate. Without some outside intervention or unforeseen turnaround in the market, the investment could become an embarrassing half-billion dollar loss. It's unclear precisely how much peril such a loss would put Jared, or his family's, finances in, given the opacity of their private holdings.

HBJ, a former prime minister of Qatar who ran the country's \$250 billion sovereign wealth fund, is a billionaire and one of the world's richest men. He [owns a yacht worth \\$300 million](#) called Al Mirqab, the same name he gave to the private investment firm that Kushner pitched. The former emir of Qatar summed up HBJ's power [with a quip](#): "I may run this country, but he owns it."

...

Meanwhile, the water is rising on the Fifth Avenue investment. And the blockade continues.

Had the Qataris known where things were heading diplomatically, said the source in the region, they'd have happily ponied up the money, even knowing that it was a losing investment. "It would have been much cheaper," he said.

The Intercept's reporting-team present strong circumstantial evidence that, as they put it,

"THE CRISIS DATES TO MAY, when President Trump visited Saudi Arabia and met with regional leaders there, laying his hands on the now-famous orb."

That "orb" is [pictured here, atop my earlier article documenting](#) that the Saudis' power-competition against the Thanis to lead the global fundamentalist-Sunni movement, had long preceded the Saudis' boycott of Qatar, and that the Saudis quite likely requested from Trump during [his visit there on May 20th](#), whether he would back them on a boycott of the Thanis' Qatar, and that Trump (whether for personal business reasons or otherwise) was eager to say yes to that proposal from them.

But, in either case (as I document there with links), Trump's pro-Saud position is supporting what the U.S. federal government has long been stating, in confidential communications, is, in fact, the world's biggest financial backer of Al Qaeda and other fundamentalist Sunni jihadist organizations. The royal Saudis are even bigger in that than the royal Thanis are. If Trump does this (supports jihadism) out of incompetency, or if he does it out of greed, makes no difference to his being able to be impeached and removed from office and replaced by **Mike Pence**.

Also, it should here be pointed out — which neither The Intercept's report, nor the Huffington Post's report that it linked to (including in the excerpt that's quoted here from the TI article) as backup for it, noted, but *should* have noted — that **Clayton Swisher**, who wrote all of the HuffPo's article and co-authored TI's article, is an employee of the Thanis: as [TI puts it](#),

“Clayton Swisher is the Doha-based director of investigative journalism with Al Jazeera Media Network.”

HuffPo failed to publish that essential information, but said only the far less relevant:

“Clayton Swisher is an investigative journalist and author of two books on the Arab-Israeli conflict.”

What readers need to know, is that [to be an employee of Al Jazeera is to be an employee of the Thani family](#). Swisher writes as one of their agents. He also is the only one of the three co-authors of the TI article who lives and works in Qatar (Doha); so, he was probably the lead investigator among the three. The other two (Grim and Walsh) are U.S.-based and had previously worked for the Huffington Post, which has always been a Democratic Party organ (and the Democratic Party want President Trump to be impeached and Mike Pence to become President).

Whereas the ‘Russiagate’ argument against Trump is built upon so much misrepresentation as to be basically the Democratic Party’s turning of the Republican **Joseph R. McCarthy** now 60 years later, into a ghost against his own Republican Party and turning today’s Democrats into McCarthy’s mere imitators long after communism has gone, there is real and solid substance to the argument against Trump regarding his backing of the royal Saudis.

The evidence against Trump on Saudi-Qatar-gate is clearly damning against Trump in either case, and the only real questions are the initiating motive behind, and the precise sequence of events immediately preceding, the [5-6 June 2017 boycott-blockade of Qatar](#). Trump is now clearly impeachable if the Republican Party decides that Pence would serve their purposes more effectively than Trump does.

At this stage, it’s only a political judgment-call by Republicans. They won the 2016 elections, and they will decide what to do with their prize — whether, going forward into the 2018 mid-term elections, theirs will be the Trump brand, or become switched to the Pence brand. Corruption isn’t, by any means, the only issue; there also are real policy-differences at stake, even within just the Republican Party. Pence built his base amongst fundamentalist Christians. And the judgment-call here will be made by Republicans, not by Democrats.

*Investigative historian **Eric Zuesse** is the author, most recently, of [They’re Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST’S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).*

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About the author:

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