Acknowledgements

Since I wrote my PhD thesis on Saudi and Iranian foreign policy a decade ago at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, much has changed in the Gulf, the Middle East and wider world. I have spent most of the time since 2013 living and teaching in Cairo, where I have been keenly aware how Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have extended their economic influence and secured their long-standing alliance with Egypt.

This book is the product of a wide range of influences and experiences. As Associate Professor and Director of the Middle East Studies Center at the American University in Cairo, I had the opportunity to engage with diplomats from various countries to learn about their strategic imperatives domestically, in the Middle East (including the Gulf) and internationally. I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to present my research on Qatar and the UAE at the Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS), Georgetown University Qatar and the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, where I gained valuable feedback. My field research to the UAE has been funded by the London School of Economics Middle East Centre as part of their project ‘Mapping Foreign Policy in the GCC’. Again, feedback from peers and scholars was extremely useful in locating the UAE’s foreign policy in a wider regional context.

Another prelude to this volume came from a workshop on oil adjustment policies in the Arab Gulf since 2014, hosted in Lebanon by Martin Beck and Thomas Richter from the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) and was published by Manchester University Press in 2021 under the title: Oil and the Political Economy in the Middle East: Post-2014 Adjustment Policies of the Arab Gulf and Beyond. This experience afforded me the opportunity to consider Saudi domestic reform and political consolidation in detail. I then had the opportunity to present a similar paper at the Institute for the Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, Princeton University as a visiting scholar, which was an incredibly rewarding experience. Bernard Haykel was generous in hosting me and critiquing my work.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who agreed to be interviewed on or off the record for this research. Those I can mention here include a number of current or former ambassadors: Gerald M. Feierstein, Joseph W. Westphal, Seyed Hossein Mousavian, Sir William Patey, Navdeep Suri, Akihiko Nakajima, and Katsuhiko Takahashi. I am also grateful to Michael Knights, who gave up his time to discuss Gulf security issues. These contributions greatly enriched the material presented in this volume and allowed me to question, crystallise or re-evaluate key issues and concepts. Similarly, colleagues and friends have challenged my work and offered some great insights during the process of reviewing individual chapters: Ibrahim Fraihat (Iran), Jonathan Fulton (China), Christian Koch (Europe), Mark N. Katz (Russia), Talmiz Ahmed (India and Pakistan), Makio Yamada (Japan), Ikran Eum (Republic of Korea), Sumanto Al Qurtuby (Indonesia) and Asmady Idris (Malaysia). Any omissions or errors remain solely my responsibility.

There are various organisations I am indebted to for their contribution to my learning experience concerning Gulf politics. The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, where I am a non-resident fellow and have written a number of op-eds referenced in the research of this book, has played a vital role, first in serving as a platform for cutting-edge analysis, and second through its events from which I have been able to engage and draw a series of unique insights. The Gulf2000 project at Columbia University has been an indispensable resource for those of us in the field of Gulf studies. Thanks to Robert Byron and Lucy Burns at Manchester University Press, who have done a superb job in shepherding this project through to completion. Thanks also to my copyeditor, Judith Oppenheimer, who did a stellar job on clarifying my prose and getting the manuscript print ready.

Robert Mason
Cairo, July 2022.