ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

riting a book, for me at least, is a difficult process. I really wouldn't recommend it under almost any circumstances. However, if you insist on doing so, make sure that you are couched firmly amid a range of helpful friends, colleagues, and family who make the process bearable.

When it comes to the subject matter itself, there is just no substitute for endless discussions in classrooms, coffee shops, corridors, malls, sougs, ministries, and military bases, as well as at conferences and on Zoom, Teams, Skype, Google Hangouts, Signal, WhatsApp, and, indeed, over the phone. I must thank a litany of people, including Abdullah Baabood, Adel Hamaizia, Andreas Krieg, Becca Wasser, Cinzia Bianco, Courtney Freer, Eleanor Gillespie, Emile Hokayem, Gerd Nonneman, Jamie Ingram, Jared Koch, Justin Alexander, Karen Young, Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, Kristin Diwan Smith, Matteo Legrenzi, Mehran Kamrava, Michael Stephens, Mari Luomi, Miroslav Zafirov, Mohammed Abdel-Haq, Simon Henderson, Steven Wright, and Toby Dodge. I offer a particular note of thanks to David Des Roches for his patience and willingness to indulge myriad questions about the nuts and bolts of Gulf security. Similarly, I am most grateful to those colleagues—David Des Roches, Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, Mari Luomi, Courtney Freer, Ash Rossiter, and Jim Krane—who spared their time to read through drafts of the manuscript, offering valuable insight and correctives.

I am still in the debt of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI)—Jonathan Eyal and Michael Clarke—for appointing me as director of their Gulf office back in the day, which started this (seeming) obsession with the region.

In terms of friends and colleagues from the Gulf itself, I shall not do you the disservice of thanking you here, but I'm quite sure you know who you are. Many Gulf friends have guided me for over a decade now, and I'm genuinely grateful. I am also indebted to some of my more recent Gulf students who have often gone above and beyond with their time, expertise, and hospitality: *shukran jazeelan*.

As for the writing process, it's plainly a horror. But colleagues at King's have helped in myriad ways. I am most grateful to the cofounding members of the Gulshan Strategic Studies Group (GSSG)—Andy Corbett, Cathy Scott, Alex Wilson, Alex Gould, Bence Nemeth, Stefan Schilling, and Matt Uttley—for their discussions and distractions. Moreover, I must offer a particular note of thanks to Bence Nemeth for his willingness to endure countless discussions about the book's structure, themes, and plenty besides. I would also like to thank Amanda Chisholm for launching and running regular writing sprints for all and sundry during lockdown. This offered important structure and focus. Sincere thanks also go to Marc Lynch and to Caelyn Cobb at Columbia for their patience and encouragement, and the production team at KGL for their fastidious and diligent work.

The opportunity to lecture about the Gulf proved to be a highly enjoyable opportunity to refine my arguments and ideas. It's true what they say—teaching a subject really does make you streamline and clarify your thoughts. Many thanks to various classes at the Royal College for Defence Studies (RCDS) and at the UK Defence Academy. Moreover, I am grateful for Sciences Po asking me to author various Gulf- and Middle East–focused MA and BA courses. It has been a pleasure to teach such super-smart students. Similarly, the time spent discussing the work of my wonderful cohort of PhD students has been both enjoyable and frequently insightful—many thanks to Ahlam, Ali, Hessa, Juhaina, and Sara.

As for my family, I am ever grateful for their support. *Merci* to the wonderful French contingent, and *mòran taing* to the Scots lot. Otherwise, I owe, as ever, incalculable thanks to my long-suffering wife for her endless support.

Crouch End Summer 2022