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How Qatar Helped Free an American Hostage Without Paying Ransom

POLLY MOSENDZ

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Nancy Curtis, right, mother of freed journalist Peter Theo Curtis, leaves her house in Cambridge, Mass., followed by an unidentified tenant, Tuesday, Aug. 26, 2014. Peter Theo Curtis, who wrote under his birth name of Theo Padnos, was freed Sunday, Aug. 24, offering consolation to U.S. officials, a journalism community and family members deeply unnerved by the grisly video of James Foley's beheading in a desolate desert landscape. (AP PHOTO/MICHAEL DWYER)

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Just days after an execution video of reporter James Foley surfaced, another American journalist, Peter Theo Curtis, was released from captivity. Curtis was captured in Antakya, Turkey, and held for two years by Jabhat al-Nusra, which is affiliated with Syria's branch of al-Qaeda, but was freed over the weekend. Unlike Foley, who was killed by members of the group ISIL after they made ransom demands of more than 100 million euros, Curtis was released without paying a ransom, after help from the government of Qatar.

Qatar has become a key player in negotiation talks between terrorist organizations and the United States in the past, recently assisting in the hostage exchange of Bowe Bergdahl. They've also facilitated peace talks between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan. Qatar's intelligence service has particularly key information on Jabhat al-Nusra, which allowed for the release of Curtis without paying a ransom, according to a report by Adam Goldman and Karen DeYoung in [The Washington Post](#).

According to the Post, the impetus for Qatar's was also spurred by businessman David Bradley, who put together his own search team,



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including a retired FBI agent, after meeting a cousin of Curtis's last year. (Bradley is the owner of Atlantic Media, which is the parent company of The Wire.)

Bradley said that he and the FBI agent, traveled to Doha, Qatar, last month to work with Qatari intelligence officials. Ghanim Khalifa al-Kubaisi, chief of Qatar's intelligence service, informed them that he was able to track Curtis's location.

The rescue operation put al-Kubaisi's team in danger, and therefore required the sign off of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the current Emir of Qatar. Though complications arose, Jabhat al-Nusra agreed to release Curtis. He was brought to Israel and met by FBI officials. His mother says she intends on confiscating his passport now that he is headed back to the States.

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