

said in remarks broadcast by state-controlled television.

Analysts said Putin's remarks represented a hopeful signal for Russia's business elite. But they also noted that Putin has made similar offers in recent years and never formally barred criminal investigations into privatization.

RUSSIA, Continued on Page 5

E-Plus, a German unit of KPN. That is because Cellway is a "virtual" operator: It does not own a network but operates as if it did, buying and reselling air time on other networks.

"It doesn't matter to me whose network they use," said Franke, 53, "as long as the calls are cheap."

Across Europe, experts say roughly 30 percent of mobile users are like

cently, into France and Germany.

"This is a significant paradigm shift for the mobile phone industry," said John Strand, the owner of Strand Consult, a Copenhagen-based researcher that focuses on the industry. "What these companies are providing is pure, plain mobile telephony."

Most of these so-called mobile virtual network operators undercut estab-

easyGroup's round ship stake and is use of his brand.

EasyMobile is the Danish phone 20 percent held including Frank Ras of Telmore, a Dan

CELLPHONES, Cont

CURRENCIES | New York

	Thursday 2 P.M.	Previous
€1 =	\$1.2946	\$1.2973
£1 =	\$1.8694	\$1.8676
\$1 =	¥106.33	¥106.11
\$1 =	SF1.2001	SF1.1976

Full currency rates | Page 16

OIL | New York

Thursday 2 P.M.

Light sweet crude \$54.35 \$0.54

STOCK INDEXES

Thursday

The Dow 2 P.M. 10,495.26 0.38%

FTSE 100 close 4,922.50 0.25%

Nikkei 225 close 11,745.97 0.06%

Soros conviction upheld

A French court reaffirmed the guilt of the American billionaire for insider trading in 1988. Page 15

Liberty Surf for sale

Tiscali said it was selling its French unit to Telecom Italia. Page 15



Otto Pohl for the International Herald Tribune

Students gathering on the grounds of the new Cornell Medical University in Qatar.

Getting a foreign education Qatar opens up by importing universities

By Otto Pohl

DOHA, Qatar: Qatar may seem an odd country to be leading education reform in the Gulf region. The country's ruler, Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, tolerates no political dissent, and many areas of public life remain off-limits to debate.

Yet Doha has become home to one of the boldest experiments in higher education in the world, and certainly the boldest in the Middle East. Four U.S. universities — Cornell Medical, Virginia Commonwealth, Carnegie Mellon and Texas A&M — have opened branch campuses in this tiny Gulf country over the past two years, and a fifth is expected soon.

With post-Sept. 11 visa restrictions curbing access to top universities abroad, Qatari officials have decided that the best way to fill the growing demand for world-class education in the Middle East is to import it.

Sheik Hamad, while keeping a lid on dissent, has encouraged economic and social change; education reform is in-

tended to further help his subjects help themselves. This is democracy, one degree at a time.

The foreign universities are located in a development called Education City overseen by one of Sheik Hamad's three wives, Sheika Mozah. She is leading the overhaul of the country's entire school system, including Qatar University, the largest in the country.

When completed, the 1,000-hectare, or 2,500-acre, site will include several more universities, a 300-bed teaching hospital, and a science and technology park.

Al Jazeera, the satellite television channel based in Qatar, plans to broadcast a children's channel from a building in Education City beginning in May.

Qatar can afford to dream big. This tiny country, which occupies a small peninsula jutting off of Saudi Arabia, pumps 900 million barrels of oil a day and will soon be the world's largest producer of liquid natural gas.

QATAR, Continued on Page 5

In Europe public toward on Ch

By Judy Dempsey

BERLIN: When from a small country asked what he thought the European Union the architecture China signed

against lifting it."

When asked if the situation clear at the meeting of foreign ministers,

"France and Germany on this issue very hard countries are falling

"We know the idea that Europe is a bargo while Britain the rules for exporting China if it is lifted say? We are a small

France and Germany of the running of 2003, when the idea was first raised at meeting in Brussels.

At the time, the arms embargo imposed in response to the military demonstration in Tiananmen Square in 1989 was lifted, they said, try.

What they did is that Beijing had Paris and Berlin partners in Europe bargo.

"The embargo against China," said director of Asia Institute for International Affairs in Berlin, to have it lifted."

EMBARGO, Contin

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Qatar opens up a little as the Gulf nation imports higher education

QATAR, From Page 1

The government faces few financial restraints and, with only 150,000 citizens, limited social pressures.

Virginia Commonwealth University, the first school to open here, is housed in a futuristic building designed by Ibrahim Mohammed Jaidah. Cornell is next door, in a stark building by a Japanese architect, Arata Isozaki.

Much of the rest of Education City, however, is only in the planning stages. Newly planted palm trees, leaves still wrapped, line walkways between unconstructed buildings.

While universities have long organized educational exchanges and semesters abroad, few have ever opened a fully equivalent degree-granting branch campus overseas.

So far the only foreign universities in Doha are American, but the president of Qatar Foundation, Charles Young, said that discussions are under way with

schools from other countries.

"What we're trying to do is build a center of excellence in a region which is filled with mediocre practices," said Sheikha Abdullah al-Misnad, president of Qatar University and a board member of the Supreme Education Council.

The Qatar experiment is on the leading edge of a larger trend to internationalize education.

Singapore is establishing a large number of international graduate degree programs with internationally recognized universities including Duke, Stanford, MIT, Insead from France, and the Technische Universiteit Eindhoven from the Netherlands. The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland opened a branch campus last October in Bahrain, a small Gulf country just to the north.

In Qatar itself, there are currently about 350 students at the U.S. branch campuses.

Officials expect up to 8,000 when development is completed, with about

two-thirds of them from Qatar. In order to help gifted students from marginal educational backgrounds gain access to these new universities, the Qatar Foundation runs a one-year bridge program that culminates in an international baccalaureate degree. About 200 students are enrolled, including nine from Iraq.

Many of the students were attracted by the combination of a Western education in a Middle Eastern setting.

"It's a lot like Saudi Arabia," said Anaya Sarkar, a first-year pre-med student at Cornell. "It's just a smaller version of where I lived."

One of her friends, who is currently studying at George Washington University in Washington, is considering transferring here, said Sarkar: "There is too much of a cultural gap."

That gap works both ways, however. At home, in Saudi Arabia, Sarkar is obliged to shroud herself in the big billowy black cloth known as the abaya. In Qatar, some students wear the abaya to

class, but there is no dress code.

This is helpful, noted Sarkar: "It's kind of difficult to do lab in an abaya."

Tasnim Khalife, 18, a first-year student, wears a head scarf rather than the long cloak.

"In Saudi Arabia, if I walked around like this I would get weird looks," she said.

Many of the social and cultural aspects of university life in the United States are absent here.

Male and female students live in separate dorm rooms under strict curfew. There is no alcohol near campus. The potentially difficult issue of religious study has been minimized by largely avoiding it.

Some students at Qatar's foreign universities admit they would rather have gone to the United States. Miryam Shafae, a first-year pre-med student at Cornell's Qatar branch, for one, was unable to obtain an American visa.

Even when applying from Doha, with

Cornell supporting her application to attend summer school in New York, the visa process took so long that she missed the classes she had hoped to attend.

The branch universities in Doha maintain close contact with their home campuses.

Some classes, like the radiology class at the Cornell medical school, are taught by videoconference from New York. In order to maintain academic standards, the universities maintain complete control over staffing and admissions.

Although the university experiment here is largely successful, cultural differences surface in unexpected ways.

A professor at Carnegie Mellon, John Robertson, describes teaching a Victorian-era novel in a freshman seminar. He explained to the class that, in writing from that time, nature reflects the inner turmoil of the characters.

He found that the students missed the implication for the main character,



NYT

International Herald Tribune
Friday, March 25, 2005

however, in one key scene where the skies darkened and rain loomed.

"We live in a desert," Robertson recalls one student telling him. "Why should we think that clouds and rain are a bad thing?"

International Herald Tribune