

The Qatari Crisis and Its Effect on Regional Balance in the Gulf Region

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Abstract

The study dealt with the effect of the Qatari crisis on the gulf region through explaining the roots, causes, consequences and security of the crisis on the region, to reveal the effects that the Qatari crisis caused to the regional balances. The study adopted the analytical method through showing the Qatari crisis state and its reflections on the regional relations. The study concludes that there is a new alliance that may cause a disruption in the traditional balance of power in the region. The study also shows the inability of the Gulf Cooperation Council to solve the internal crisis. The study recommends enhancing security systems for all Arab Gulf countries

Keywords: The Qatari Crisis, Regional Balance, Gulf Region.

Introduction

The study dealt with the Qatari crisis and how it was managed from the beginning until now. It also dealt with its negative influences caused to the regional security state, which was clearly reflected on the confidence state among the Gulf countries themselves throughout the involvement of some regional powers in the crisis, which were reflected on the future of the Gulf-regional relations. Despite all efforts and mediations to solve the crisis, it began to take greater dimensions more than the expectations; the escalation of positions took a serious role in disturbing the balance of power in the region, especially with the Iranian, Turkish and Israeli interference in the crisis.

The Qatari-Gulf crisis formed a clear threat to the state of balance of traditional power in the Gulf region, where it affected the domination policy

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imposed by Saudi Arabia on the Gulf countries, which led to the continuity of Iranian threat to the region stability. The Turkish position that supports Qatar represented a clear involvement in the Gulf affair, where Turkey sent military forces to Doha in the light of the joint military cooperation agreement between them, which angered the boycotting countries greatly, which motivated them to adopt the American position supporting normalization with Israel to adjust regional balances in the region.

The Study Problem and Questions

The Qatari crisis represented a clear challenge to the conservative state of Arab Gulf countries, and the Gulf solidarity in facing it; where the strategic and security environment of the Gulf region witnessed several changes and developments from the beginning of the diplomatic crisis between Qatar and some Gulf, and what followed with security, social and economic consequences, until talk began to revolve around the Gulf countries ability to solve their internal problems. Throughout these data, the study sought to answer the following main question: What is the effect of the Qatari crisis on the balance of traditional powers in the Gulf region, and how was its effect?.

Importance of the Study and Objectives

The importance of the scientific study lies in the importance of the subject itself, which deals with one of cognitive rights of the regional studies through dealing with the effect of the political crises in changing the equation of balances of regional powers which led to the entry of new players outside of the region. On the other hand, a practical study that clarifies the future of Gulf-Gulf relations, and the danger of the weakness of the economic and political connection and interdependence among the Gulf countries, and it also shows the fragility of the regional security situation in the area.

The study also sought to achieve several pivotal objectives, the most prominent of which were explaining the roots, causes and motives of the Qatari crisis, and their effect extent on the Gulf-Gulf and regional-Gulf relations. It also contributes in understanding how it affected the traditional balances of the region and its future effects, and we will know the most likely scenario of the nature of balances of new powers.

The Study Method

The study adopted the descriptive analytical method through describing and monitoring the political situation and change in it, where it will contribute in determining the features of the Qatari crisis and general form by collecting information about its roots, stages of its escalation, characteristics and its segments in a quality and quantity form, then classifying these information to

reach the accurate facts about the existence regional circumstances, and the new apparent variables as they are in the contemporary era.

The Study Hypothesis

With regard to the study hypothesis, it was launched from a central idea which states that there is a direct relation between the political crises and the state of balance of powers in the Gulf region. It showed the weak state of the regional security and the failure of Gulf cooperation organization to solve their internal crises clearly, which indicates an assumption that there is a positive direct relationship between the Gulf crises and the emergence of a new pattern of balance of power in the region, which may reveal a new perspective of the Gulf countries to solve their crises away from the Gulf organization and its social associations.

Therefore, the Qatari crisis was considered an independent variable, and the balance of power a dependent variable, Based on that, the study hypothesis was formulated as follows: “The Qatari crisis negatively affected the balance of traditional powers in the Gulf region”.

Concepts Of The Study

Crisis: It means in Arabic language drought and difficulty⁽¹⁾. and in English according to Webster Dictionary it means crisis, which is a shift point to the best or worst, or a radical change in the human state^(*). In the terminological definition, crisis means a sudden situation or position characterized by a lack of time and a severe threat to interests, that begins when one country takes an action where its cost is very high for another one, and available time for the decision-maker to act is very limited⁽²⁾.

Balance Of Powers: It represents the tool that organizes conflicts among the states. Harold thinks that “It is a structure of strength relation based on rational decision, and any attempt to change it will face a strong resistance to replace it in its origin image⁽³⁾”, while In the Encyclopedia of Political Science “Balance of powers as a system of changeable political dynamics that interacts in the world societies which based on a number of independent countries, where its aim concentrates on keeping a limit number of political strengths available to each of them⁽⁴⁾”.

*<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/crisis>

Related Studies

This study is one of the few studies that dealt with the negative effects of the Qatari crisis. There is a group of studies that dealt with the Qatari crisis and its regional consequences in a systematic and scientific manner, including:

- A study by Al-Arada (2019) entitled “The Gulf political crises and their effect on the Gulf Cooperation Council 2013-2017”, where the researcher adopted the decision making method to investigate the Qatari crisis and its implications on the Gulf Council Countries. The study found that it is necessary to work to build a supranational political entity to solve the Gulf crises.
- A study by Rasoul and Others, 2019, "The current Gulf crisis", the researchers dealt with the causes of the crisis from a historical point of view. It was found to be a border crisis and a family crisis. It also has regional and international extensions that are difficult to solve radically.
- A study by Al Maqabla, 2019, the role of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf in the Qatari crisis. The researcher discussed the reasons for the inability of the Cooperation Council to solve the crisis. He found that there was a problem with the council's legal structure.
- A study by Falk (2018) entitled “A Normative Evaluation of the Gulf Crisis”, dealt with the Qatari crisis during two time periods in 2014 and 2017. The study concluded that the political disagreements are inherent among the member countries of the Cooperation Council, which clearly dominate the performance of the council and obstruct its movement in resolving its crises.
- The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (2017) concluded a study entitled "Gulf relations crisis”, dealt with the Qatari crisis by adopting the historical method, and it also dealt with the economic and political implications of the crisis. The study concluded that there was an effective role of some great powers in the council that influence its resolutions.

First: The Qatari Crisis the Reasons and Justifications

The political geography of the Gulf region consists of eight political units which are: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE and Oman. These countries have various geostrategic features based on their location that links between east and west Asia and their view of the Indian Ocean through the Strait of Hormuz. They also have huge oil wealth that greatly contributes to providing the international energy resources^(*), where these merits form at the same time a great problem to the security and stability of the region, as this has been reflected on the cooperative ambitions, where they faced obstacles and challenges that affected the regional security, as the security challenge remains a

* <https://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/Pages/default.aspx>

major concern that worries the countries of the region and obstructs their progress.

1. The Historical Disagreements among Gulf Countries

The historical relations between the gulf countries are characterized by a large amount of historical disagreements among them, where some of them may be related to personal issues among the ruling families, or the difference of the political and economic interests⁽⁵⁾. The bad historical relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia have been reflected on the nature of the Qatari-Gulf disagreements, where the political history is full of tribal disagreements and conflict over the lands and political borders among the ruling families⁽⁶⁾. The emergence of oil and seeking for discovering it revealed borders problems between Saudi Arabia and its gulf neighbors, but Britain worked to include them by a border agreement in 1965, but the position exploded again in 1992, where the Saudi forces attacked disputed Khuffos area with Qatar, and also attacked the Shaybah area, which is disputed with the UAE⁽⁷⁾.

With regard to the Emirati-Qatari disagreements, they were basically resulted from Qatar rejection to join the Emirati union in 1971. The Bahraini-Qatari disagreements were historical ones due to the British protection period; where after Bahrain got its independence from Britain, the two parties struggled on the ownership of the Zubarah area and a group of islands in the Hawar area in 1976, then the conflict renewed in 1982 and reached the stage of military action in 1986 when Qatari forces bombed Bahraini military bases on the island of "Fasht Dibal"⁽⁸⁾.

Then the Qatari relations with the Gulf countries went through another curve after Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani overthrew his father when he was on a visit abroad in 1995, which prompted the UAE to grant him political asylum. The Gulf countries considered this incident a dangerous precedent that threatens the family stability to the monarchy systems, and at the same time Qatar accused both the UAE and Saudi Arabia of plotting against the new Emir and supported an attempting coup against him⁽⁹⁾.

2. The Qatari-Gulf Crisis 2014-2020

With the intensification of conflict in interests among the forces supporting "Arab spring revolutions", and the occurrence of major failures in resolving military positions, a clear disagreement emerged between Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain on the one hand, and Qatar on the other, where Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain announced at that time the break off their relations with

* A documentary program "Qatar 96" The conspiracy is Gulf and the weapon is Egyptian. <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2018/3/5>

Qatar and withdraw their ambassadors in January 2014, and frankly announced the Qatari opposed position against the Gulf consensus⁽⁹⁾, whereas in May 2014 through the Kuwaiti mediation, the Riyadh agreement was concluded between King Abdullah (2005-2015) King of Saudi Arabia, and the Emir of Qatar Hamad bin jasem (1995-2013); the agreement included many issues, the most important of which was non-interference in the internal affairs of any party, Aljazeera stop supporting the opposition parties and media, not supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and support Egypt and contributing in its security and stability⁽¹⁰⁾.

With the escalation of the Qatari-Emirati disagreement which was clear in intensification of contradicted media campaigns between the two countries 2017-2018, especially those propaganda about Qatar's financing of terrorism, at the time when Qatar accused the UAE of hacking the Qatar News Agency and spreading false statements by the Emir of Qatar, where Qatar considered these allegations to harm its international reputation, and it justified that with its strong participation in war against terrorism and fighting its finance. But Qatar's involvement in supporting the group opposed to Marshal Khalifa Haftar, who was supported by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and its behavior different that contradicted the Gulf trends in Yemen, pushed Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE and Egypt to announce that Qatar has wasted the entitlements of the Riyadh Agreement⁽¹¹⁾.

Qatar has rejected the demands of the four countries, which are related to reducing diplomatic representation with Iran, closing the Turkish military base, not hosting opposing characters to their countries, not supporting terrorist organizations and closing Al-Jazeera channel. Those countries thought that Qatar's role in the Yemeni file was a double role to the advantage of the parties hostile to the "Decisive Storm" alliance, where it looked that Qatar was committed to the defense cooperation document with Iran more than its commitment to the Gulf consensus. Moreover, Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt became a threat to the pillars of the Egyptian regime that supports the Gulf states. The four countries reinforced its accusation list by announcing that the terrorism activities were directly or indirectly related to Qatari authorities⁽¹²⁾.

Second: Reflection of the Crisis on the Regional Cooperation System

The opposite of the traditional roles that the secretaries-generals have in the international organization, the role of the Secretary-General of the Gulf Council is considered an administrative one only; the crisis showed that there was no role for the Secretary-General "Abdullatif Al Zayani" (2011-2020) to solve this crisis, while Qatari accusations were directed to him that he was biased against Qatar since his nationality is Bahraini. Through his official website as the

Secretary-General, Al-Zayani expressed his deep surprise at the Qatari media's attempt to hold him responsible for resolving the Gulf crisis, where he frankly announced that the solution of the crisis and ending its consequences are in the hands of their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries⁽¹³⁾.

1. The Cooperation Council Inability to Play its Role

Referring to the final statements issued by general secretariat, we find that the supreme council wasn't concerned with the existence of a crisis among the member states, where the subject of the Qatari crisis was absent from the discussions occurred in the periodic and exceptional meetings that the General Secretariat organized at the level of the Supreme Council and foreign ministers, and referring to the minister council statements, we find that the Qatari-Gulf crisis wasn't discussed although the council had concluded eleven meetings where several regional and international issues were discussed.

According to the main system, the Gulf Cooperation Council is considered a cooperative organization that don't have supranational powers, which means it doesn't have the ability to impose its resolutions on the members countries, where it takes its resolutions by consensus, which is a habit adopted by presidents with agreement and satisfaction. The economic domain formed the major pivot of the joint work⁽¹⁴⁾.

However, the council sought to find a mechanism to coordinate the external policies and positions through the periodical meetings of the foreign affairs ministers council which have the form of "troika", but at the sixth article in the pact, we find that the Dispute Settlement Commission, which belonged to the Supreme Council. Referring to the tenth article, the legal text has stripped the body from the political powers and restricted them to the legal disagreements related to the interpretation of the basic system, where it indicated that the supranational council is responsible for forming the body in each state individually based on the nature of the disagreement, if one emerged about interpretation or application of the basic system and isn't resolved within the framework of the minister council or supranational council, where it has the right to refer it to the Dispute Settlement Body.

2. Kuwaiti-Omani Mediation Outside the Cooperation Council

Under the inability of the council to play its role, Kuwait and Oman guided a diplomatic movement to resolve the problem of withdrawal of the ambassadors in 2014. These efforts led to Qatar demanding from some Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood leaders to leave to turkey, the Emir Tameem bin hamad (2013-) the Emir of Qatar contacted the Saudi Crown Prince Mohamad bin salaman (2015-)

and announced that he was ready for dialogue, but the escalation of disagreements with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt led pushed these countries to announce cutting economic and political ties with Qatar from the beginning of 2017, then Kuwait interfered again in the role of mediation through its Emir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad (2006-2020), who sought to communicate with Emir of Qatar to calm the situation and avoid escalation.

As a response to that mediation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar Mohamad AL thany (2016-) indicated that the speech that Emir Tamim was scheduled to deliver on the crisis has been delayed to give an opportunity to Kuwaiti efforts to calm the conflicting parties⁽¹⁵⁾. The Emir of Kuwait Sabah Al Ahmad held a press conference with the president of the USA Donald Trump in September 2017, where he indicated that the Qatari-Gulf crisis was surprising, the Kuwaiti mediation prevented any military action from taking place and Qatar is ready to sit at the negotiating table⁽¹⁶⁾. During the opening of the Kuwaiti National Assembly session, the Emir Sabah Al Ahmad stated, "The role that Kuwait played in mediation and reconciliation between the conflicting parties aimed to reform the Gulf relationship, since this crisis has regional and international consequences that may cause harm to the future and security the Gulf"^(*).

As for Sultanate of Oman, it adopted the neutral role of the crisis after 2017, but it supported the Kuwaiti mediation to bring the points of view of the conflicting countries closer and reach a common ground to resolve the crisis outside the framework of the Cooperation Council, where the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Oman Youssef bin Alawi (1997-2020) made a solidarity visit to Doha, and Oman opened its ports as an alternative to the Emirati Jebel Ali Port, which led to increase of the amount of trade exchange between the two countries from (\$860) million, with a surplus of (\$89) million in favor of Qatar in 2014, to (\$1545) million in 2019, with a surplus in favor of Oman of (\$444) m 2019⁽¹⁷⁾.

Third: Saudi Regional Policy Shifts

The nature of Saudi relations with the regional powers in the Gulf represents an important determiner to the development of relations between the Gulf countries and these powers, where Saudi plays a central role in affecting the foreign policies of these countries, and its unilateral vision dominate the other Gulf powers perspective towards Iran⁽¹⁸⁾.

* Sheikh Sabah's speech at the opening session of the Kuwaiti National Assembly 10-24-2017, seen on 9/9/2020 on the website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VedevzYev6Q>.

1. The Impasse of the Politics of Domination and Mobilization Against Opponents

Saudi Arabia is considered the great country in the Gulf region since it has great human, geographical, military and economic abilities, which made it play an important role in defining the Gulf vision of the regional crises; in light of its disordered relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia takes a hostile position towards Iranian policies in the region. In 2015, Saudi Arabia announced the beginning of military actions to face the Ansar Allah group "Al-Houthi" loyal to Iran in Yemen, that it considered it a security danger to Saudi Arabia, and it also executed the Shiite religious man Nimr al-Nimr who was supported by Iran, then it cut off its diplomatic relations with Iran in protest of the demonstrators storming the Saudi embassy in Tehran in 2016, where the Gulf countries followed by withdrawing their ambassadors from Tehran. But the continuation of the crisis led to counterproductive results against the interest of Saudi Arabia, as Qatar, Oman and Kuwait all felt that Saudi Arabia wanted to impose guardianship and hegemony on its neighbors⁽¹⁹⁾.

There was also a decline in the level of the Saudi-Turkish bilateral relations because of Saudi conservations of the Turkish position that supported Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt; Egypt represents an important strategic pillar in Saudi policy towards Iran, where Saudi Arabia supported the military regime in Egypt after the overthrow of Muslim Brotherhood group, as Saudi Arabia thinks that liberal Egypt will be a major supporter in facing political Islam in the region whether through Shiite Iran or the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood supported by Turkey. In addition, Turkey has also built the military base in Qatar, and its negative position towards killing of the journalist Jamal Khashigji in Saudi embassy in Istanbul which was negatively reflected on the development of the economic and diplomatic relations between the two countries, where the diplomatic representation decreased to the level of the Chargé d'Affaires, the trade exchange between the two parties also declined from (\$5) billion 2015 to (\$4) billion 2019⁽²⁰⁾.

With regard to Iraq, Saudi Arabia reopened its embassy in Baghdad since 2015 after 25- year rupture, where this Saudi step was understood as a new mean to rebalance with the increased Iranian influence in Iraq in line with Turkey, but it was clear that Saudi-Iraqi rapprochement acquired a new push after the outbreak of the crisis; as in 2017, King Salman received the prime Minister of Iraq Haider Al-Abadi(2014-2018), and the Saudi Crown Prince also received Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr, who visited Saudi Arabia in response to an official Saudi invitation.

The continuity of the causes of the crisis and entry of regional parties to it represent a threat for Saudi security, when Saudi Arabia was afraid of escalating the disagreement of its neighbor the UAE in light of the oil portions, where Saudi sought to resolve the crisis actually and worked to end it, especially with the decline in its military spending as a result of the drop in global oil prices during the Corona pandemic, which decreased from (\$84) billion in 2014 to (\$61) Billion in 2019⁽²¹⁾; at the Gulf Summit Conference in 2021, the final statement of the 41st Gulf Summit announced the return of diplomatic relations with Qatar and the emphasis on the principles of good neighborliness⁽²²⁾.

2. Alliance and Maximizing of Strength in Cooperation with Israel

The Israeli-Gulf relations increased with a fear of that there was American-Iranian deal at their expense, after the conclusion of the nuclear agreement between Iran, the USA and the great Western powers in 2015, where these shared fears escalated as the agreement would lead to that Iran might become a nuclear power threatens the national security and change the balances of powers in the region for its favor⁽²³⁾; where Israel is in a semi-permanent clash with Hamas and the Lebanese Hezbollah, which receive Iranian military support regularly, and it increased its military spending significantly every year which rose to (\$17.7) billion in 2014 to (\$20.4) billion in 2019⁽²⁴⁾. Saudi Arabia also suffered from the interference of the Revolutionary Guards that support Shiite groups in eastern Saudi Arabia, the Houthi group in Yemen, and the popular crowd militias in Iraq.

With the Gulf Cooperation Council declaration of classifying the Lebanese Hezbollah as a terrorist organization threatening Arab national security in 2016⁽²⁵⁾, Israel media was quick to welcome this declaration, The former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel Tzipi Livni(2006-2008), considered this resolution increased pressure on the party⁽²⁶⁾. After Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain cut off their diplomatic relations with Qatar, the Israeli reactions began to frankly welcome this step, where Former Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman (2016-2018) announced in a speech before the Israeli Knesset in July 2017 that “the Arab countries that cut off their diplomatic with Qatar didn’t do that because of Israel nor the Palestinian issue, but because of fear of the radical Islam terrorism⁽²⁷⁾”; as Israel found that the boycott resolutions with Qatar mean that these countries considered Israel as a partner - not an enemy - in the war against Islamic groups and their supporters, where this step was an introduction of open door to Israel to participate in fighting what is called terrorism.

The Qatari crisis had a negative effect on The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, where it emerged as one disagreement point between Qatar and the neighboring countries; Former Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir (2015-

2018) attacked Hamas, as he said: “Enough is enough, and Qatar has to stop supporting organizations such as Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas Movement”, the Saudi media channels launched a fierce campaign against Hamas Movement and described it as a terrorist movement⁽²⁸⁾. Saudi Arabia announced that it arrested leaderships of Hamas on its lands led by the leader "Mohammed Al-Khudari in 2019, and the Turkish Anatolia Press showed that the Gulf grants and aid to the Palestinian Authority were decreased by 81% annual base of the first eight months during the year⁽²⁹⁾.

In 2019 Yisrael Katz (2019-2020) The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel announced a military cooperation with the UAE amid escalating tensions with Iran, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UAE Anwar Gargash (2016-2021) announced the Emirati agreement of the normalization of relations with Israel on August 13, 2020, followed by Bahrain. The US president Donald trump (2017-2021) had a role in motivating the Gulf countries to normalize the diplomatic relations completely with Israel, which was known as the Deal of the Century, and based on it, cooperation in all political, economic, trade, financial, tourism, educational, security and intelligence aspects should be begin⁽³⁰⁾. The Bilateral relations were actually activated between the two parties on both economic and diplomatic aspects, especially Israel experienced rapid economic growth, where its gross domestic product has risen from (\$207) billion in 2009 to (\$394) billion in 2019⁽³¹⁾. The Saudi, Emirati and Bahraini intelligence agencies also contracted to buy the Israeli “Pegasus” spyware program to penetrate smart phones, in order to spy on its enemies and a number of politicians, journalists and opponents. Israeli ships and submarines also visited some Gulf ports, which may indicate the possibility of emergence of security cooperation between the two sides.

Fourth: The Crisis Reflection on the Turkish-Iranian in the Region

The escalation of the Qatari-gulf led to occurrence of interventions of regional powers in the crisis, where some powers found their chance to achieve some political gains in facing the possible opponents. The crisis began to take further domains than it was expected, especially with the Iranian-Turkish-Israeli involvement in it.

1. The Iranian Involvement in the Crisis & the Idea of a Central State

Although of the weakness of Iranian military spending that reached (\$12) billion in 2019⁽³²⁾, comparing to the regional powers in the area, Qatar concluded an agreement for military cooperation with Iran in 2010 to reinforce the security of the region, which was known as Defense Cooperation Document. The Qatari policy sought to play a balance role in its relation with Iran and Saudi Arabia despite the pressures practiced by some Gulf cooperation countries on it to review this relation, where Qatar participated in the Decisive Storm in 2015 to

fight Houthi group supported by Iran at the time when it supported the Iranian call for establishing a regional security defense organization and the attendance of Iranian president of the Gulf Cooperation Council Summit.

On the other hand, Qatar practiced the role of mediator in several conflicts in Syria and Iraq, which gave this balanced policy an impression of not being hostile or clashing with Iran, but this equation differed with the escalation of the crisis with Saudi Arabia and the UAE in 2017, where it was forced to increase its political and trade relation with Iran in light of the imposed Gulf siege on it. Conversely, Iran took a supporting position to Qatar and against the siege and boycott procedures practiced by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt, seeking to seize the opportunity in facing Saudi Arabia, despite that Qatar had adopted policies contradicted with Iranian ones whether in Syria or Yemen, or by embracing the US forces at Al-Udeid base. Qatar also withdrew its ambassador from Tehran in solidarity with Saudi Arabia when the latter cut off its relations with Iran in 2016, which formed anxiety to Saudi Arabia, where it became clear that Qatar's bias to Iran came from the nature of Saudi-Iranian relation.

Iran was quick to respond the Qatari demand to provide the Qatari markets with foodstuffs and essential needs despite of the negative effects of the world punishments on its national economy, where it opened its atmosphere and airports to Qatari planes and ships, and made Bushehr Port anchor for Qatari ships. It also agreed to offer a trade lane by road to the Turkish exports to Qatar⁽³³⁾. As a result, Qatar concluded Free Trade Agreement with it to raise the level of trade to partnership one between them, and this led to increase of the amount of commercial exchanges between the two countries from (\$150) million in 2015 to (\$235) in 2018 and with surplus to favor of Iran⁽³⁴⁾.

In appreciation of the Iranian position, Qatar announced the return of Qatari ambassador to Tehran and participated in Astana process on Syria. In addition, the Qatari-Iranian relations took a different turn when the Qatari representative describe Iran as an "honorable country" in Arab League Council meeting on the ministers' level (No.148) in 2017⁽³⁵⁾.

2. Emergence of Turkish Role as a Variable in the Crises

The Turkish-Qatari relations experienced accelerated development in the last years on the diplomatic and military level, as Turkey and Qatar concluded an agreement for strategic and security cooperation, where Qatar, according to this agreement, allowed to establish A Turkish military base called "Al Rayyan base", and this agreement came in light of the escalation of Turkish military spending which increased from (\$12) billion to (\$20) billion in 2019⁽³⁶⁾. Therefore, Turkey from the beginning of the crises in 2014, but this attempt did

not bring significant results. In light of the disappointment of the Turkish mediation failure, the Turkish president Ardugan (2014-2021) declared that he stands by Qatar as he said: “Always together with Qatar with oppressed people all over the world”⁽³⁷⁾.

In light with the escalation of crisis of economic and diplomatic boycott, Turkey quickly sent a number of military forces to Al Rayyan Base, but this process found a type of stress in relation with Saudi Arabia, as it considered it a rejected process and unacceptable. At the same time, the UAE refuses this behavior and considered it a kind of asking help from foreigners, and these countries position became clear when asking Qatar to close the Turkish base within the thirteen demands declared after one month from the beginning of the crisis⁽³⁸⁾.

In appreciation of the Turkish position, Qatar politically supported Turkey during the failed coup attempt in 2016, where Qatar's foreign minister condemned the coup and the supported powers⁽³⁹⁾, and at the same time the Turkish position encouraged Kuwait to think of building several alternative alliances to keep the regional security of Kuwait throughout reinforcing its security and military relations with Turkey and concluding a number of cooperation agreements in 2018.

As for the economic aspect, the relations between the two countries were developed clearly, as Turkey was experiencing rapid economic growth since 2002, as its gross domestic product increased from (\$240) billion to (\$761) billion in 2019⁽⁴⁰⁾, which enabled it to launch a great air transportation to provide Qatari market with foodstuffs after the impose of siege on it by the Gulf countries, and this gave a better chance to reinforce commercial exchange between them, which increased from (\$783) million in 2015 to (\$1.6) billion in 2019 with a surplus for favor of Turkey⁽⁴¹⁾. The Turkish companies concluded contracts to import gas and investing in various agricultural and industrial sectors, and in turn, Qatar presented a group of economic projects, investments and deposits of nearly \$15 billion supporting the Turkish economy after the decline in the exchange rate of the Turkish lira⁽⁴²⁾.

Fifth: Possible Scenarios for Regional Balances

The Qatari crisis took dimensions that may affect Regional balance in the Gulf region. Here are some possible predictions which some of them are considered optimistic and others are pessimistic as follows:

1. The outbreak of military confrontations among the parties, where the continuity of the causes of the crisis between Qatar and the Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain) in addition to Egypt may lead to escalation of actions leading to war, as turkey and Iran became direct parties

of the conflict in facing Saudi Arabia, which this issue may benefit Iran in occurring a flaw in the balances of traditional powers in the region, especially with the intervention of Turkey alongside Qatar.

2. End of the crisis and a relief in the Saudi-Qatari relations, where this possibility is possible to lead to tilt of the balance of powers for Saudi, and thus Turkey may become an ally in supporting the confrontation with Iran, as the Kuwaiti mediation played a role in making the Gulf views closer and not reach the stage of escalation. Signs of relief began to appear after Emir of Qatar acceptance of King of Saudi invitation to attend the Cooperation Council AIUla Summit, followed by another visit to Jeddah in 2021.
3. The issues remain as they are because of absence of mistrust among parties with the stability of the balance of traditional powers. Although the Saudi-Qatari reconciliation and the possibility of retreat and inclusion of the Qatari role in the region, there are still clear conservations by the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt towards the development of Qatari, Turkish and Iranian relations, and so Qatar is possible to be an isolated country from the Arab and Gulf neighbors.

Conclusion

The study found that the Qatari-Gulf crisis has actually affected the balance of powers in the Gulf region, where it led to entry of new agents in the Gulf issue, and therefore, the Gulf crises didn't remain an internal affair. The continuity of the qatar-Gulf crisis for years without any radical solution of the causes of disagreement led to Iranian and Turkish intervention in the crisis as supporting parties to Qatar, while the alliance with Israel became an available option to the rest of the Gulf countries. which made Saudi Arabia review its regional policies to reduce the tension with neighboring countries and work to resolve the crisis as much as possible.

Iran and Turkey provided Qatar clear political, economic and military support, at the time when Israel found that the Saudi position towards Qatar was in its interests, where it showed clear optimism towards negative effects of this crisis on Iran and the Palestinian Resistance Movement. Qatar which is accused for terrorism, has good relations with Iran, and it hosts a number of Hamas movement leaders and plays a serious role in supporting groups of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, which is the position that Saudi Arabia and the UAE reserves about it greatly. Therefore, Israel hoped that this crisis will lead to change the traditional balances in the Middle East under the pressures that it practices with some Gulf countries on the USA to resolve its position against Iran; where the development of Gulf-Israeli diplomatic relations may lead to the possibility of establishing a strategic alliance in facing Iran, and it is possible to

be at the expense of the support directed to the Palestinian issue, thus the Qatari crisis created a new strategic fact in the Gulf region.

Recommendations:

Based on the results of the study, it recommends the following: Establishing a collective security system in the Gulf region, studying the future repercussions of the Qatari crisis on regional security. Activating the role of an institution Settlement of disputes in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

الأزمة القطرية وأثرها على التوازنات الإقليمية في منطقة الخليج

وصفي محمد عقيل، قسم العلوم السياسية، جامعة اليرموك، إربد، الأردن.

ملخص

تناولت الدراسة أثر الأزمة القطرية على توازن القوى في منطقة الخليج، من خلال توضيح جذور الأزمة وأسبابها وتداعياتها السياسية والأمنية على المنطقة، بهدف كشف الآثار التي خلفتها الأزمة القطرية على التوازنات الإقليمية. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج التحليلي من خلال بيان دراسة حالة الأزمة القطرية وانعكاساتها على العلاقات الإقليمية، ونتج عن الدراسة وجود تحالفات جديدة قد تؤدي إلى الإخلال بموازن القوى التقليدية في المنطقة، ووجود عجز واضح لمنظومة التعاون الخليجي عن حل الأزمات الداخلية، ولذلك توصي الدراسة بتعزيز منظومة الأمن الجماعي لدول الخليج العربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأزمة القطرية، التوازن الإقليمي، منطقة الخليج.

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