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Security Understanding of Iran-Israel and Saudi Arabia

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RESEARCH PAPER

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Security understanding of Saudi Arabia has taken different shapes. Security is the stability of regime. Security means for Saudis that regime's stability in region without being affected ideologies which may harm the kingdom. In order to provide its security, creating peaceful environment for its citizens and not allow people of Kingdom to question to authority is what kingdom does. These ideologies are blocked to enter into territories. These are mainly Arabism and Shi'ism. However, without cooperation with Western allies such as USA and Britain, it is so hard to do for Saudis. In order to provide it, Saudi Arabia tries to keep its relationship in a good level with these powerful actors.

All neighbours of Saudi Arabia were under control of Great Britain until they had become independence from Great Britain. Saudi Arabia and Great Britain were in good relationship as they are now. Therefore, it can be said that Saudi Arabia did not fell any threat from its neighbours. Saudi Arabia almost have been in good relationships with most powerful world actors. USA is now in the mission of protector of Saudi Arabia. [1]As Tammy states that USA is proving, training and equipping Saudi armed forces. Saudi Arabia desire to keep these relationships good as long as they can. Such helps from USA rely on oil. Saudi Arabia's huge amount of oil reserves is desired by those powerful actors after usage of oil was increased. As Korany says that USA is more interested in oil than security and stability of regime. Therefore, attitudes towards these huge oil importer states are different than others. [3]Also Korany claims that particularly in times of regional conflict involving Arabs and Israelis, supplies of oil to industrial countries is important. Continuity of oil production is so significant in that sense. These producers should be protected and secured for the interest of these powerful actors. Shortly it can be said that Saudi Arabia did not feel threat in its border from any neighbours thanks to its desired huge amount of oil. Threats arise from ideological ways for Saudi Arabia. Especially Arabism and potential separation of Shi'ism in the region is

1. Although the USA is the only superpower capable of providing an ultimate security guarantee to the Kingdom through training and equipping the Saudi armed forces, there has always been a Saudi desire to establish and enhance ties with other global powers'.(Tamamy)

2. 'What the United States is primarily interested in is the huge reserves of oil in Saudi Arabia; its interest in the security of the country and the stability of the regime is derivative and secondary' (Korany)

3. 'In this case also, the linkage between systemic security concerns and those of the region have less to do with the security of individual Arab states than with the security of oil supplies to the industrial countries, particularly in times of regional conflict involving Arabs and Israelis'. (Korany)

considered as huge threat for their security. These two factors are caring potential threat to their throne. Gamal Abdel Nasser was using Arabism mostly through the National Arab Radio against Saudi Arabia's insensitive attitudes towards Arab's problem in the region. Saudi Arabia's legitimacy is based on a traditional monarchy in Pan-Islamist credentials. A collective movement or protest against kingdom may resulted in huge destruction which may end the family's ruling. However, as it is noticed that Saudi Arabia is a kingdom and kingdom is hard way to keep ruling. Saudi Arabia may not feel any threat from its border and to its security in military way but Saudi Arabia was certainly feeling threat in ideological way from the first day until now. A collective movement or protest against kingdom may resulted in huge destruction. Citizens of kingdom should live under good circumstances and not questioning the authority. [4]As Fawcett put it in world as Arab Cold War that is between 1958 and 1970. Rivalry between monarchies and republicans were felt. On one hand Arab socialist Egypt and on the other hand Saudi Arabia was source of conflict.

Egypt's position in providing teacher to region was also threat to Saudi Arabia. Those teachers may affect the both old and young generation. Questioning and demand to change something may take place in Saudi Arabia and kingdom absolutely does not want it.

Another security concern of Saudi Arabia is emerged by relationships with Iran. Relationship between two countries was not that much active until the 1960s because of sectarian factors. Iran was Shia and Saudi family was Sunni but such sectarian issue was felt mostly after Iranian Revolution. Also, Iran's recognition of Israel was another element which blocks the relationship. Israel was not welcomed by almost all Arab states and a country's recognition of Israel was not welcomed too. Therefore, there was angry towards to Iran. Iran criticized the way of Saudis ruling in both Shah's time and after revolution. Shah was giving advice to Saudi King Faisal for modernizing the country in mixed education, freedom of clothes and so on in his latter. Shah claimed that King Faisal cannot stay on his throne if king was keep

4-'The first occurrence of a region-based rivalry between monarchies and republicans is what Michael Kerr has depicted as the 'Arab Cold War' and which took place between 1958 and 1970, mainly opposing the Arab socialist Egypt, led by Gamal Abdel Nasser and Saudi Arabia, a traditional monarchy its legitimacy in Pan-Islamist credentials . The drivers of conflict, involving domestic and regional/transnational dimension alike, were actually engraved in the divide between secular Arab nationalism and Islam that were at once sources for legitimating domestic authority in various countries and projecting power in the region'(Fawcett).

ruling in that way. Such declaration to Saudi from Iran may wake the citizens of Saudi Arabia. People may demand these rights and it may turn out conflict if kingdom insist on ruling the same way. After revolution, criticism against Saudi Arabia was on the top. Also Saudi Arabia was afraid of separation of Shiism in the region. [5]As Blanchard claims that separation of Shi'ism in the region such as Iraq, Syria and Lebanon is not what Saudi Arabia. Again threat was alive for Saudi Arabia. Ruhollah Khomeini was directly targeting the legitimacy of Saudis. [6]Korany is also supporting this argument. Iran revolution may pose a significant threat to ruling elites, especially in countries with a substantial Shi'i presence such as Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. [7]With these perspective, Saudis do not really need that much military power to secure itself from Iran and also Israel. According to Saudis, security means more something ideologically.

Lastly, legitimacy and security is related to each other in case of Saudi Arabia. Kingdom should provide good life for its citizens to keep its ruling secure. In order to provide it, production of oil is key factor. Any unwanted situation in production of oil and income of it may start questioning of regime. [8]Korany is also in favour of this argument. He says that oil

5-'Saudi policies toward Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon continue to reflect the kingdom's overarching concerns about Iran and its ties to state and non-state actors in these countries. Statements by Saudi leaders suggest that they see Iran's policies as part of an expansionist, sectarian agenda aimed at empowering Shia Muslims in the Middle East at the expense of Sunnis. Iranian leaders attribute similarly sectarian motives to their Saudi counterparts and remain critical of Saudi cooperation with the United States.'(Blanchard)

6-'In practice, the overall impact of Iran's Islamic regime in the Arab world tended to be limited by its Iranian and Shi'i origins, as well as by its increasing external and domestic difficulties. However, it was still able to generate considerable responsiveness and to pose a significant threat to ruling elites, especially in countries with a substantial Shi'i presence (for example, Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia).'(Korany)

7-'Israel and Iran - it shares a common border with neither. Thus the kingdom had not previously been motivated by necessity to expand its armed forces'. (Korany)

8-'Thanks to the oil price boom of the 1970s, the legitimacy of the major oil exporting monarchies of the Gulf has become tied to their oil wealth and the largesse that these regimes have been able to dispense among politically important segments of their populations. The downturn in oil prices following the glut in the oil market in the second half of the 1980s, and the consequent shrinking of their financial capacities, could therefore have very adverse effects on the legitimacy of these regimes'.(Korany)

price boom of the 1970s increased the power of regimes and glut in the oil market in the second half of the 1980s. In shortly, Saudi Arabia's security is based on its stability of oil. The fact that Saudi Arabia have huge amount of oil resources guarantee its security, which is provided by powerful actors and Saudi Arabia tries to keep oil price reasonable and stabilize oil production for its security. However, when usage of oil is decline or finished, what kind of things will keep Saudi Arabia secure is bringing question mark to mind.

Security understandings of Iran also vary time to time. Islamic revolution is turning point of Iran's both foreign relationships and security understanding in 20th century. Security means stability of regime for Iran in both before and after revolution. In the time Shah, modernizing and trying to provide good life for citizen is what Shah did. After revolution, rigid precautions and decision were taken to keep itself secure.

Before the revolution, Iran was having good relationship with west and tension with neighbours was not that much high when compared with the revolution's time. It was so good that western allies of Iran, who are blaming and placing embargo to Iran because of having nuclear energy, were helping to Iran to build nuclear system.[9]Bahgat also states it in his work. Cooperation with west about nuclear energy was high. It is good example to show variability of Iran's relationships which shapes its security understanding. Non-western allies of Iran was considering Iran as threat. Such scenario has changed after Islamic revolution. Relationships

9- 'In the following decade, Iran signed several agreements with the United States (1974) to buy eight reactors, with Germany (1974) to build a power reactor at Bushehr, and with France (1977) to build two reactors at Darkhovin. In addition, Iran purchased a ten percent share in a uranium enrichment plant built by a French company called Tricastin.5 In other words, Western governments and companies worked closely with the monarchy to build an ambitious nuclear program'(Bahgat)

10- 'External threat is often a powerful means of silencing internal strife, even of gaining some popular legitimacy'. (Korany).

11-'It was a game changer in 1945 in the early Cold War and again in 1979 when its earlier contract with the West was broken and Iran assumed a non-aligned stance. From being a guardian of Western interests, Iran became a pariah state.'(Fawcett)

12-'Unable to find a Western partner for its nuclear program, Iran turned to the Soviet Union and China. In 1990, Iran signed nuclear cooperation agreements with both Beijing and Moscow, and five years later, Russia agreed to a deal worth $800 million to complete the first reactor at Bushehr'.(Bahdat)

between west and region's countries was completely different. Iran's expansionist Shia policy had worsen situations with its neighbourhood such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Gulf states. . Iran was not only in bad relationships with Arab Sunni Muslim counties but also Israel and other western countries. Friend of western was considered as enemy by Iran and Israel, who was recognized friendly in Shah's time, is evil in the eyes of Iran now. Like Saudis, Iran should also provide security its regime which is under threat of ideological and physical. When unwanted situation is occurred, people of Iran knows well who to blame. Iran is a republic but it should not be missed that influence of Mullahs in politics is very high. Without permission of religious leader, it is so hard to do something politics. Therefore, regime should not let massive protest occur against its way of ruling. Satisfying to people is also important factor as it is for Saudis. Heavy penalties might be the way which they use usually to secure themselves but it may not work forever. Therefore, Iran and Saudi Arabia have to create external threat to make citizens busy. [10]Korany believes that by making people busy with external threat, regime guarantees itself. In shortly, security is eliminating western actors, which is considered as threat to their security from Middle East and guarding Islamic regime for Iran. [11]As Fawcett states that by doing in this way, Iran tries to become a pariah state. Being pariah is solution for their security. Islamic regime was eliminating western actors and also itself from any angers. Two factors play major role on Iran's understanding of security. What Iran does in this sense is that developing their nuclear power and do not let harmful ideas take place in their territory. Therefore, Iran turns his face to Asian allies. [12]Bahdat says

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that Iran turned its face to Asian countries and shape its policy according to it. In shortly, it can be said that there are similarities in understanding of security between Saudi Arabia and Iran in terms of guarding the security but the method they use is different. With these respective, what Iran does to secure itself is like being self-sufficiency against these western actors in external solution. Iran's harsh policy towards citizens is internal security solution.

Israel has very different understanding of security in the Middle East than Saudi Arabia and Iran has. Israel was not threated by ideological way like these two were threated. Because of being unwanted state in the region, cooperation between Israelis citizens was too high. Therefore Israel was not concerning internal security issue. From the first day of establishment of Israel to end of 20th century, Israel is not welcomed by most Arab states. Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Egypt was one of important states who were not welcome Israel. Israel took care of mostly external enemies to secure its border and citizens. Dealing with these states and eliminating their power was understanding of security for Israel. In order to do it, Israel was not enough by itself. Its western allies and USA were playing key factor in this issue. [13]Moller emphasised how strong relationship they have in his work and he says that Israel is strategic partner in the region. United state was provider of security for Israel as it was for Saudis too. However this time, such help is not related with the natural resources which Israel has. It is directly related with being strategic ally. Israel is the door which opens the Middle East to United State. When relationships goes bad with other Arab states, Israel should stay there for United State to make intervention to Middle East.

As it is known that Israel relationships with region's countries are problematic. Main reasons behind is that Israel is being unwanted state. Firstly, relationship between Palestine was terrible because of occupation of land. Systematic settlement of Jews to this region was not pleasant by host of region. It was the most important trigger for conflict between Palestinians and Jews. Secondly, Israel is dependent state of drinkable water and fertile land for agriculture. In order to provide these needs, Israel had occupied the Syria's Golan Heights

13-'The United States has all along been far from impartial, but a staunch supporter of Israel, not least because of ideological affinity. As the region's main military power, Israel will also continue to play an important strategic role for the United States'. (Moller)

after the six days war between Israel and Arab states. Therefore, as it was before, relationship with Syria is not good. Thirdly, occupying Sinai Peninsula which was belong to Egypt was another reason which breaks relationship with its neighbours after six days war. Israel's policy of occupations was increasing the tension in the region. [14]As Barnett states that it is huge defeat for Arabs and political structure of Arab states has changed dramatically. Not being able to stop Israel's actions was empowering the burning fire in the region. Therefore, surviving in region was required strong military capacity for Israel. Having strong relationship western allies and USA is key factor to secure Israel, which does its best to keep relationship good. In that sense, power means security and it legitimizes state's action. Being backed by powerful state legitimizes Israel actions in the region. However, when the power is shifted from Israel's powerful allies to the opposite side, what may secure and legitimize Israel action is unknown.

Lately, Israel has changes its security policies. Israel military power was considered as solution for security in the region. With this change, Israel aims to do it in peaceful ways. Therefore Israel has started peace progress with Palestine and Jordan in the beginning of

14- The June war delivered a defeat that only millennialists would have predicted—in six days Israel captured Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, the Sinai from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. The residues of the defeat, many of which would become clearer and more dramatic with time, were public, undeniable, and touched nearly all who were in any way associated with it. Even before the war had formally ended on June 10, Nasser announced his resignation and took full responsibility. But he returned to power after throngs of Egyptians coaxed him back, unwilling to have the Israelis claim another casualty of the war. Yet there was no hiding his devastation. "I can't forget what I went through during the first few days after the war in June," Nasser would later recall. "There is no doubt that what happened in 1967 has affected us all psychologically, morally, and materially." (Barnett)

15- As Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians attempt to implement their historic September 1993 Declaration of Principles, it is imperative to anticipate the risks and threats that lie ahead and to consider how to safeguard prospective peace agreements against future challenges. Above all, there is a need to insulate the peace process from the destabilising turbulence and upheaval evident elsewhere in the Middle East. This can best be achieved by constructing cooperative security structures that are capable of pre-empting tensions, managing crises and absorbing pressures generated by changes in the strategic environment. These security structures must also address specific issues, such as the proliferation of non-conventional weapons, that can have a major impact on the peace process.

1990s. [15]As Efraim Karsh and Yezid Sayigh had emphasized in their article that Declaration of Principle was important step in this progress. This can best be achieved by constructing cooperative security structures that are capable of pre-empting tensions, managing crises and absorbing pressures generated by changes in the strategic environment.

To conclude, Iran and Saudi Arabia's security understanding is more or less same in terms of guarding and protecting their regime. However the way they use is different. While Iran, after revolution, aims to eliminate the western actors in the region, Saudi Arabia gets help of these actors in the Middle East and sectarian conflict between these states is also main security problem in the region. Iran and Saudi's competition is not only felt by themselves but also region's countries too. For instance Iraq, Jordan, Syria. On the other hand, Israel has different understanding of security in the Middle East. Surviving and fighting against Arab states which don't welcome the Israel in the region, is main concern of Israel. In order to secure itself, Israel also gets help from Western partners like Saudis. Difference between these help is that Saudi's huge amount of oil reserve is desired by these states but Israel is considered as strategic ally, which opens Middle East door to those state. Every state in the region behaves according to their interest and when these interest are clashed to each other, conflict starts and restlessness never leave the region.

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