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Freezing the Desert The Middle East After Cold war- Security Dilemma .docx

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Middle East Diplomacy Conference



Freezing the Desert

The Middle East After Cold war: Security Dilemma

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I. Introduction

The Middle East is a primary area of contentionⁱ. After World War two, the hegemonic powers conscious the importance of Middle East in many terms. Begin with geographic location in the heart of the world, surrounded by many central seas, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Arabian (Persian) Gulf, the Oman Gulf, the Black and the Caspian Sea and finally the Indian Ocean. The region is also full of oilfields and gas deposits recourses. Before the end of the Second World War, both Soviet Union and United States were interested in the Middle East's oil reserve. In fact, their forces were highly dependent on oilⁱⁱ so there was a concerned about the risk if the oil supplies were denied by their enemies. This research will outline the GCC security situation in cold war; Suez Crises, Palestine/ Israel Conflict, Between Iraq- Iran war & Iraq- Kuwait War. The post-cold war situation and finally future expectation of Gulf Union and Solution alternative



ⁱ Kahana, Ephraim. Suwaed, Muhammad. Historical Dictionary of Middle Eastern Intelligence Archived 2015-12-23 at the Wayback Machine. Scarecrow Press, 13 apr. 2009 ISBN 978-0810863026 p xxxi.

ⁱⁱ Held, Colbert C. (2000). Middle East Patterns: Places, Peoples, and Politics. Westview Press. p. 7. ISBN 0-8133-8221-1.

Background

Cold War and Middle East

The period from 1950 to 1960s in Middle East was complicated and crucial for the following perspective: the period after the French and British colonialism, the unstable development of postcolonial politics and the great harsh compaction between the United State and Soviet Union. In 1950s, the Europeanization military and economy decline sharply in Middle Est in favor of United Statesⁱⁱⁱ and USSR. Moreover, Suez crises was generally the introduction of The Cold War into the Middle East and where the Western power was replacement. And the security situation game changed.

The Suez Crisis (Tripartite Aggression)

In 1869, Suez Canal was opened by Egyptian government and financed by French government. The Canal soon became strategic location important, as it provide the shortest ocean link between Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. This Canal particularly helped in trading process and make the European power closer from colonies. However, few years after, in 1875, Egypt faced a financial crisis, so the government sell 44% from the canal operating company shares to the British government of Benjamin Disreali. In early 90s where the oil demand increases from the Europe to the two million barrels per day, and they were already a host supplier in Middle East, the Suez Canal continued to gain more and strategically important. Israel, United Kingdom and France attacked Egypt in 1956, for the seek of removing Gamal Abdel Nasser from power and controlling Suez Canal^{iv}. Once the fighting had started, a huge political pressure from the United Nation, United State and Soviet Union started too against them, which led the UK, France and Israel to withdrawal. The episode strengthened Abdel Nasser and humiliated Britain and France. However, as a result of the conflict, the UN created UNEF peacekeeping to police the Egyptian-Israeli border.

ⁱⁱⁱ Trentin, Massimiliano, and Matteo Gerlini. *The Middle East and the Cold War: between security and development*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Pub., 2012.

^{iv} Mayer, Michael S. (2010). *The Eisenhower Years*. Infobase Publishing. p. 44. ISBN 9780816053872.

Palestine – Israeli Conflict

In the middle of 20th century, a new security struggle started in the region, between Israel and Palestine^v. The conflict roots can be traced back to Jewish immigration, and sectarian conflict in Mandatory Palestine between Jews and Arabs. Nevertheless, Palestine- Israeli conflict has been referred as “the most intractable clash”^{vi}, with Israeli ongoing occupation of Gaza and the West Bank for more than 50 years^{vii}.

Despite the fact of conflict struggle between the two parties and the neighborhoods, for the first time the whole region agreed on a one decision, and against one enemy which was Israel. The Arab collective decision led to five major wars and a number of minor conflict. Egypt led the region decisions and there was an excellent opportunity to create a collective regional security, but the opportunity has not been taken.

Between Iraq- Iran war & Iraq- Kuwait War (First and Second Gulf War)

In 1980, an armed conflict between Iran and Iraq started and last for eight years, resulted half a million Iranian and Iraqi soldiers, with an equivalent number of civilians and many more injured too. The epic conflict started by Iraqi with a supporter of Middle East countries, United State, Soviet Union, together with France. Along with both sides border disputes, motivated by Iranian Revolution fears which might inspire the Shi'a majority in Iraq and the region^{viii}. After an eight year of war, Iraq was exhausted economically, and to recoup the following damage caused by the war, Iraq invaded Kuwait. This invasion creates a new Security escalation in the region. And because the region was suffered from not having a collective security organization that can protect the Oil wealth, United State involved in helping Kuwait and became the region “superman” since then.

^v "A History of Conflict: Introduction". *A History of Conflict*. BBC News.

^{vi} Avner Falk, *Fratricide in the Holy Land: A Psychoanalytic View of the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, Chapter 1, page 8, "Most experts agree that the Arab–Israeli conflict is the most intractable conflict in our world, yet very few scholars have produced any psychological explanation—let alone a satisfactory one—of this conflict's intractability"

^{vii} Chris Rice, quoted in Munayer Salim J, Loden Lisa, *Through My Enemy's Eyes: Envisioning Reconciliation in Israel-Palestine*, quote: "The Palestinian-Israeli divide may be the most intractable conflict of our time."

^{viii} Molavi, Afshin (2005). *The Soul of Iran: A Nation's Journey to Freedom* (Revised ed.). England: W. W. Norton & Company. p. 152. ISBN 9780393325973.

1. Cold War and Middle East Security

Gulf Cooperation Countries

was established in 1981 in response to the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War. The Regional intergovernmental economic and political cooperation, Include: Oman, KSA, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. In 2001, the GCC supreme council set the main goals:

1. Custom Union by 2003.
2. Common Market by 2007.
3. Common currency by 2010^{ix}.
4. Unified military (Peninsula Shield Force)

The common currency goals have been failed to be obtained by GCC members. Despite the fact if it realized, the Gulf Cooperation Countries monetary union would be the second largest monetary union in the world^x. However, the time of establishment the cooperation was a good opportunity it gave the Arab Gulf State a one framework of a multilateral organization that could pursue common aspirations while at the same time maintaining the main opponents of the regional security system - Iran and Iraq - of this arrangement.

The GCC security weapon was the creation of Peninsula Shield Force; a collective self-defense capability, which in turn removes the reliance on external defense support. However, in 1990, the Peninsula Shield Force faced its first challenge when Iraqi forces attacked Kuwait a GCC member state, the ineffectiveness of the Peninsula Shield Force became immediately apparent. Nevertheless, the forces showed an effective role in Bahrain uprising in 2011.

2. Current issues

Arab Uprising

A revolutionary protest wave began in 2010 in Tunisia, soon it flourishes to: Libya, Egypt, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen. And the major slogan was “the people want to bring down the regime”^{xi}.

^{ix} Bandar Salman Al Saud (1997). "The GCC security convention" .*University of Glasgow*. Retrieved 27 December 2013.

^x Sturm, Michael; Siegfried, Nikolaus (June 2005). *Regional Monetary Integration in the Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council* (PDF). Frankfurt am Main, Germany: European Central Bank. ISSN 1725-6534. Occasional Paper Series, No. 31. Retrieved 11 May 2009.

^{xi} Abulof, Uriel (10 March 2011). "What Is the Arab Third Estate?". *Huffington Post*. Archived from the original on 7 June 2011. Retrieved 1 May 2011.

However, Oman suffered from un sustained street too, but people protest for economically reasons, not to change the regime. There was a kind of immediate response from Tunisia and Egypt. While in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen, the power struggle competes with the civilian. However, the social media showed for the first time in the region how power is it. Lots of Arabian government started to appear in all social media plat forum and guide the public opinion through it or through using the new terminology of social media influencer.

Arab Uprising has brought more challenges to the security of the Arabian Gulf states. And the political landscape changed dramatically. Citizen are now more involvement in government decisions like in the case of Oman, where the Lower House (Majlis Al Shura) gain some more power as a tool to represent the Citizen. People are more aware of the cost of such a revolution too like in the case of Yemen and Syria where the protest became a civil and sects war. Arabian government started to spend more in security agreements and weapons too. To be mentioned that the most highlighted result of Arab Up Raising was the sects raising.

KSA, Iran, UAE, Qatar, and the New "Game of Thrones"

Millions of viewers were watching Game of Thrones series, and waiting for the new season. The unexpected news that the real world played out a free and public series of Game of Thrones by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The bad news is this real show has no excessive violence, no fantastic series of plots.

The recent tensions between UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar about which side we shall support, and which one is our min enemies are only part of the story. Oman and Saudi Arabia have been at odds since the GCC was established because of Wahhabis^{xii}. The UAE still has few remnants of the days when three separate groups of security forces were deployed, and each GCC country continues to pursue its security efforts with very little emphasis on uniformity, interoperability and joint efforts to develop the Mission's capabilities Concentrated, deterrent efforts, integrated air and naval defense systems and missiles. Bahrain suffered from instability and economic crises.

Saudi Arabia and Iran soft war cost the GCC Qatar this time. However, schoolers agreed that Iran is not a superpower or a great conspirator. The success of Iran is largely due to the game between the princes of the Arabian Gulf and other Arab regimes by the external forces. We cannot ignore

^{xii} "Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and the New "Game of Thrones".| Center for Strategic and International Studies. November 1, 2017. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/saudi-arabia-uae-qatar-and-new-game-thrones>.

Shi'a, KSA and other GCC region can take Oman as an example how all sects could live together without any conflict or preferences. At the end, they are Muslims too. However, both KSA and Iran are a world major oil and gas exporters. The tension between two countries started from Iranian revolution, the nuclear program and many more regional supporting issues. The two powerful countries have no political relation too^{xiii}. In fact, the bilateral relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have been strained over various geopolitical issues such as interpretations of Islam(Shia), aspirations of the leadership of the Islamic world, oil export policy and relations with the United States and other Western countries.

Future Expectations

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to Union?

In 2013, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain called for a union, at Manama summit. Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah Oman's Foreign Minister said that Oman would not support such plans. Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Qatar joined Oman position in not backing Union dreams. In fact, Oman as a historically the most independent state among other GCC member, has no chance to change her position. Although if there is such a security crisis that called of such a union, collative security^{xiv}.

Kuwait is the most democratic state among the GCC. The union project could largely be led to (collective security action) which could pursue to silence and less freedom activism. For example, Kuwait will bring parliamentarians to the National Assembly from the opposition, which is composed of liberals and Islamists, who do not allow other GCC states to exercise any power in their political systems. Since many Kuwaitis are proud and happy of "half democracy" and relative transparency and openness, the concept of the Union has achieved its share of the country's resistance of votes across its political spectrum. The Gulf Union might be hard to achieve in short run. In case of Qatar, the highest gross domestic product per capita in the world, and world's top liquefied natural gas exporter. Saw the Gulf Union from an economic perspective. The union will

^{xiii} Wehrey, Frederic; Karasik, Theodore W.; Nader, Alireza; Ghez, Jeremy J.; Hansell, Lydia; Guffey, Robert A. (2009). *Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation and Implication for US Policy*. RAND Corporation. ISBN 9780833046574. Retrieved 1 November 2017.

^{xiv} Thuffman. "Who in the GCC wants a union?" *Al-Monitor*. December 06, 2016. Accessed November 1, 2017. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/12/gcc-union-manama-dialogue-iran-nuclear-deal.html>.

redistribute the wealth among other state. Furthermore, Doha has recently established a strong tie with Islamist group throughout the region and hosted many of them as Muslim Brotherhood. On the other hand, UAE consider the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group^{xv}, will absolutely cause an internal and external conflict to Qatar. All in all, in short run, the union is still considering as dream demand by KSA to become a hegemonic power.

Solution Alternative

China: An Ideal Alternative

China has a number of advantages over the Middle East and North Africa region, for example China imports approximately one-quarter of its energy from Saudi Arabia^{xvi} and billion shared investment funds in different part of MENA region. China could be the magic solution for several reasons. First, they lack the religious, colonial and historical baggage that many other nations weigh in MENA region. Unlike other main powers, China does not have a negative historical impact in the region. China refused to be part in Arabs / Israelis violence and has no preference among Muslims & Jew. China has also ignored to take part between Muslim sects. More importantly, the MENA geographical and demographic divisions cannot be attributed to the Chinese. In addition, China enjoys normal relations with all the countries of the MENA with some small exception in case of Oman. In January 2016, a couple of days before the Xi Jinping started MENA tour, the Chinese government published the (*China's Arab Policy Paper*): a roadmap and a statement that is aimed to guide Chinese foreign policy in Arab countries^{xvii}. Interestingly enough, the paper focus in China's vice-foreign minister, Zhang Ming recent declarations, who stated that the "ultimate way out" of conflict in the MENA region is the economic development^{xviii}. laudative the South-South model of cooperation, the Paper stated, "*Arab states are China's*

^{xv} Thuffman. "Who in the GCC wants a union?" Al-Monitor. December 06, 2016. Accessed November 1, 2017. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/12/gcc-union-manama-dialogue-iran-nuclear-deal.html>.

^{xvi} Gergawi, Mishaal Al. "China Is Eyeballing a Major Strategic Investment in Saudi Arabia's Oil." Foreign Policy. October 26, 2017. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/26/china-is-eyeballing-a-major-strategic-investment-in-saudi-arabias-oil/>.

^{xvii} China's Arab Policy Paper, September 13, 2017, Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2016-01/13/c_135006619.htmDollar, D. (Summer 2015), China's Rise as a Regional and Global Power, Horizons, pp. 162-172.

^{xviii} "China's Increasing Interests in MENA: Is the All-Economy Solution a Viable Path for Stability?" Mediterranean Affairs. June 23, 2016. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://mediterraneanaffairs.com/chinas-increasing-interests-in-mena-is-the-all-economy-solution-a-viable-path-for-stability/>.

important partners in following the peaceful development path, strengthening unity and cooperation among developing countries and establishing a new kind of international relations with win-win cooperation at its core.”

I believe that China could be the regions judge behave using the investments tools as a sanction if any state shatter such a role. However, in GCC the most effective security players are government and Islamic scholar, as an Islamic state. China could direct control the state outside behaviour for the seek of having a stable economic area, government could easily control the Islamic scholar, where they shape people public opinion.

Conclusion

In conflicts in the Middle East can be classified into four types: conflicts run and between outside powers and Middle Eastern states; between Middle Eastern countries among themselves; between different political parties and religious sects within a state; as well as transnational and cross-border conflicts. Professor Cuneyt Yenigun state that the number one reason of Middle east conflict is the seatrain issue^{xix}. The cold war period shaped the security transformer in the region and foreign military air bases too. The post-cold war and Arab Up raising reshaped the government internal and external relation. According to Gulf Union, there is less hope to be obtained in short run.

The China’s could be the ideal solution for Middle Eastern political, security and social conflicts. And there are three categories of domestic mechanisms already practicing by Chinese, specifically: The mechanism of the Special Envoy of the Chinese Foreign Ministry; convoy mechanisms and peacekeeping mechanisms by the Chinese Ministry of National Defense; and the foreign aid mechanism by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce. The China-Arab Cooperation Forum, the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, the United Nations and other international organizations are the main international systems of China's security governance. China's security governance in the Middle East not only creates "public goods" for the region, but also means to build strong

^{xix} Yenigun, Cuneyt , Conflict Resolution for the Middle East: Sectarian Rapprochement, Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, ISSN:2147-7523.

constructive relations with the United States, the European Union, Russia and others. The Chinese and Western security regimes in the Middle East vary with the Chinese side focusing on improving the well-being of the peoples of the Middle East and placing it as a top priority on the agenda, followed by the "bottom-up" road map and seeking progressive, consultative, comprehensive and selective governance in the Middle East conflict.

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