

**SAUDI-IRAN RAPPROCHEMENT: ANALYZING  
REGIONAL IMPACT**



**RESEARCHER**

Aimen Akhter

Reg. No. 204-FSS/MSIR/F22

**SUPERVISOR**

Professor Dr. Muhammad Khan

Dept. of Politics and IR

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD**

**2024**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**I** would like to begin my gratitude by praising the Almighty Allah for all the blessings He has bestowed upon me in life. It would never have been possible without guidance from Allah Almighty who made me come across instances that shaped my success. This research is one of the few things that I hold close to my heart and I would like to thank Him for giving me the strength and courage to pursue this. It is indeed He who at every step gave patience and confidence to pursue MS in my choice of stream. I extend my sincere regards to my great supervisor, Prof Dr. Muhammad Khan for providing me with encouragement throughout the degree. I am also grateful to the IR faculty honorable members who helped me during my coursework and research and provided motivation to complete my thesis. I am grateful for the much-needed support and insight all my professors have shared with me. Their kind words and fruitful discussions have helped me shape my study. I sincerely thank my kind family who did not leave me alone during this time and helped me with their comprehensive support. I feel deeply indebted to their silent but constant efforts for me to continue my hard work and surpass any hurdles that tried to become a problem. My parents have been the best support and I will never forget the attention and love I received from my siblings which helped me the most during my studies. I will always be grateful to them for making this possible. Here, I would like to thank my friends whose existence was a source of happiness for me and whose encouragement has always made me stand up and not give up. Lastly, I want to thank all my acquaintances at International Islamic University Islamabad, who helped me academically and professionally towards my degree and never let my morale down. I feel fortunate to have distinguished faculty members who provided me with professional training and helped me complete my thesis and degree requirements.

# **Dedication**

To my Parents, Teachers & country who are  
deprived of even their most basic rights

## ABSTRACT

**T**he present study aimed to investigate the ongoing reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran, a pivotal geopolitical development in the Middle East. The research focuses on three primary objectives. Firstly, it examines the intricate factors driving the reconciliation, encompassing historical, cultural, and geopolitical elements, as well as economic and security considerations possibility of Saudi Arabia-Iran reconciliation has significant implications for regional stability and global politics. The objectives of the study were (I) to examine the factors that necessitated reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. (ii) To evaluate the possible continuation of the reconciliation process between both states on a long-term basis. (iii) To analyze the regional implications of this reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The researcher used the qualitative method. The study examines the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran, a significant development in the Middle East with far-reaching implications for regional stability and global politics. The deal, brokered by China, marks a major shift in the long-standing rivalry between the two nations, which have been on opposite sides of various regional conflicts. The study analyzes the historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors that contributed to the initiation of the reconciliation process, including the growing recognition by both sides of the need for cooperation in the face of shared regional challenges, such as the ongoing conflict in Yemen and the threat posed by extremist groups like ISIS. The study also explores the regional implications of the reconciliation, including the potential for increased economic cooperation, reduced tensions in the region, and a shift in the regional balance of power. Additionally, the study discusses the challenges and opportunities for Pakistan arising out of the Iran-Saudi rapprochement, including the potential for increased economic collaboration and the need for Pakistan to maintain a balanced diplomatic stance in the region. The study concludes that the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is a significant development with the potential to promote regional stability and global peace, but it also poses challenges for Pakistan and other regional players.

## Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the study-----	1
1.2. Problem Statement-----	8
1.3. Significance of the Study-----	9
1.4. Objectives of the Study-----	10
1.5. Research Questions-----	11
1.6. Literature Review-----	11
1.7. Theoretical Framework-----	22
1.8. Research Methodology-----	25
1.9. Operation Definitions-----	26
1.10. Organization of the Study-----	27
CHAPTER 2	30
REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS-----	30
2.1 Saudi-Iran Relationship-----	31
2.2 Commencement of peace policies -----	35
2.3 Policy on Confidence Building: Introduction and Action -----	40
2.4 Strengthening of Political and Bilateral Security Cooperation-----	44
2.5 Summary-----	48
CHAPTER 3	49
FACTORS NECESSITATING CONCILIATION BTW SAUDI-IRAN-----	49
3.1 The Role of Russia in The Iran-Saudi Reconciliation-----	53
3.2 US as a Factor in the Iran-Saudi Reconciliation -----	56
3.3 The Saudi-Iran Rivalry and Britain-----	60
3.4 France Factor as a Reconciliation Process -----	62
3.5 European Union and Saudi-Iran Rivalry -----	65

CHAPTER 4 68

POSSIBILITY OF LONG-TERM CONTINUATION OF THE RECONCILIATION----- 68

    4.1 Economics Effects ----- 71

    4.2 Advancing the Saudi-Iran Re approached----- 72

    4.3 Ramifications of Saudi Arabia and Iran Reconciling ----- 76

MAJOR AND CONCLUSION----- 77

    Major Findings----- 77

    Future Projections----- 79

    Conclusions----- 87

    Recommendations ----- 90

REFERENCE----- 91

*Chapter I*  
**INTRODUCTION**

**Background of the Study**

For decades, Saudi Arabia and Iran's animosity has shaped Middle Eastern affairs. The geopolitical landscape of the Middle East has been defined by the long-standing tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, two regional powerhouses with different ideologies and objectives. But new developments suggest the two countries could be getting closer to reconciliation. The potential improvement of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia is significant because of Iran's longstanding alliance with Saudi Arabia. Iran and Saudi Arabia have had tense ties for decades, characterized by regional animosity and proxy wars. Their geopolitical animosity, as two major Middle Eastern nations, has affected regional and global dynamics, especially as it pertains to Iran. Regional instability, including extensive proxy conflicts and heightened sectarianism, has been further exacerbated by the ideological, geopolitical, religious, ethnic, and economic factors that have fueled the animosity between the two nations. They have supported opposing factions in many conflicts. Iran backs the Houthi rebels in the continuing civil war in Yemen, while Saudi Arabia spearheads a coalition that supports the internationally recognized government. The competition between these two nations has exacerbated sectarian tensions and contributed to the instability in the Middle East. There have been many efforts over the years to strengthen ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Some observers believe that the change in foreign policy under the Biden administration might open the door for this reconciliation (Khan, & Mashwani, 2024).

Iraq has an excellent chance to take advantage of Saudi Arabia's investments in numerous Iraqi businesses as a result of the reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Riyadh has made several investments in Iraq in recent years: Iraq built two border crossings with Saudi Arabia in



2020–22 and asked Saudi Arabia to engage in business and agriculture in the southern provinces.<sup>29</sup> The issue, however, is that these kinds of investments are opposed by Iran and Iraqi Shiites who support Iran. There were suspicions of grid sabotage over the project to link Iraq's energy to Saudi Arabia, which the government chose to overlook.

In the best-case scenario, Saudi Arabia's investment in Iraq would rise as a result of the reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. On the other side, given Iran's inadequate infrastructure and US financial sanctions, the Kingdom's Finance Minister, Mohammed Al-Jadaan, said that his preparedness to invest in Iran after the agreement<sup>31</sup> suggests that this investment may instead go via a third nation, like Iraq. For instance, it may discuss less controversial and unapproved initiatives like food and medicine that Saudi Arabia and Iran could work together to carry out in Iraq. Iraq may also put money into cutting-edge banking and financial initiatives that connect Iran and Saudi Arabia. Both parties trust Iraqi banks, and Baghdad may get waivers from Washington on sanctions for specific infrastructural and strategic projects, such as connecting and integrating Saudi Arabia's and Iran's gas and power networks with the Gulf Cooperation Council via Iraq. All three of these nations desperately need to make investments related to climate change. A significant portion of the geographical area in each of the three nations is made up of deserts. Dust storms in Saudi Arabia's and Iraq's deserts bring fine dust to Iran's west, south, and even its central region. The Iranian authorities have sent stern warnings to the Saudi Arabian and Iraqi environmental agencies about this matter. The three parties may choose to jointly invest in this region given the respiratory issues that the fine dust is causing for the inhabitants of each of the three nations (Juneau, 2023).

During the October 2021 negotiations in Baghdad between Riyadh and Tehran, the idea of an "international highway" was put forth. This would connect Mecca, the center of Muslim

importance, and Mashhad, the largest pilgrimage site in Iran, by rail and road via the holy city of Karbala in Iraq. Taking into account the strategic initiatives slated for all three nations, such as Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to draw in 100 million visitors yearly, generate one million new employment opportunities, and raise the tourism sector's contribution to domestic output to over 10%<sup>34</sup>. This initiative has a good possibility of succeeding, and it will also strengthen social, religious, and cultural ties between the three nations.

Complex geopolitical conflicts have traditionally defined the Middle East, with Iran and Saudi Arabia serving as regional epicenters. The region's political environment has been profoundly impacted by the long-standing and ideologically charged rivalry between these two powerful nations. On the other hand, a reconciliation process between Iran and Saudi Arabia has begun, which is a significant and revolutionary move. There has never been a better chance for diplomatic realignment in the Middle East than now, thanks to this significant break from the traditionally antagonistic relationship. An in-depth understanding of the forces propelling this reconciliation, an evaluation of its sustainability prospects, and an analysis of the wider regional ramifications are the foundation of this research. The path for this diplomatic approach has been prepared by long-standing animosities, together with current geopolitical changes, economic factors, and common regional difficulties. This research aims to delve into the intricate aspects of the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran, in light of the current geopolitical situation in the Middle East, which is shaped by complicated regional wars and realignments (Kamrava, 2018).

The animosity is fueled by ideological differences and geopolitical objectives, and it is very doubtful that it will be resolved anytime soon. In 2019, Gause III Despite diplomatic efforts to ease tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran on occasion, the aforementioned problems remain too deep to allow for a genuine reconciliation. Although there may be occasional tactical

cooperation or limited communication between the two countries, the inherent sectarian, geopolitical, and external factors that fuel their war make a complete and enduring reconciliation remain elusive (Schreck, 2019).

One possible strategy to encourage reconciliation is mediation by regional or international parties. The beginning of Saudi Arabia and Iran's reconciliation process has emerged as a game-changing and very crucial step in the dynamic Middle Eastern geopolitical environment. Considering the long history of animosity and geopolitical rivalry between these two regional superpowers, the possibility of better relations represents a possible change in the status quo. To understand the complex reasons behind this diplomatic overture, this paper explores the complexities of the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. This reconciliation is taking place against the background of long-standing animosity, interspersed with more contemporary geopolitical shifts, economic factors, and common regional difficulties. Recognizing the processes and possible consequences of this reconciliation is crucial as the Middle East man oeuvres through intricate regional crises and geopolitical realignments. This research seeks to provide subtle insights into our knowledge of this critical juncture in Middle Eastern diplomacy by conducting a thorough analysis of the causes driving the reconciliation, evaluating its long-term sustainability, and exploring its larger regional repercussions. The Middle East is at a crossroads, and this research aims to shed light on the changing character of diplomatic ties there and what it may mean for regional stability and global relations (Barbosa, &Kuster, 2019).

Iran and Saudi Arabia can reconcile, and Tehran may rethink its approach to the Middle East. Yet, mending fences between Saudi Arabia and Iran is not without its share of difficulties and dangers. There will be no quick fix for the long-simmering sectarian and geopolitical tensions between the two nations. Some Gulf nations and other regional players, including Israel, may see

a reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran as an attack on their interests, which might cause fresh divisions in the area. Reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran might have far-reaching effects on US-Saudi ties. Although it has the potential to bring about more stability in the Middle East and cause a reevaluation of the area, it is not without its dangers and difficulties. The final effect of any possible regional dynamics and other actors' interests-driven complex will be decided by Resolving the nuclear issue between Iran and Saudi Arabia hinges on Iran's longtime partnership with Saudi Arabia (Weddington, 2017).

Iran and Saudi Arabia have been at odds since the 1979 Iranian revolution, marking the beginning of more than 30 years of animosity. After a new relationship with the Islamic Republic was formed, the Saudi monarchy—whose legitimacy was founded on Islam—felt its supremacy in the Muslim world was endangered. During the Iran–Iraq War of the 1980s, Saudi Arabia secretly backed Iraq. Under Presidents Mohammad Khatami (1997–2005) and Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989–1997), Iran's ties with its neighbors were improved, leading to a small easing of tensions. The election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, however, once again put a halt to efforts towards reconciliation. When Shiites in Bahrain rose in protest against the Sunni royal family during the 2011 Arab Spring, tensions became even higher. In response to what it saw as Iranian provocation of the revolt, Saudi Arabia sent its forces to crush the rebellion.

After a moderate administration led by Hassan Rouhani took office in 2013, it attempted to mend fences with Saudi Arabia. Conflicts in the area, especially in Yemen and Syria, have caused tensions between the two nations. Hundreds of Iranians died in a stampede in Saudi Arabia in September 2015 while performing the annual hajj rite. Following the disaster, Saudi authorities accused Iran of politicizing the situation, while Tehran blamed Riyadh for mismanagement. The 2016 execution of Shiite cleric Nimr al Nimr by the Saudis and the subsequent attachment of the

Saudi Embassy in Iran caused tensions to rise once again. Consequently, Saudi Arabia cut relations with Iran. Nevertheless, no single event spawned the tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. But Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution played a big role in creating the hostile environment we see today. To Saudi Arabia, the rise of the Islamic Republic posed a double threat: Its leaders were unabashedly Shiite and staunchly anti-American, opposing a close ally of the monarchies on the Arabian Peninsula (Weddington, 2017).

The government of Iran was eager to share the revolutionary spirit with the rest of the world. Foreign Shiite militias and groups were endorsed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's first supreme leader. As a result, Riyadh aimed to strengthen ties with other Sunni nations. The development of groupings like the Gulf Cooperation Council, which consists of six nations, was prompted by these initiatives. When Saudi Arabia backed Saddam Hussein of Iraq in the Iraq-Iran War of the 1980s, tensions rose. Two regional superpowers emerged during the 1991 Gulf War: Iran and Saudi Arabia, following Iraq's humiliation in that conflict. Political and social unrest is sweeping across both Iran and Saudi Arabia, reigniting a rivalry that has simmered for decades. Their regional animosity and aggressive postures might be partly explained by an effort to unite a fractured nation against a national enemy, given that each administration is subject to internal pressure from religious fundamentalists or civil society activists. They have both continued to sponsor political groups and proxies beyond their boundaries to gain influence and dominance in their respective regions. Furthermore, major world powers such as the United States, Russia, and the European Union are not only involved in the competition but also play a significant role as observers and supporters of both sides. However, with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, relations between the two nations began to shift. While many were not surprised, the Saudi government did not back Saddam Hussein's harsh denunciation by Tehran during the Kuwait War. Iran condemned Saudi

Arabia for inviting Western soldiers, particularly American ones, to the country, but it did not hold Saudi Arabia responsible for the enormous military buildup in the region. On the subject of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, at least there was a subtle endorsement of recent events. During Foreign Minister Su'ud al-Faysal's visit to Iran in early June 1991, Tehran emphasized the need for cooperation between the two main Gulf governments in safeguarding the security of the Gulf area. An Iranian ambassador in the Middle East posed the question, "Is it reasonable that the largest, most populous, oldest, and most powerful country in the Gulf should not be involved in establishing a security arrangement in the Gulf?" The diplomat's inquiry was ultimately met with a negative response, as Saudi Arabia continued to be cautious about Iran's ambitions to establish long-term dominance in the region (Takeyh, 2009).

Iran brought up the production quota issue because it thought the quota it was given in March 1982 was too low. Quotas, according to Iran, should be determined by four factors: each country's historical production share, its oil reserves, its population and financial requirements, and its foreign currency reserves. No matter how valid the Iranian arguments may be, they are largely directed against Saudi Arabia and its struggle for dominance in the Gulf. During the May OPEC meeting in Quito, Iran's oil minister clarified the country's stance towards Saudi Arabia. Our conflict with Saudi Arabia extends beyond the oil industry. American-Iraqi relations are only one facet of a much larger political conflict. The Iraq-Iran conflict was an opportunity for Saudi Arabia to increase its leverage over Iran. Saudi Arabia successfully countered Iranian ambitions at the Vienna summit by keeping quotas and price differentials unchanged and raising the output cap, making it more realistic. The Saudi official's assurance that his nation will "adopt appropriate measures at the appropriate time to protect the interests of the majority (of OPEC members)" seemed to indicate this. This was a message to Iran and a signal to the other members of OPEC

not to support Iran, both in a subtle but noticeable way. Additionally, conflicting legitimacy is a defining feature of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. Both have used Islamism as a political tool to counter other ideologies. Amidst what seems to be a broader secular shift of global power, both factions are eager to establish a regional order that serves their interests and ensures domestic security, even if they may only be able to achieve disarray for the time. No Pax Russia or spontaneously formed great agreement will occur in West Asia, and the region does not have a natural balance of power. Only when all nations are strong and capable, shielded by a collective security system, will the region's issues be solved? Iran and Saudi Arabia both have economic and political challenges, but they are both well-equipped to continue their competition by diplomatic, economic, and even military methods; neither country can genuinely beat or marginalize the other. This ongoing struggle is threatening to derail West Asia's future. But it would be naive to think of the schism as long-standing, based on sectarian animosity, or even unfixable. Whether we are closer to a *détente* or a resolution is still up in the air; in fact, it seems that reconciliation between these two powerful nations is farther away than it has ever been (Saikal, 2021).

### **Problem Statement**

The historical rivalry and geopolitical competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran have been a major source of instability in the Middle East. The complex dynamics of the Saudi Arabia-Iran reconciliation pose a multifaceted challenge that demands in-depth exploration. The central research problem for this study revolves around understanding the driving factors behind the reconciliation, assessing the sustainability of this process and comprehending the far-reaching regional implications it carries. The intricacies of diplomatic, political, and historical dimensions necessitate a nuanced investigation to unravel the complexities that surround this geopolitical shift.

By addressing these questions, the research aims to contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on international relations in the Middle East.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study on Saudi Arabia-Iran Reconciliation: Analyze the Regional Impact holds paramount significance in unraveling the complex geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East. As two historical adversaries, Saudi Arabia and Iran's engagement in a reconciliation process is a momentous development with far-reaching implications. By examining the driving factors behind this reconciliation, the research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the diplomatic and political maneuvers that underpin such a pivotal shift. Assessing the sustainability of this reconciliation process contributes crucial insights into the potential long-term outcomes and consequences, guiding policymakers in strategic decision-making. The analysis of regional implications offers a broader perspective on how this reconciliation may affect neighboring countries and the overall stability of the Middle East. Furthermore, the study enriches the academic discourse on international relations, diplomacy, and Middle Eastern Studies, serving as a foundational resource for future research. Ultimately, by disseminating findings to the public, the study fosters awareness and informed discussions on Middle Eastern geopolitics, empowering citizens to engage meaningfully with global affairs. In essence, this research is not merely an academic endeavor but a significant contribution to our understanding of a transformative geopolitical event with implications for international relations, regional stability, and public awareness.

As Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman said that a discussion between Riyadh and Tehran was impossible, the long-simmering animosity between the two countries has once again come to



the fore. He criticized Iran's immoral reasoning that the Muslim world must be prepared for the arrival of the Imam Mahdi. But Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, said, "We have never ruled out intermediary efforts," meaning that Iran is willing to engage with the Sunni monarchy. Russian, Kazakh, Indonesian, and Pakistani authorities have all offered mediation ideas, and we have not opposed any of them. Both Saudi Arabia and the mediators are not the source of the crisis, and we do not want to provoke them. A mentality shift on the part of Saudi authorities is crucial.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the factors which necessitated reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran.
- To evaluate the possibility of continuation of the reconciliation process between both states on a long-term basis.
- To analyze the regional implications of this reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

### **Research Questions**

- What historical, cultural, or geopolitical factors contributed to the initiation of the reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran?
- What are the possibilities of continuation of the reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran?
- What would be possible regional implications of the reconciliation process?

## **Delimitation of the Study**

This study was focused on a specific time frame, limiting the analysis to the events and developments related to the Saudi Arabia-Iran reconciliation up to the last available information (as of September 2021). Ongoing developments beyond this date are not considered in the study.

## **Literature Review**

This second display of "heroic flexibility" is intended to stop the system from continuing on its present downward track, according to Iran. The declaration came after months of public demonstrations in response to the murder of MahsaAmini, a young Kurdish girl, while in the custody of the police, and in the wake of growing economic issues that have caused the Iranian rial to fall to all-time lows and inflation to soar to all-time highs. In the meantime, the announcement holds out hope for the Saudis that it will lessen the threat of Iranian expansionism by ending, or at least decreasing, Iranian military support for the Houthi rebels and extending the cease-fire so that Yemeni drones and missiles won't retaliate against Saudi Arabia. Before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the United States had friends in Saudi Arabia and Iran. However, Riyadh became concerned due to Tehran's increased activity in the area. The Shah's assertive action raised fears in Saudi Arabia even in 1971 when he employed force to take control of three strategically located islands at the entrance to the Straits of Hormuz. The Shah's intentions were questioned by the Saudis, who feared that he would use his influence to subjugate the whole Persian Gulf under Iranian rule(Hicks, & Dalton, 2017).

When Iranian pilgrims held a march in Mecca known as the "Disavowal of the Pagans," in 1987—the first significant Iran-Saudi conflict since the revolution—took place. Hundreds of Iranians were murdered in clashes between Saudi security forces and pilgrims. In a lengthy speech,

Iran's Supreme Leader at the time, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, charged Saudi Arabia's officials of being "puppets and servants of America" and "traitors to the holy shrines." Following Khomeini's death in 1989, hostilities progressively declined. Following the election of reformist Iranian President Mohammad Khatami in December 1997, Crown Prince Abdullah was present at an Organization of Islamic Conference held in Tehran. During a trip to Saudi Arabia in March 1998, King Fahd and Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the predecessor of Khatami, had a meeting. Through these meetings, agreements on mutual security and economic cooperation were reached by Hassan Rouhani, the future president and then national security adviser. The path to the Iranian government's creation of a corridor to the west and the Mediterranean was cleared in 2003 with the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein administration. The 2011 Arab Spring-related civil conflict in Syria prompted the Iranian government to intervene directly to save Bashar al-Assad's rule. This enhanced Iranian sway over Syria and opened up access to the Mediterranean and, ultimately, Lebanon, where the Islamic Republic of Iran's close ally Hezbollah has a prominent military and political role. Saudi Arabia, which is now essentially commanded by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, progressively became more assertive as Iranian influence increased in the area. To quell Houthi rebels who adhere to a version of Shia Islam as opposed to Sunni Wahhabism, the predominant religion of Saudi Arabia (an extreme offshoot of Islam that demands a literal reading of the Koran), the Saudis launched an invasion of Yemen in 2015. Iran stepped escalated its influence in Yemen and started to back the Houthis (Mousavian, 2020).

Early in 2016, ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran deteriorated with the execution by Riyadh of Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, a Shiite cleric who had attended Iranian seminaries from 1979 until 1994. In reprisal, ultra-conservative Iranians set fire to the Saudi embassy in Tehran. The subsequent Houthi rebel strikes on Saudi sites, carried out by Iranian drones and missiles,

escalated tensions to unprecedented levels. Between 10 and 15 percent of Saudi Arabia's population is Shiite, and they predominate in the Eastern Province, which is home to Al Ghawar, the biggest oil reserve in the world. The Saudis fear that Iran's attempts to export the revolution and deepen its strategic penetration could lead to fresh turmoil among the Shiite minority, endangering the Kingdom's lifeblood. Iran has had two significant crises at the same time. First came the demonstrations that erupted in the wake of Amini's death, which gained widespread support and attention from across the world and lasted for around 100 days. At a cost of almost 500 fatalities, Iranian security, military, and law enforcement put an end to the demonstrations, although severe doubts were voiced about the system's durability. Iran International, a satellite channel located in London, was a major factor in inciting the demonstrations. It is said that "individuals connected to the Saudi royal court fund and helped launch" Iran International, despite the channel's protestations. Noting that bin Salman previously said, "We won't wait for the battle to be in Saudi Arabia," the Iranian government accuses the network of carrying out Saudi strategy. Rather, we will endeavor to position them to win the war in Iran rather than Saudi Arabia. "I warn the Al Saud regime, which has propaganda media that only promote mischief and are openly seeking to provoke our youth, to be careful with your behavior and control these media," said Hossein Salami, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), during the height of the protests in November 2022. The network has considerably reduced its coverage of the Iranian regime but has not stopped criticizing it since the announcement of the Iran-Saudi accord (al-moslemani, 2018).

Iran's second issue is the country's currency, the rial, which is losing value daily. Due to political unrest brought on by the demonstrations and U.S. sanctions brought on by Iran's failure to salvage the 2015 nuclear agreement, it is 55% weaker than it was a year ago. Unquestionably,

the devaluation has increased prices, particularly in the food sector. Food inflation for the year 2023 was officially declared in January 2023 to be 70%, however, it is well known that the actual number is probably far higher. Under these conditions, it is conceivable that demonstrations may flare up again. The situation is serious, as admitted by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who said, "We are facing problems both in the field of the value of the national currency as well as inflation and high prices." We must use every strategy at our disposal to address these financial issues. Iran's economic problems drive efforts to calm tensions with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and pursue détente with neighboring nations. Iran has committed to strengthening coordination and oversight of its quickly developing nuclear program. IAEA head Rafael Grossi said on April 1st, "We are starting with the installation of cameras." We're going to start by reconnecting a few internet monitoring services. We are getting back the visibility we once had. It is unclear whether Iran would pursue a lesser agreement, maybe including the release of three dual citizens of the United States, that would result in more restricted sanctions relief, or if it will resurrect the nuclear deal, which might liberate billions of dollars' worth of frozen assets. Any all-encompassing deal between the US and the Islamic Republic is shaky, however. Khamenei has barred direct engagement with the United States ever since the Trump administration abruptly withdrew from the nuclear accord in 2018. Khamenei's hardliners see their animosity against the United States as a defense of their identity and continued existence. Hardliners would become irrelevant if reconciliation meant that the revolution would stop and that there would be no need for an IRGC or a "supreme leader" to protect it. The Iranian-American issue is emphasized by the IRGC as "fundamental, ideological, and existential and cannot be resolved through negotiations."

**GawdatBahgat. "Iranian-Saudi Amity: Potential and Consequences."**

The Gulf region's well-established strategic significance is emphasized by Gawdat Bahgat, who writes around the turn of the century. The region's significance has been heightened, as the author claims, by recent finds of oil and minerals in addition to natural gas deposits. The warming of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, two bitter enemies, is, nonetheless, the most noteworthy event to have occurred in the area. "The first Iranian president to visit Saudi Arabia since the revolution of 1979, President Muhammad Khatami, made history in May 1999. His visit symbolized a growing conciliation between the two giant Gulf states." "A rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran should not be seen as an attempt to form an axis against a third party," the author adds, addressing the perception that the United States saw in the growing relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia as an effort to establish an axis. A zero-sum approach is the wrong lens through which to see it. Instead, you can win for everyone. It has the potential to stabilize the oil market and bolster security in the area. Both the Americans and the people living on either side of the Gulf need this (Bahgat, & Ehteshami, 2021).

**” Frederic Wehrey, Theodore W. Karasik, Alireza Nader, Jeremy Ghez, Lydia Hansell and Robert A. Guffey. Saudi-Iranian Relations following Saddam Hussein's downfall. Policy, Cooperation, and Rivalry.”**

If the authors are correct in assuming that Saudi and Iranian ties in the Gulf region are characterized by conflict regulation and subdued rivalry, then the two countries have actively sought out more open competition in the area. The divergent regional policies of Iran are to blame for the disparity between the Gulf and Levantine landscapes: Its aggressiveness and encouragement of non-state actors in Palestine and Lebanon have been unchanged after it stopped supporting militancy on the Arabian Peninsula in the mid-1990s. The absence of any natural resources in the Levantine area also serves to inflame tensions. In addition, the writers noted that

there is more open animosity and an attempt by Saudi Arabia to limit Iran's influence in the area compared to the Gulf. "However, there are subtle 'rules of the game' that help to reduce sectarian conflict even within each power's economic and political policies towards topics like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Lebanon. Riyadh and Tehran have skillfully navigated their rivalry by finding areas of convergence when their shared interests were at risk, even though the situation in Lebanon and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has prompted both countries to back opposing factions in the region. The fact that Iran's leadership is philosophically and politically hostile to Israel means that they may not always be pragmatic and flexible when it comes to the Levant is something that Saudi Arabia must also consider. Hizballah and Syria are two groups that might bring about change in the area. Iran's influence has grown, and Saudi Arabia and other Arab governments are increasingly eager to seek a balanced coalition that would encompass Israel, as a result of Hizballah's persistent pressure on the Siniora government in Lebanon and its consequent consolidation of military and political dominance in the area. The authors conclude that Saudi Arabia might benefit from Syria's potential influence as a swing vote due to its ad hoc alliance with Iran on the Lebanese problem. However, this could only happen if the two countries can reach an agreement on the Hariri issue, which is very improbable shortly. The outcome of the Levant will depend on how Saudi Arabia and Iran weigh the pros and cons of regional cooperation. Both countries have been pursuing their competition via non-state partners so far, but that may alter soon (Grumet, 2015).

### **M A Saleem Khan. "Shifting Gulf Power Arrangements."**

The author of this study draws attention to the paradoxical situation in the Persian Gulf and the two competing processes there. The discovery of oil ushered in an era of unprecedented prosperity, connectivity, media saturation, education for everyone, affluence among contractors

and other businesspeople, expanding labor colonies, and a new generation of thinkers. Nonetheless, the administrations were rigid, paternalistic, and monarchical, and they kept the non-sheik classes out of power. A chasm opened up and tensions rose as a result of the postponement of political changes. Amid the Gulf's meteoric rise, which is relevant to a closed study, the political and social sides came to a halt, defeating the aim of orderly advancement. "Our knowledge of the Gulf is limited," the author writes as a conclusion. Written mostly by British officers or academics, most works on the sheikhdoms and the Gulf fail to provide a comprehensive account. Given the region's geography, geoeconomic significance, and shifting power dynamics, India is likely to take a keen interest in the current and future actions of the three larger countries—Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq—as well as the eleven smaller states along the Arab coast in the Persian Gulf (Rose, & Wood, 2005).

**Neil Patrick. "Saudi Foreign Policy: The Boundaries of Helpfulness."**

The author asserts that Saudi Arabia no longer influences the Islamic world to warrant attention from the West as it seeks to support its friends and confront Iran. Because it does not have a strong institutional framework, Riyadh is very careful when formulating its foreign policy. According to the author, Kingdom is well-known for not following up. It seems likely that the King's initiative in Iraq sprang from this chaos, whereas in Yemen, the interests of the three Saudi princes responsible for defense, interior, and intelligence appear to be uncoordinated. When considering the larger Middle East, Saudi Arabia views its bilateral relationship with the US as paramount. Direct intelligence sharing with Washington and its main European allies is possible, but not with Dubai or Yemen, and the accuracy of this intelligence is not guaranteed to always uncover schemes before they are carried out. The kingdom is pleased to be seen as a useful ally to the US, and shared goals would help facilitate the planned new \$60 billion US-Saudi weapons



agreement, which is equally concerned with dealing with Yemen and, maybe, Iran. The contract would also provide an expanded Saudi air strike capacity. Riyadh, like many other governments in the Gulf Cooperation Council, will remain very worried about Iran's nuclear program. But Saudi Arabia mostly sees itself as an observer in this whole mess, knowing full well that it can't stop a regional war, a little nuclear capacity in Iran, or an unpopular US-Iranian compromise. The authors conclude by stating that Saudi Arabia lacks the diplomatic energy and capability to contribute to the reshaping of the region. If the parties to the dispute are willing to compromise and a future solution will not hurt Saudi interests, it is always willing to mediate (Mason, 2014).

**Sajid Mahmood Khan "The Power Dynamics for Iran and Saudi Arabia in the US-Iran Nuclear Deal."**

"The US-Iran nuclear deal is an outcome of international efforts to overcome an enduring chaotic situation that had seriously been affecting peace and security not only in the Middle Eastern region but also the world," the author writes, describing the ongoing situation as a source of global instability. As a remarkable diplomatic accomplishment, the US-Iran nuclear agreement deserves praise from the Obama administration. However, US partners in the Middle East are understandably worried about the accord's impact. Some Arab nations in the Middle East, notably Saudi Arabia, see the nuclear agreement between the US and Iran as detrimental to regional stability and the established power dynamic. The Saudi Arabian government is very worried about the nuclear agreement between the United States and Iran because it sees it as a gateway to many political, economic, and military prospects for Iran. The interests of Saudi Arabia and its allies are threatened by the purported proxy organizations sponsored by Iran in the Middle Eastern area, including Hezbollah and other Shiite terrorist groups. An effort to examine how the nuclear agreement between the United States and Iran has altered the regional power dynamic is the stated

goal of this research. What follows the US-Iran nuclear agreement is an examination of "any possibility for future conflict or peace process and confrontation" between Saudi Arabia and Iran. One of the greatest books on the hot topic of the Gulf and Middle Eastern area is the US-Iran Nuclear Deal: Power Dynamics for Saudi Arabia and Iran. The effects of the nuclear agreement on national, regional, and global scales are the subject of this book. In addition to focusing on the two major enemy nations, this book also covers the effects on other Middle Eastern governments. Countries and international organizations with a vested stake in this transaction are detailed in this book. Economic prosperity decreased stress, and the absence of conflict are all crucial outcomes of this pact, which is also critical for regional and international peace. The deal's implementation impact on all stockholders is noteworthy, and there are also highlights for Iran's advantage. This agreement benefits the United States as much as it does Iran, according to the author. However, as a reader, I believe that several topics require more elaboration, particularly regarding the impact of Saudi Arabia on this agreement. Still, if you're interested in international affairs, this book is a great addition. The nuclear agreement between the United States and Iran has had far-reaching effects on the region, particularly on the two long-time adversaries Saudi Arabia and Iran, as detailed in one of the books on the subject, Power Dynamics for Iran and Saudi Arabia. The potential effects of this agreement on the area, should it be executed as planned, are also detailed in this book. An additional focus of this book was Iran and the potential regional consequences of its rise to regional power and economic prominence (Saïd, 2016).

**Jack McGinn. "Continuation of the Reconciliation Process between Saudi Arabia and Iran?"**

When disputes last for a long time like the one at hand, each side uses its version of events to justify its position in the past. A certain interpretation of Iranian regional aspirations has been

central to the Saudi narrative since 1979. Saudi Arabia views its current actions as a defense of the established quo against a Shia theocracy that is revolutionary, military, and expansionist. Contrasted with Iran's "Trotskyist" stage, which aims to export revolution, Saudi Arabia is satisfied to preserve the existing regional order, according to this perspective. Islamic Revolution, as Henry Kissinger had broached the subject of the then-important American ally and leading regional military force, Shah Reza Pahlavi, acquiring the oil reserves of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with him (as recorded in Andrew Scott Cooper's book *The Oil Kings*). This bitter hatred of Saudi Wahhabism and this historical memory are the driving forces for Iran's dictatorship. The Saudi elite sees Iran as a mortal danger because of Iran's imperial aspirations, which include the overthrow of the Gulf ruling hierarchy. So, the present man oeuvres of Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman are an attempt to thwart an enemy that, in his view, has existed since before his time. Despite the widespread belief among academics and journalists that Saudi Arabia is paranoid, Saudi officials maintain that their actions in Yemen are justified. They see Iran attempting to use the Houthi movement, which is militarily capable, to establish a foothold in north Yemen and imitate Hezbollah on Saudi Arabia's border. Despite Iran's economic woes, the country is spending a disproportionate amount of its reserves to prop up its power projection efforts in Yemen and Lebanon. It has done this by skillfully playing on divisions inside and between Arab nations. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members Saudi Arabia and the other "status quo" nations have tried to react by becoming more forceful. Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar have all taken a more amicable stance towards Iran in recent years, but this has created a rift in the Gulf, particularly after June 2017. Saudi Arabia has increased spending on its armed forces in response to the 'Pax Americana' security cover being withdrawn since the American people are no longer ready to tolerate long-term foreign military deployments. The Saudis have made it clear that they

would maintain their present stance until Iran stops attempting to destabilize the region, which, according to the current Saudi leadership, could only be achieved via a change of government. Iranians portray their story as an old regional power that has always been dominating and feels compelled to maintain that position. Iran's foreign policy in this area has been mostly dictated by the government since 1979, rather than being shaped by it. Power politics are nothing new for Iran; the only difference is that, since 1979, the Iranian regime has shown little interest in participating in global affairs. As a reflection of the prevailing political Islamist ideology, it seeks economic engagement and incorporation into global trade flows but differentiates between the two. On the subject of national security, it has little interest in exchanging information or collaborating with neighboring nations (Putnam, 2020).

### **Research Gap (Gap of Knowledge)**

Identifying a research gap is crucial for framing the significance and relevance of a study. In the context of the research on "Saudi Arabia-Iran Reconciliation: Analyze the Regional Impact", the following research gap can be articulated, while there is a growing body of literature on the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East, including studies on Saudi-Iran relations, a notable research gap exists in the nuanced analysis of the ongoing reconciliation process and its comprehensive regional implications. Existing scholarship often focuses on historical animosities and broader regional conflicts, leaving a void in the examination of the factors driving reconciliation and the potential long-term sustainability of improved relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Moreover, there is a scarcity of studies offering a detailed exploration of the intricacies surrounding this geopolitical shift, particularly in terms of the motivations, challenges, and discourses shaping the reconciliation. This research aims to bridge this gap by conducting an in-depth investigation into the diplomatic, political, and regional dimensions of the Saudi-Iran

reconciliation, contributing a nuanced understanding that is currently lacking in the academic discourse.

### **Theoretical / Conceptual Framework**

In a neo-realist framework, the historical rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is analyzed through the prism of power politics and state interests. The competition for regional influence becomes a central theme, where both nations are perceived as rational actors engaged in a perpetual struggle for dominance, but rather as a strategic man-oeuvre to secure each state's interests in the Middle East. The prospective warming of ties is viewed through the lens of altering power dynamics, with both nations seeking to readjust the balance of power in the region. In this neorealist perspective, the evolving relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran is thus understood as a calculated response to shifting power dynamics, aligning with the core tenets of neo-realism. (Beyers, 2017). The study aims to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate web of factors driving the reconciliation and its potential consequences for regional stability in the Middle East. Neo-realism, or structural realism, is a theory in international relations that emerged as a response to classical realism. Developed primarily by scholars like Kenneth Waltz, neo-realism focuses on the anarchic nature of the international system, asserting that states' behavior is largely influenced by the structure of the system rather than the internal characteristics of individual states. Key tenets include the distribution of power as a primary driver of state behavior and the concept of self-help, wherein states prioritize their security in the absence of a higher authority. Unlike classical realism, neo-realism places a greater emphasis on systemic factors, providing a more structured framework for analyzing the dynamics of international relations. Neo-realism, also known as structural realism, represents a paradigm shift in the realm of international relations, offering a nuanced perspective on state behavior. Pioneered by scholars

such as Kenneth Waltz, this theory challenges the anthropocentric focus of classical realism by emphasizing the systemic forces shaping international dynamics. At its core, neo-realism contends that the anarchic nature of the international system, devoid of a centralized authority, compels states to act in their self-interest. The distribution of power becomes a pivotal factor, influencing states to engage in strategic calculations to ensure their security. In contrast to classical realism's emphasis on internal factors, neo-realism's lens is broader, providing a systematic framework that elucidates the intricate interplay of states within the global arena. This approach not only enriches our understanding of international relations but also underscores the importance of structural considerations in comprehending geopolitical complexities (Nyangchak, 2022)

According to realism, governments function as unitary players in an international system that is motivated by the desire for power. Mearsheimer argues that the ultimate objective of the major powers is to become the hegemon, and they are always looking for methods to gain an advantage over their competitors.<sup>78</sup> Because of this paradox of power conflicts, governments' current condition of affairs is characterized by an ongoing battle for hegemony.

State dominance within the area is known as regional hegemony. According to its interests, the regional hegemon rules and shapes the area. Furthermore, the regional hegemon does not want peers and does not let others downgrade its standing. Mearsheimer argues that the essence of the international system is anarchic. The Middle East has historically been the center of global problems, a region that is prone to war and has seen some of the longest-lasting hostilities on earth. It seems that the area reflects the anarchic, security-competitive, and war-prone realism region. Over the last forty years, the area has seen conflict, with Saudi Arabia and Iran emerging as significant players.

The behavior of both nations to increase their influence in the area and achieve regional hegemony (i.e., the dominant influence in the region) is explained by realists' anarchy and the battle for power under the current conditions.

Another theory is that major countries are potentially threatening one another since they are militarily capable of aggressive actions. In keeping with the preceding premise, this one asserts that states can never be assured of another state's desire to use force against another state. It is from these presumptions that large powers are forced to act as anarchistic allies. This idea is also grounded in the actual world, where governments act as enemies because they can do damage to one another. Given that Saudi Arabia and Iran are two of the major Middle Eastern powers, the actions of each state may be explained by the presumptions described above. Each nation has pertinent military capabilities intended to undermine the other's territorial integrity.

Similarly, when they possess strong military capabilities and are unsure of each other's intentions, they often get into a power struggle. Mearsheimer claims that the major powers are afraid of one another and have misgivings about one another. Whether correctly or not, they see one another as threats, and there is limited opportunity for nations to have mutual trust. Mearsheimer goes on to say that the other big power in the area is seen as an adversary by the other great powers. Furthermore, the states' violent behavior is motivated by their desire to live. States also look out for their existence and see other states as possible dangers. Every state views itself as vulnerable and strives for its assured security since the realist international order lacks a central authority to ensure the security of any state. States therefore take a firm and uncompromising stance in defending their interests. As a result, there is a never-ending power struggle between the states.

F. Gregory Gause has proposed an additional rationale for governments acting in a way that jeopardizes security against one another. He talks about the phenomena known as the "regional security complex," in which governments perceive reciprocal threats from one another. By this method, reciprocal dread and threats from one another characterize such a regional structure. The Persian Gulf has been dubbed a regional security complex by him. According to Gause, such regional networks should include governments whose main security concern is one another, as seen over time by the conflicts they wage and the time and resources they invest in their interactions. Be aware that attempts at regional integration and other constructive interactions are not given priority in this idea of a regional system.<sup>87</sup> Security relations' duration and severity characterize such a system. Particularly in the modern age, the Persian Gulf has developed into a complex regional security environment in which Saudi Arabia and Iran have become important actors. Both nations act in a manner that has been harmful to the stability of the area because they see one another as security threats.

### **Research Methodology**

The researcher used qualitative research design to examine the prospects of a Saudi Arabia-Iran reconciliation. Qualitative research is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth analysis of the factors at play and provides a more detailed understanding of the dynamics of the Saudi-Iranian relationship.

### **Data Collection Method**

Primary sources for the study's data and information came from academics, lawmakers, important people, bureaucrats, and authorities on a global and national scale. However, the researcher was able to reach out to the appropriate individuals and authorities using technological



channels like Skype, email, and live messengers, and received favorable answers. In addition, we conducted in-person interviews and focus groups with national academics, legislators, specialists, and authorities to get their thoughts and perspectives. As a study instrument, an open-ended questionnaire was used to gather their viewpoints. Not only did we consult primary sources, but we also combed through reams of secondary material, such as scholarly journals, books, magazines, essays, and periodicals, to glean more information. The researcher visited many national libraries and institutions to gather secondary data and information. These included the National Library in Islamabad, the Central Library of the University of Sindh, the Liaquat Memorial Library in Karachi, and the Central Library of Islamic University.

### **Operational Definitions**

In this study, operational definitions and key variables play a pivotal role in providing clarity and precision to the research framework. The primary variable under examination is the Saudi Arabia-Iran Reconciliation, operationally defined as the diplomatic and political engagement between these two nations, characterized by a mutual effort to resolve historical conflicts and enhance bilateral relations. Operationalizing this variable involves assessing tangible diplomatic actions, such as high-level meetings, agreements, and joint initiatives, as well as the rhetoric and public discourse surrounding the reconciliation. Key variables contributing to the analysis include the Factors Necessitating Reconciliation, which encompasses historical grievances, economic considerations, and regional security concerns that have prompted both states to pursue diplomatic rapprochement. Another essential variable is the "Sustainability of Reconciliation" operationalized through the examination of ongoing diplomatic efforts, the commitment of both parties to the process, and the resilience of the improved relations over time. The "Regional Implications" variable is fundamental to understanding the broader impact of the

reconciliation process. This involves operationalizing changes in regional alliances, the response of neighboring states, and the influence on regional stability. These variables collectively form the foundation for a comprehensive examination of the Saudi Arabia-Iran reconciliation and its repercussions on the Middle Eastern geopolitical landscape. By clearly defining and operationalizing these key variables, the study aims to contribute rigor and precision to its analysis, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics at play in this critical geopolitical development.

### **Organization of the Study**

**Chapter 1: Introduction to the Thesis:** This chapter introduced the study, providing the background and context for the research on the reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It is discussing the significance and scope of the study, and present the research objectives and questions. This chapter were also outlining the structure of the thesis and introduce key concepts and terms relevant to the analysis.

**Chapter 2: Regional Implications of the Reconciliation Process:** Corresponding to the third objective and related research question, this chapter will analyze the potential regional implications of the reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It explored how this rapprochement might affect the political, economic, and security dynamics in the Middle East. The chapter examined the impact on regional alliances, conflicts, and the balance of power, providing a nuanced understanding of the broader consequences of the reconciliation.

**Chapter 2: Factors Necessitating Reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran:** Aligned with the first objective, this chapter was examined the factors that necessitated reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It was delved into the historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors

that have influenced the initiation of the reconciliation process. The chapter were explored the motivations and pressures that led both states to consider rapprochement, providing a comprehensive analysis of the contributing factors.

**Chapter 3: Possibility of Long-term Continuation of the Reconciliation Process:** In line with the second objective, this chapter evaluates the prospects for the continuation of the reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran on a long-term basis. It assessed the current state of relations, the commitments made by both parties and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The chapter considered various scenarios and factors that could influence the sustainability of the reconciliation efforts.

**Chapter 5: Major Findings and Conclusions:** The final chapter summarized the key findings of the study, addressing the research questions and objectives. It synthesizes the insights gained from the previous chapters, highlighting the significant factors that necessitated the reconciliation, the likelihood of its continuation, and its regional implications. The chapter also offers recommendations for policymakers and suggests areas for future research, providing a comprehensive conclusion to the study.

## *CHAPTER II*

### **REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS**

The nature and stability of international relations between nations are both subject to change. They are dynamic and ever-changing, influenced by the level of understanding between countries. Common interests and ideologies are the bedrock of international relations among nations. The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran has gone through a fascinating cycle that fits neatly into the definition of international relations. It started cordial, then turned hostile, then stable, and finally estranged, especially after the Arab Spring in Syria, when "Iran and Saudi Arabia each backed opposite sides in Syria's civil war and the conflict in Yemen." An outline of the evolving Iran-Saudi relationship is the goal of this chapter.

In 1928, four years before Saudi Arabia gained international recognition in 1932, the Al-Saud dynasty rose to power in modern-day Saudi Arabia. Diplomatic relations between the two states were quickly established, though official visits between the two heads of state did not occur until the mid-1960s. Nevertheless, once King Faisal was deposed in neighboring Iraq in 1958, there was a push to establish a friendly relationship and diplomatic conversations intensified. Concerns "about the possibility of additional populist revolt against monarchial dynasty in the region" have been raised in response to the growth of nationalist movements in both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran, two monarchs. Among the many shared objectives between Saudi Arabia and Iran was the maintenance of their respective monarchs; the two countries also had similar economic priorities. Fighting "socialists and radical nationalists in the Gulf region [and] ensuring a stable flow of oil and gas, and in increasing wealth through export" were the two countries' shared interests until the late 1970s (Bsheer, 2020).

The disparities in religion, culture, and language were secondary to the more important national and international concerns that had brought the two dynasties together in a cordial and amicable alliance. Cooperative, prosperous, and amicable as the two nations' relationship had been up until the 1979 coup d'état in Iran, a new Iranian policy took shape, casting doubt on Al-Saud's legitimacy and casting a shadow over the continued dominance of monarchies in the area. When the Islamic revolution in Iran took power in 1979, it brought together all the forces that Saudi Arabia and the Shah's rule had opposed. Their relationship continued to deteriorate from the 1979 revolution until 1988 when it finally broke off diplomatic ties.

## **2.1 Saudi-Iran Relationship**

Saudi Arabia demonstrated acute awareness in response to the threat from the Islamic Republic of Iran after the Shah's fall. From 1979 onwards, when Iran first tried to propagate its Islamic revolution, Riyadh saw Tehran as a disruptive influence in West Asia. As the new decade began, Saudi Arabia gained confidence in its ability to safeguard regional interests, regardless of how strong or weak the Iranian revolution danger may have been. The already wide chasm between them became even wider due to their fundamentally different ideologies. On behalf of the six-member governments, Abdullah Y. Bishara, the GCC secretary general, made a statement in 1982 stating that Iran's ambitions to dominate Gulf security matters constituted the greatest danger to the stability of the GCC members. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was a real danger due to his divine-right assertions to govern the Islamic world; he was also a heretic in Saudi Arabia and had a hunger for violence. It seems the Ayatollah and his group were "refused entrance into Kuwait" after clearing the Iraqi border, which is significant considering Khomeini's personal history, which includes his attempt to seek asylum in Kuwait after Baghdad's expulsion of him. "The entire party was trapped in the no-man's land between the two border posts" when Iraq refused to let them

return. The preacher never forgave the Kuwaitis for the "insolence" they showed him at the border crossing, even though Khomeini and his entourage were finally allowed to travel to Baghdad and flew to Paris on 6 October 1978. This event only served to reinforce Khomeini's long-standing antipathy against monarchical governments. The result was the beginning of Ayatollah's detractors' perceptions in Riyadh(Shehu, 2021).

The Saudi government was understandably worried about its security after the downfall of an amicable ally of the Shah of Iran, particularly because the Shia populace of the al-Hasa area rose against the monarchy and rallied behind Khomeini's troops. "Prince Sultan Ibn Abd al-Aziz of Saudi Arabia, minister of defense, blamed international communism for recent events in Iran and issued a dire warning about the Soviet surge into Afghanistan," In contrast, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister Saud al-Faysal saw the Iranian revolution as a global and regional security dilemma. The situation in Iran was deemed "contrary to the interests of Islam, the entire Muslim world, and the stability of the Middle East" by Crown Prince (later King) Fahad Ibn Abd-Aziz, who went even further in his judgment, as reported in the Riyadh newspaper al-Jazira. Still, since 1979, Iran has been part of the problem, sowing discord in the two holiest cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina. On September 24th and 25th, 1981, clashes broke out in Medina between Saudi police and Iranian pilgrims. Because they were passing out pamphlets demanding the Al Saud family's ouster inside the country, a large group of pilgrims were swiftly apprehended and expelled. One million pilgrims allegedly took part in protests at Mecca on 4 October 1981, singing pro-Khomeini chants antagonistic to Saudi Arabia, the US, and Israel, according to Tehran. This was a more severe episode than the previous one. A group of disruptive pilgrims who attempted to protest were allegedly thwarted, according to Riyadh(Panaite, 2017).

"A Muslim gathering where the participants cannot mobilize against Israel, is not a hajj (pilgrimage); one cannot separate politics from religion," said Hajatolislam Abdel Majid Moadika, Iran's Minister of Islamic Guidance, in a speech delivered on the same day. Coming to Moadika's aid Former Iranian parliament speaker Hojatolislam 'Ali Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanjani categorically said that the events in Mecca were "the export of the Islamic revolution" and that Muslims had every right to participate in the trip. Saudi Arabia should cut ties with the US as it does not need American support, according to Khomeini, who claimed in one of his weekly Friday prayer speeches. That Hajj was not a platform for nations to broadcast their grievances and meddle in the domestic affairs of sovereign states was Riyadh's main point of contention.

Iran brought up the production quota issue because it thought the quota it was given in March 1982 was too low. Iran maintains that quotas have to be determined by four factors: relative foreign currency holdings, population and financial demands, historical production shares, and oil reserves. Regardless of their validity, Iran's claims are mainly directed against Saudi Arabia and are intricately linked to its struggle for dominance in the Gulf. During the May OPEC meeting in Quito, Iran's oil minister clarified the country's stance towards Saudi Arabia. Our conflict with Saudi Arabia extends beyond the oil industry. The conflict between Iraq and the United States is only one stage of a much larger political struggle. The Iraq-Iran conflict was an opportunity for Saudi Arabia to increase its bargaining power with Iran. By keeping quotas and price differentials the same and raising the output cap, Saudi Arabia was able to thwart Iranian initiatives at the Vienna summit. When the Saudi official stressed that his nation will "adopt appropriate measures at the appropriate time to protect the interests of the majority (of OPEC members)," this was obviously what he got at. A not-so-subtle message was sent to Iran and the other OPEC members, suggesting that they should not support Iran. Saudi Arabia was frightened of Iran because of its

aggressive and open foreign policy, and Tehran did not stop at undermining Riyadh's legitimacy, which it saw as being anti-Western and thus un-Islamic; it also sought to transplant its version of Islamic rule to the kingdom. In late 1986, the kingdom began its vicious anti-revolutionary and anti-monarchic efforts. By early 1987, Riyadh had realized that its reconciliation and accommodation tactics with Tehran had not worked(Panaite, 2017).

Things between the two nations began to shift, however, with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It was widely expected that the Saudi leadership would react warmly to Iran's harsh criticism of Saddam Hussein during the Kuwait War. Iran does not hold Saudi Arabia responsible for the enormous military buildup around the Arabian Peninsula, although it chastised the Saudis for inviting Western soldiers, particularly American ones, to the country. As far as Saddam Hussein and Iraq were concerned, at least it was an implicit endorsement of recent events. The two biggest Gulf governments should work together to ensure the security of the Gulf area, Tehran reminded Foreign Minister Su'ud al-Faysal during his visit to Iran in early June 1991. "Is it reasonable that the largest, most populous, oldest, and most powerful country in the Gulf should not be involved in establishing a [Gulf Cooperation Council] security arrangement in the Gulf?" inquired an Iranian ambassador stationed in the Middle East. The diplomat's inquiry was ultimately met with a negative response, as Saudi Arabia continued to be cautious about Iran's ambitions to establish long-term dominance in the region(Panaite, 2017).

Regardless, foreign minister Sa'ud al-Faysal visited Tehran at the end of May 1988 and signed a comprehensive agreement including cultural, economic, commerce, scientific, technological, and sports-related matters. "Targeting industry, mining, transport, petrochemical, and tourism as sectors for possible cooperation," the agreement said, surprising everyone, even though it addressed bilateral investments.<sup>24</sup> It is hard to say if everyone had this opinion. Prince



Turki bin 'Abdallah's statement that the monarchy was unconcerned about Iran's missile tests perplexed high-ranking officials. The Saudi government seems to have decided to reduce its support for the Taliban in Afghanistan more quickly in 1998, maybe influenced by the closer connections between Saudis and Iranians at the time. In September 1998, Riyadh summoned its ambassador from Kabul and promptly dismissed the Afghan official from the kingdom. Although Saudi support for the Taliban likely began to diminish after the slaughter of hundreds of Hazara (Shi'i) civilians in the Afghan town of Mazar-i-Sharif, Tehran enthusiastically applauded this move.<sup>26</sup> After the Taliban assassinated nine Iranian diplomats in August 1998, which, for a time, hinted at a possible full-scale clash, Saudi Arabia was also worried about Iran's military buildup.

## **2.2 Commencement of Peace Policies**

Ten years after the Islamic revolution rocked Iran, the nation was cut off from the rest of the world. The world community has shunned Iran due to Khomeini's strict policies, both domestic and foreign. Due to the government's heavy investment in a costly war and compensation for war casualties, oil income dropped significantly. With the conclusion of the conflict with Iraq, Iran's per capita GDP dropped by half. There would be an emphasis on economic rebuilding from the government. Following the passing of Ayatollah Khomeini, the position of Supreme Leader was bestowed to Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who was serving as President at the time. The Speaker of the Parliament at the time, Rafsanjani, succeeded him as president. The fourth president of Iran, Ali-Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, was chosen by the people. Modifications to the Islamic Constitution were necessary for their ascension to power. The President's authority was greatly expanded. The President currently oversees the defense, intelligence, and foreign policy-related operations of the Supreme Council of National Security. More pragmatism and clarity about the government's power to act were goals of the 1989 constitutional mandate(Jones, 2009).

The rise of Ayatollah Khomeini and Rafsanjani to power signaled a novel understanding of the notion of an Islamic state. Greater pragmatist policies were initiated in the management and policies of the economy. Economic reconstruction was made a top priority of the realistic group in the fundamentalist camp after the Rafsanjani election brought the faction to power. A team of technocrats was brought together to focus on economic development, described as the era of reconstruction that began in Iran's foreign relations. He provided the breed of bureaucrat's room for development, and the revolutionary fervor was reduced to a great extent easing the way towards progress. He tried to open Iranian foreign policy to the world practically and realistically, however with little success. Before Rafsanjani, the aim of Iranian leadership was based on the export of its revolution ignoring international regulation and the United Nations resolution as well as other regional organizations. The Rafsanjani government accepted the new realities dominating the international scene and the chaotic situation prevailing in Iran. To tackle the situation, internal and external, economic reconstruction policies along with the formulation and enforcement of foreign policy principles were brought into force. Therefore, Iran pragmatically forged good neighborly relations policies(Gharagozli, 2017).

Firstly, the young foreign policy elite knew that Iran couldn't alter the regional political landscape. Second, as the United States shifted the power dynamic in the Gulf, Iran sought to conform to its new position. The United States wanted to safeguard its massive oil holdings in the area and prevent the Soviet Union from becoming involved. In light of these facts, the Rafsanjani administration sought to limit US objectives by convincing regional governments that Iraq, the US's most important partner, was engaging in an expansionist agenda and a bigger danger to the regional monarchies. When Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, Iran was one of the first Persian Gulf nations to denounce the move and call for Iraq's immediate and unconditional

withdrawal from the country. Rafsanjani chose an "active neutrality policy" to increase the country's advantage. After Iraq invaded Kuwait, international forces were sent to the Gulf area to foster cooperation among the member states. Also, Iranian propaganda organizations fought against foreign troops in the area and attempted to get the government to fight them, which stoked the already present anti-Western feeling in Iran. Instead of condemning Saudi Arabia, the administration accused Iraq of allowing foreign forces to intervene in the Gulf area, even though it was opposed to Iraq(Mason, 2014).

The Iranian government realized it could no longer depend on Moscow to deter US action, which weakened Iran's negotiating position with the West and exacerbated border instability. Amidst the mayhem, Tehran saw a chance to expand its sphere of influence. Also, regional stability and economic collaboration were priorities for Iran in the Persian Gulf. Because of the change in the regional power dynamic, we are still dedicated to ensuring the stability of the area. The Iranian leadership saw the US military's support for Saudi Arabia and its increased defense capabilities as a sign that the regional power dynamic will soon shift in Saudi Arabia's favor. Through diplomatic channels, Iran proposed a plan wherein the Persian Gulf governments would band together to form a coalition army and compel Iraq to vacate Kuwait. In addition, it asked the GCC to establish a combined Gulf security structure to limit the presence of foreign troops and constrain Iraq. Nevertheless, Iran did not get any favorable feedback. A dramatic shift in the relationship between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the GCC nations occurred as a result of the conflict between the GCC states and Iraq. Doha, the site of the "Eleventh Annual Summit of the GCC" on 22–24 December 1990, was a striking example of this shift. There were several positive new tendencies during the summit, most notably an Iranian movement towards bettering ties with GCC member nations. Regarding the Persian Gulf issue, the summit also praised Iran's stance. When an earthquake in

Iran killed forty thousand people, Saudi Arabia "sent [t] aid to Iran." The foreign minister of Qatar said during a news conference in Doha that Iran should be a part of any regional security arrangement. The Iranian foreign minister made the following statement: "The Islamic Republic of Iran, welcomed positive points in the latest communique, [and considered] it a step towards expansion of ties with council members(Pollack, 2013).

Nevertheless, this idea was not promptly accepted by Saudi Arabia. In 1991, after the Gulf War, a security agreement was proposed as a replacement for the multinational forces commanded by the United States in the area. There were many reasons why Iran was not included in the exclusive security arrangement that was suggested in the Damascus Declaration, which included a coalition of eight countries including Egypt, Syria, and the GCC states. One key consideration, as stated by the expert, was that it would effectively acknowledge Iran's dominance in the area. Because of this cutoff, Iran's status as a regional superpower deteriorated. An agreement was achieved between the two nations in February 1991, when the Omani government in Muscat opened its offices for the purpose. Iran ramped up its attempts to reach a consensus with Saudi Arabia and other GCC members in the hopes of forming a new security agreement that would include all countries along the coastline. At a meeting between Prince Saud al-Faisal and Iran's foreign minister in Jeddah, the Iranian minister gave Prince Saud al-assurance that the Iranian pilgrims would follow all Hajj regulations. Relations between the two nations improved even more as a result of Iran's action. When Saudi Arabia raised its quota for Iranian Hajj pilgrims from 45,000 to 15,000, it was a direct response. "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran have reached an understanding on solving all problems between them," the Iranian foreign minister said in an interview. In a joint statement issued on March 20, 1991, the Saudi and Iranian governments stated that full diplomatic relations would be restored between the two nations within

a few days. After a three-year breakup, the couple got back together. Each country's embassies in Riyadh and Tehran hosted a delegation of nineteen people(Pasha, 2016).

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the two nations' close ties were forged. Following Iran's boycott of the Hajj in 1991, Saudi Arabia began to admit Iranian pilgrims. According to a fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khamenei of Iran, any practice by Shias that causes discord among Muslims or undermines Islamic values is considered haram, or bad. Iranian Hajj pilgrims were led by Ayatollah Reyshahri, a representative of Khamenei, who conveyed a message of togetherness, friendship, and fraternity under the flag of monotheism. Hence, after a long period, the season concluded in a friendly environment with minimal security measures. During his two-day visit, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister Al-Faisal met with Tehran officials to address a variety of substantive issues. The fruitful results of these trips helped to enhance the diplomatic connection between Iran and Saudi Arabia.<sup>40</sup> During his visit to Riyadh on October 21, 1991, Iran's deputy foreign minister for international affairs, ManucherhMotaki, met with Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Abd Al-Rahman Mansoori, to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations in the areas of trade, agriculture, oil, and the economy, as well as to develop a shared agenda for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit in Dakar. To reach the shared goals, the two sides decided to swap ambassadors before the meeting. The position of Iranian ambassador to Riyadh was filled in June 1992 by Gholam Ali Nadjafabadi. "The 'Islamic World' has two wings, and it's possible to play without its two wings of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," he stated, presenting his credentials. In the Islamic world, both are significant and have their place.

The official Iranian stance towards Saudi Arabia was colorful and had a clear word, which greatly facilitated the recognition process between the two nations. The inaugural annual

conference of the Islamic Step Bank, which was mostly funded by Saudi Arabia, was convened in Tehran for the first time in November 1992, marking a significant step. It took Iran thirteen years after the bank's founding (1975) to become a member. Several initiatives in Iran totaling over US\$ 130 million have been launched since then. The Sharif Technical University was able to acquire labs and other experimental equipment with the help of a \$8.5 million loan from MohsinNoorbakahs, the Iranian minister of economic affairs and finance at the time. The relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia has been volatile in recent years, but recent developments indicate that the two countries share similar goals and have begun a new phase of bilateral ties to work together to solve Muslim world issues and strengthen Islamic unity. It is important to mention that President Hashemi Rafsanjani expressed his approval of the meeting's focus on areas of mutual interest and emphasized the need for economic and political delegation exchanges to foster deeper cooperation between the two nations(Weddington, 2017).

### **2.3 Policy on Confidence Building: Introduction and Actions**

In the seventh Iranian presidential election, Hojatolislam Mohammad Katmai received more than 20 million votes out of a total of 29 million, and his triumph was largely praised by international observers and professional analysis. Many on a global scale saw this change as a major social and political phenomenon. It was no picnic to win with such a resounding majority, but his international and domestic policies, as well as the goals outlined in his platform, ensured his victory. An unprecedented degree of public engagement and the will of the people were on display in the election. The bulk of voters wanted to replace the current political system with one based on Islamic principles. Khatami had outlined his plan to accomplish the objectives and raised the essential concerns of home and international policy. Fundamental liberties and rights, tolerance, respect for human dignity, and the eradication of social discrimination were the

cornerstones of national concerns. Social security, a revamped state-run economy, openness and accountability in government, new political parties, enhanced political development, a culture of critical evaluation of government actions, etc. were all parts of his programming terms of foreign policy, he put his faith in easing tensions and fostering mutual trust to strengthen and broaden Iran's political and economic ties with other nations, particularly those in the Middle East. A watershed moment in the development of Iran's new approach to international relations occurred when the concept of "Dialogue among Civilizations" was emphasized. Throughout the globe, people were praising and applauding this idea. It was Iran's way of sending a message to the rest of the globe and its neighbors that it wanted to end hostilities with every nation. With the change in Iranian foreign policy from negative to positive legitimacy on May 23, 1997, the country began to distance itself from provocative actions and rhetoric. Resolving conflicts with other nations was the priority. It was a sign that the president was cognizant of two basic issues with international relations. The first of them was Iran's already troubled relationship with the rest of the world, which would only become worse if the current tensions persisted. Secondly, there was the need to remove the tension that had arisen as a result of Iran's diplomatic efforts (Petito, 2004).

Respect, knowledge, and experience were the cornerstones of Iran's "detente" proposal. By clearing the air about its foreign policy, Iran aimed to put a stop to any international disagreements or conflicts. To maintain its security, Iran started to concentrate on the global facts as they are. While stressing that "detente does not cannot inattention and in differences towards threats but rather recognizes the boundaries of enmity and consolidates friendship and commonalities in standing against threats," Khatami outlined the goals of reducing tensions as the conservation, development, preservation, and stabilization of national interests and security. Beyond bringing democracy to Iran, the policy's stated goals included a "harbinger's universal peace based on justice

and equality and elimination of hegemony in international relations" and the promotion of gender equality. Among Khatami's foreign policy priorities for Iran during her rule was the strengthening of ties between the Islamic world and non-aligned nations. After declaring this framework of Iran's foreign policy, the country's foreign policy became active and vibrant. The world started to see Iran in a more positive light, and its legitimacy was further enhanced. Consequently, nations who want to establish cordial ties with Iran seized the opportunity and started cooperating with it on a bilateral basis. Iran has urged its neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia, to maintain cordial ties to achieve its objectives. Saudi Arabia acknowledged and made clear its desire to establish positive ties with Iran via various means. The leaders of the Arab littoral states in the Persian Gulf wished Khatami a happy birthday and offered their congratulations on his election. They also expressed their desire for a stronger relationship with Iran(Mazurek, 2018).

At an Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) conference in Tehran in December 1997, the foreign policy of Iran was praised by the leaders of all-Muslim nations. Despite the United Nations' best efforts to dissuade the gathering, 55 member nations ended up attending a competing economic summit in Qatar. With the involvement of a high-ranking Saudi delegation and the beginning of a new chapter in their bilateral relationship, the 8th OIC summit was held in Tehran in 1997, ending almost two decades of animosity and distrust between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Iran offered a constructive message to the summit, assuring all nations that the Islamic Republic of Iran is not a danger. The Iranian leader also gave an optimistic address, stressing the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Along with the other participants, Saudi Arabia warmly supported Iran's position. It was a public declaration of willingness for conversation and constructive engagement across cultural and religious lines that summit participants made in their statements.



At the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit, one of Iran's primary goals was to foster an environment conducive to confidence-building with all of its neighboring governments, particularly Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia welcomed the new president's detente strategy to bring the two nations closer following the May 1997 Iranian presidential election, seeing it as a turning point towards the construction of a new relationship. As a result, Saudi Arabia increased its efforts to foster cultural, diplomatic, and commercial links. The remarkable shift in stance among Arab governments, and Saudi Arabia in particular, was a reflection of the Arab world's disillusionment with the peace talks with Israel. As a result of the kingdom's and the United States' apparent failure to assess the Arab-Israeli peace process, some Arab states have begun to distance themselves from Washington. The Khatami regime deftly made use of this fact. By seizing this chance, Khatami strengthened Iran's ties to Saudi Arabia. The Saudi delegation's leader, Crown Prince Abdullah, met privately with Khatami twice during the conference. During their conversation, Abdullah emphasized the need for cooperation and unity among all Islamic countries, including Iran and Saudi Arabia. He urged them to implement new measures that would improve communication and understanding between their nations. Optimism for the future—"a future that could guarantee the elevation of the two nations," the Iranian leader said, Saudi Arabia's leadership's worldview and ideology determined the new development's impact on Iran and the region. Even Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Abdullah, has something encouraging to say about the goal of reconciliation between his country and Iran. The speaker made a point of stating, "It is not surprising to see Tehran as a host such a noble Islamic gathering" about the Iranian Muslims and their contributions to Islam's rich past. "Muslims should open a new chapter in their attitude towards each other and in an existence with the outside world," Abdullah added, describing the summit in Tehran as a historic gathering. To achieve a positive future, he emphasized the need of

working together and eliminate current obstacles. "The huge participation of members in this Summit is an indication of the of the member respect for the role that Iran plays as well as the great hope for better things that is foreseen for the country," said Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Saud Al-Faisal, who was speaking at the event(Ahmad, 2023).

We anticipate that this tendency will lead to more coordination and collaboration between the two nations as a consequence of the strengthening of bilateral ties between Riyadh and Tehran. During the same year's April visit, the Saudi foreign minister met with Iranian counterparts in Tehran to discuss and hopefully finalize several broad agreements pertaining to bilateral ties in trade, investment, culture, technology, and academia. The pact was then signed by the two ministers of foreign affairs. The two nations also decided to meet in Riyadh at the end of 1998 to finalize their first joint economic commission, which was chaired by their respective trade ministers. With Tehran's help, Riyadh hosted an exclusive exhibition for the first time, and Saudi Arabian representatives were on hand at the Tehran International Trade Fair.

#### **2.4 Strengthening of Political and Bilateral Security Cooperation**

Several high-level visits between Iran and Saudi Arabia have taken place, including those of the Speaker of the Saudi Arabian Consultative Assembly to Tehran in 1998 and of Sultan Abdulaziz, the Second Deputy of the Saudi Council of Ministers, to Tehran in 1999. Another example is the reciprocal visit of the Iranian and Saudi Ministers in charge of defense and civil aviation to Tehran in 1999. All of these trips between the two countries' leaders were signs that their relationship was becoming better. During the May 1999 visit of the Saudi Defense Minister to Tehran, a bilateral agreement on air transport was reached between the two nations. The trip of Saudi Arabia's defense minister, Emir Sultan bin Abdulaziz, to Iran was a crucial step in easing tensions and fostering trust between the two nations. Iran sent an invitation, and Saudi

Arabia accepted. While in Iran, Bin Abdulaziz made a statement stating that the Emir Sultan would "discuss the possible ways to strengthen the relations between the two countries in all the areas" during his meetings with high-ranking Iranian officials. "Improvement in relations between Saudi and Iran had been the interests of both the countries," he said after meeting with Iran's supreme leader. "Saudi Arabia does not regard the Defense activities of Iran a threat to the regional security and believes that Iran is a well-wisher of member states of the Persian GCC," he concluded. "With the bilateral cooperation, the Islamic Republic and Saudi Arabia would be able to discharge" commitments towards the people of both nations as well as the broader Islamic World, the supreme leader of Iran stated, stressing the importance of cooperation between the two countries (Hadzikadunic, 2019).

During his meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi in Riyadh, King Fahad voiced his delight at the improving ties between Tehran and Riyadh and advocated for further collaboration between the two countries on a global and regional scale. During a meeting with the Saudi Foreign Minister, Iran's president expressed his belief that the newly opened chapter in ties between the two nations would lead to significant progress for both countries and the Islamic world. Your Saudi brothers and sisters are reaching out to you and welcoming your stance on regional matters because you have made the correct decision, as Saud Al-Faisal put it. While speaking with reporters, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah said, "Saudi Arabia will not allow Iran's interests to be damaged." Besides Khatami's visit, other officials from the two nations also met and visited at that time. When Iran's defense minister visited Saudi Arabia in November 1999, the relationship became even more warm. Ayatollah Khamenei, the spiritual leader of Iran, received an extraordinary invitation from the Saudi king to make the Hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, reflecting the

deepening, widening, and expanding ties between the two countries. Abdul-Aziz Khuwaithir, the special envoy of Saudi King Fahd, met with Ayatollah Khamenei on February 19, 2000(Harvey, 2022).

During the meeting, King Fahd extended an invitation to King Khamenei to come to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj pilgrimage. "The strong and growing ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia would not only serve the mutual interest but would benefit the Muslim world," Ayatollah Khamenei said, expressing his gratitude to King Fahd and his intention to make a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. He went on to tell King Fahd's special envoy that Israel's danger has only increased over the years and that Lebanon is facing extermination threats even during the so-called peace negotiations. That is why the Muslim world must foster close ties among themselves. Primarily, it aimed to combat illicit money, drugs, terrorism, and crime while simultaneously working to prevent illegal migration. Additionally, the following were covered: the internal security concerns of both countries, topics such as "Fight against organized crime," sharing information on security and policing, cooperation on criminology, cooperation in maritime rescue operations, controlling opposition group activities, cooperation at the sea border, and prevention of illegal movements. Also on the agenda for the gathering was the need to combat the smuggling of art artifacts and the cultural infiltration of Islamic law. Efforts to combat the forging of official papers and to pool knowledge in the domains of education and security were additional important themes of the campaign. "Since Iran has always extended a helping hand to its neighbors, this agreement promises peace and friendship,"(Amiri, Fereidouni& et al, 2011).

Meeting with Iranian officials, Saudi King Fahd bin Abdulaziz and his crown prince, Emir Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, expressed their desire for greater cooperation between Iran and Saudi

Arabia to advance their shared interests. Emir Nayef Bin Abdulaziz thanked Iran for its warm welcome. "Based on the common interests, the leaders of Iran and Saudi Arabia reached a conclusion that the establishment of strong ties and all-out cooperation between the two nations was a must for taking a suitable step on the Islamic world and the countries in the Persian Gulf region," the Saudi Arabian minister of interior added. Even though Western commentators saw Iran's experimental launch of its long-range "Shahab-3" missile as a danger to Saudi Arabia, the Saudis had a good response and evaluation of the matter. Some saw this response as evidence of the friendly political understanding between the two nations, which is believed to be growing. In December 2001, a group of Iranian Majlis members was led by Speaker Mehdi Karrubi to Riyadh to meet with members of the Saudi "Shura" Council. However, even in this political arena, there were uneasy man-oeuvres as legislative delegations exchanged visits. Concluding the visit, a joint statement was issued by the Shura-Majlis, reading as follows: "The two countries condemned the vicious media campaign against the lofty principles, and values of Islam and considered it a conspiracy to deface the image of Islam and to weaken the Islamic and Arab nations. "No. The proclamation also changed Fahd's title from the customary "Shah Fahd" to that of Custodian of the Holy Mosques. After much back-and-forth, the two nations ultimately reached an agreement that was widely seen as a significant step forward; the accord had 141 members' worth of results for each party. In reality, the two countries were no longer a danger to one another thanks to their security accords and collaboration, which put an end to their distrust and confrontational tactics and ushered in a new age of bilateral cooperation. "These relations would leave an impressive impact on the Persian Gulf as well as the West Asian regions." Khatami made this point clear during his meeting with Saudi Arabia's interior minister when he emphasized the

importance of better ties between the two countries. "This visit is a sign of the strong and ever-expanding ties between the two sides(Al-Kahtani, 2004).

## **2.5 Summary**

The two countries had amicable relations before Iran's Shia Islamic regime's ascent to power. The two countries' monarchical systems and the weight of their diplomatic treaties were identical. In their shared struggle against regional socialists and extreme nationalists, the two nations had worked hand in glove. They were working towards the same national objective and had similar foreign policies. Neither Shia nor Sunni, nor Persian nor Arab, were at odds with one another. But Saudi Arabia faced everything it had fought against in 1979 when the Shah of Iran was deposed. The Saudis backed Iran's war with Iraq, and Iranian Hajj pilgrims sought to sow discord in Saudi Arabia. But with Khomeini's death, the two nations started to build a friendly relationship, which was further solidified by the visits of certain high-ranking officials and diplomats from both sides. When the Saudis extended an invitation to Iran's supreme leader to do the Hajj pilgrimage, ties between the two countries began to warm significantly. Other than that, the Saudis saw the Western concerns over Iran's weapon improvement as a good development. In retaliation, the two sacred mosques in Iran were officially recognized as belonging to the Saudi king, not only to the Saudi monarchy.

### *Chapter III*

## **FACTORS NECESSITATING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN**

This second display of "heroic flexibility" is intended to stop the system from continuing on its present downward track, according to Iran. The declaration came after months of public demonstrations in response to the murder of MahsaAmini, a young Kurdish girl, while in the custody of the police, and in the wake of growing economic issues that have caused the Iranian rial to fall to all-time lows and inflation to soar to all-time highs. In the meantime, the announcement holds out hope for the Saudis that it will lessen the threat of Iranian expansionism by ending, or at least decreasing, Iranian military support for the Houthi rebels and extending the cease-fire so that Yemeni drones and missiles won't retaliate against Saudi Arabia. Before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the United States had friends in Saudi Arabia and Iran. However, Riyadh became concerned due to Tehran's increased activity in the area. The Shah's assertive action raised fears in Saudi Arabia even in 1971 when he employed force to take control of three strategically located islands at the entrance to the Straits of Hormuz. The Shah's intentions were questioned by the Saudis, who feared that he would use his influence to subjugate the whole Persian Gulf under Iranian rule.

When Iranian pilgrims held a march in Mecca known as the "Disavowal of the Pagans," in 1987—the first significant Iran-Saudi conflict since the revolution—took place. Hundreds of Iranians were murdered in clashes between Saudi security forces and pilgrims. In a lengthy speech, Iran's Supreme Leader at the time, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, charged Saudi Arabia's officials of being "puppets and servants of America" and "traitors to the holy shrines."Following Khomeini's death in 1989, hostilities progressively declined. Following the election of reformist

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami in December 1997, Crown Prince Abdullah was present at an Organization of Islamic Conference held in Tehran. During a trip to Saudi Arabia in March 1998, King Fahd and Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the predecessor of Khatami, had a meeting. Through these meetings, agreements on mutual security and economic cooperation were reached by Hassan Rouhani, the future president and then national security adviser. The path to the Iranian government's creation of a corridor to the west and the Mediterranean was cleared in 2003 with the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein administration. The 2011 Arab Spring-related civil conflict in Syria prompted the Iranian government to intervene directly to save Bashar al-Assad's rule. This enhanced Iranian sway over Syria and opened up access to the Mediterranean and, ultimately, Lebanon, where the Islamic Republic of Iran's close ally Hezbollah has a prominent military and political role.(Mousavian, 2020).

Saudi Arabia, which is now essentially commanded by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, progressively became more assertive as Iranian influence increased in the area. To quell Houthi rebels who adhere to a version of Shia Islam as opposed to Sunni Wahhabism, the predominant religion of Saudi Arabia (an extreme offshoot of Islam that demands a literal reading of the Koran), the Saudis launched an invasion of Yemen in 2015. Iran stepped escalated its influence in Yemen and started to back the Houthis. Early in 2016, ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran deteriorated with the execution by Riyadh of Sheikh NimrBaqir al-Nimr, a Shiite cleric who had attended Iranian seminaries from 1979 until 1994. In reprisal, ultra-conservative Iranians set fire to the Saudi embassy in Tehran. The subsequent Houthi rebel strikes on Saudi sites, carried out by Iranian drones and missiles, escalated tensions to unprecedented levels. Between 10 and 15 percent of Saudi Arabia's population is Shiite, and they predominate in the Eastern Province, which is home to Al Ghawar, the biggest oil reserve in the world. The Saudis fear that Iran's attempts to



export the revolution and deepen its strategic penetration could lead to fresh turmoil among the Shiite minority, endangering the Kingdom's lifeblood. Iran has had two significant crises at the same time(Ghasemi, &Nasehi, 2019).

First came the demonstrations that erupted in the wake of Amini's death, which gained widespread support and attention from across the world and lasted for around 100 days. At a cost of almost 500 fatalities, Iranian security, military, and law enforcement put an end to the demonstrations, although severe doubts were voiced about the system's durability. Iran International, a satellite channel located in London, was a major factor in inciting the demonstrations. It is said that "individuals connected to the Saudi royal court fund and helped launch" Iran International, despite the channel's protestations. Noting that bin Salman previously said, "We won't wait for the battle to be in Saudi Arabia," the Iranian government accuses the network of carrying out Saudi strategy. Rather, we will endeavor to position them to win the war in Iran rather than Saudi Arabia. "I warn the Al Saud regime, which has propaganda media that only promote mischief and are openly seeking to provoke our youth, to be careful with your behavior and control these media," said Hossein Salami, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), during the height of the protests in November 2022.The network has considerably reduced its coverage of the Iranian regime but has not stopped criticizing it since the announcement of the Iran-Saudi accord(Afary, & Anderson, 2023).

Iran's second issue is the country's currency, the rial, which is losing value daily. Due to political unrest brought on by the demonstrations and U.S. sanctions brought on by Iran's failure to salvage the 2015 nuclear agreement, it is 55% weaker than it was a year ago. Unquestionably, the devaluation has increased prices, particularly in the food sector. Food inflation for the year 2023 was officially declared in January 2023 to be 70%, however, it is well known that the actual

number is probably far higher. Under these conditions, it is conceivable that demonstrations may flare up again. The situation is serious, as admitted by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who said, "We are facing problems both in the field of the value of the national currency as well as inflation and high prices." We must use every strategy at our disposal to address these financial issues. Iran's economic problems drive efforts to calm tensions with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and pursue détente with neighboring nations. Iran has committed to strengthening coordination and oversight of its quickly developing nuclear program. IAEA head Rafael Grossi said on April 1st, "We are starting with the installation of cameras." We're going to start by reconnecting a few internet monitoring services. We are getting back the visibility we once had. It is unclear whether Iran would pursue a lesser agreement, maybe including the release of three dual citizens of the United States, that would result in more restricted sanctions relief, or if it will resurrect the nuclear deal, which might liberate billions of dollars' worth of frozen assets. Any all-encompassing deal between the US and the Islamic Republic is shaky, however. Khamenei has barred direct engagement with the United States ever since the Trump administration abruptly withdrew from the nuclear accord in 2018. Khamenei's hardliners see their animosity against the United States as a defense of their identity and continued existence. Hardliners would become irrelevant if reconciliation meant that the revolution would stop and that there would be no need for an IRGC or a "supreme leader" to protect it. The Iranian-American issue is emphasized by the IRGC as "fundamental, ideological, and existential and cannot be resolved through negotiations(Bazoobandi, 2012).

The declaration of collaboration with the IAEA and reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia are part of a new strategy that recognizes that fighting both your people and the international community at the same time is not feasible. But will this plan be carried out in its

entirety? The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran deteriorated greatly in the wake of 9/11, especially after the US invasion of Iraq, as was shown in the previous chapter. Iran was able to increase its influence within Iraq as a result of the invasion, which went against Saudi Arabia's wishes. However, as Iranian assistance allowed Bashar al-Assad to keep power and as Hezbollah in Lebanon became stronger, Saudi Arabia was also losing ground in Syria and Lebanon. However, there have been ups and downs in the Saudi-Iranian alliance, which has led to sectarian conflict across West Asia. The researcher will discuss how other regional elements have changed the Saudi-Iranian relationship to the point where it has a significant influence on the current West Asian area in this chapter.

### **3.1 The Role of Russia in the Iran-Saudi Reconciliation**

Iran and Saudi Arabia could be on the verge of a big conflict. A potentially fatal cocktail of instability has been generated by recent power battles in Riyadh, the downing of a Yemeni missile over the Saudi capital, and growing Saudi anxiety about Iran's growing influence in the Middle East. The functioning, albeit not always normal, relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran had taken a serious knock, especially in the wake of the Arab Spring in Syria. The area became unstable as a result of Saudi Arabia's support for the US invasion of Iraq. Iran, on the other hand, voiced its concerns over the attack despite having proclaimed itself neutral, but the criticism stopped there. Still, the role that the greatest extra-regional parties in the conflict relationship—Russia and the US, to mention a couple—have played has only served to raise tensions. Russia and Saudi Arabia, however, have not enjoyed a smooth relationship. Saudi Arabia had aligned with the US throughout the Cold War. Saudi Arabia was against Russia's attempts to expand its influence in the area to align with the US. Following the oil boom of the 1970s, the Saudi monarchy had more clout in international politics, and "the Saudi monarchy was a valuable ally during this

global conflict with its wealth, vulnerability to external aggression, opposition to atheistic communism, and ties to...US." Saudi Arabia was quietly attempting to undermine the Soviet Union and its allies, who were at the time dealing "hammer blows against Soviet interests," via diplomatic and business ties(Cooper, 2012).

Before providing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with "economic and moral support," the Soviet Union was one of the first nations to recognize the kingdom; nevertheless, the "Soviet Union unilaterally decided to end its diplomatic relation in Riyadh after it realized that its relations with the kingdom were not achieving its objectives. "Saudi Arabia took up hostile positions against Soviet interests in the region and its policies towards the Third World, especially the Arab World, and justified its positions in all these cases with ideological pretexts," according to documentation from the end of the Cold War. Tensions between the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia peaked during the pivotal period of the Cold War. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 under the pretense of bringing political unrest to a stop. Afghanistan served as a stopgap for the Soviet Union's advance into the Gulf. The Saudis were terrified when the Marxist dictatorship took over in Kabul in April 1978 and pushed Washington to intervene. Following the Soviet Union's December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan with 80,000 soldiers and the installation of a puppet government headed by BabrakKarmal, there seemed to be a real risk that pressure would be put on Iran and Pakistan to support Soviet goals. To avert this and increase the expenses of Soviet occupation, the Saudis were instrumental in galvanizing Muslim opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the Islamic conference held in Pakistan in January 1980. In April 1981, Saudi Arabia ultimately severed diplomatic ties with the "illegal" government in Kabul, following the recommendations of the Islamic Conference(Alam, 2021).

Following the Soviet takeover of Afghanistan, several Afghan groups formed an armed insurrection to confront the invaders in a defensive war. Saudi Arabia gave billions of cash to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan during the conflict. The first conflict between a regional and extra-regional power was the Soviet-Afghan War. Saudi Arabia's involvement in Afghanistan was solely motivated by Islamic beliefs. However, the United States, which opposed the Soviet Union for political reasons, sided with its largest Middle Eastern ally and helped the Afghans stop the Soviet Union's advance. "Thus, the Soviet Union invested billions of US dollars in the Afghan conflict during the 1980s, and at its height, over 100,000 Soviet men were engaged in combat there. Nonetheless, the mujahideen, or Afghan resistance, received strong backing from a broad range of outside parties, notably the US and Saudi Arabia. The Soviet Army was ultimately forced to leave Afghanistan in February 1989 after suffering tens of thousands of casualties and defeats at the hands of the mujahideen. Moscow continued to equip and support Dr. Najibullah's communist rule even after the Soviet Union collapsed, but this was insufficient, and in 1992 the mujahideen took control of Kabul. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran had turned into its acknowledged opponent after the success of the Iranian revolution. The Soviet Union had a positive opinion of the reform of the Iranian political structure. The hostage situation was what fueled the flames and put a stop to any potential reconciliation between the US and Iran(Bokhari, 1982).

The Soviet Union largely saw the American-Iranian reconciliation as halted by the takeover of the American embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979, and the subsequent hostage-taking of its staff. Iran then questioned how the Soviet Union would respond if the United States launched an invasion of Iran to free the prisoners. Iranians feared that if Soviet armies invaded the country to assist it, as stipulated in the Soviet-Iranian pact of 1921, they may remain there long after the assistance was no longer required. Invoking the friendship treaty between the two nations, the

USSR presented its operation in Afghanistan at the end of December 1979 in response to the Kabul government's appeal for Soviet assistance. A comparable Soviet involvement in Iran may be justified under the Soviet-Iranian pact. Iranians believed that the Soviet Union was just as evil as the United States, with the exception that Americans worshipped a god and the Soviets did not. During a lecture, Khomeini said "The person who believes in God...cannot lose...," so what are we afraid of even if the Soviets "killed all the mullahs and destroyed all the believers?" The new government in the Islamic Republic expressed such abject distaste for the Soviet Union that even its friends could not stand them, as seen by the way they were acting. However, there were some striking parallels between the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Russian revolution, such as the declaration of new, superior "universalist utopian modernities" to those of the West. Even though Iran and Saudi Arabia opposed the Soviet Union on the same platform, their divergent philosophies kept them apart. Iran had severed ties with the US after the revolution, while Saudi Arabia was still in the partnership. Although their opposition to the Soviet Union did not help to heal their disagreements, the enmity increased when the Saudi-US alliance backed Iraq during its war with Iran (Abbasian, 2022).

### **3.2 US as a Factor in the Iran-Saudi Relationship**

Strategy makers and experts have found it challenging to comprehend US foreign strategy in the Middle East. As stated by Weidenfeld and Nicolson:

Middle East policy-making is difficult to assess because it occurs in a culture where, despite political rhetoric, the majority of people know very little and could care less about the area. It is also complicated, multi-centered, and sometimes chaotic. "The American people don't know the difference between Hamas and Humus," told US Senator Qatar. Applying the insights of foreign policy analysis—a collection of fundamental, frequently heuristic, and analytically

perceptive categories—is the appropriate analytical response. These categories are intended to move the study of a state's foreign policy, primarily that of the United States, which forms the basis of most of the literature, out of the instinctive and the immediate. However, the fact that the US has a secret purpose in West Asia is not a secret. "Securing oil supplies for US industry and establishing Israel as the Jewish homeland has been the main goals of US policy in the Middle East for nearly 50 years."<sup>16</sup> Because of its advantageous position, the US may promote demilitarization; nevertheless, during the last 20 years, the US has been responsible for the introduction of highly advanced weaponry worth hundreds of billions of dollars into the area (Al-*Alkim*, 2012).

Following the British announcement in 1969 that they intended to remove their forces from "east of the Suez," the US was eager to step in and take over. However, as resistance to the Vietnam War mounted at home, it became politically impossible for the United States to deploy combat soldiers into this unstable area. Vietnamization became a worldwide strategy of equipping Third World friends to carry out the intervention on behalf of the United States after the Nixon Doctrine was established. The main testing area was the Persian Gulf, with the Shah of Iran serving as a willing participant. The United States supplied the Shah with tens of billions of dollars worth of highly advanced weaponry throughout the 1970s, and hundreds of American instructors were sent to help transform the Iranian armed forces into an advanced combat force equipped to carry out counterinsurgency operations. When Iranian soldiers assisted in quelling a Marxist uprising in the sultanate of Oman in southeast Arabia in the middle of the 1970s, the tactic proved effective. However the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 brought this plan to an abrupt end. At that point, the Carter Doctrine was established, allowing the US to launch a huge military attack via the formation of the Rapid Deployment military (later renamed the Central Command). The United

States would be able to wage a war that would be so dependent on air power, could end so fast, and have such a favorable mortality ratio that the opposition from the home front would not have time to organize thanks to this very expensive endeavor. This is precisely how Operation Desert Storm will play out. As a result, there are now essentially the first signs of an ongoing American military presence in the Gulf. The tremendous financial expenses will compel the states to become economically dependent on the federal government or put further demands on the American taxpayer, putting the U.S. military in an untenable situation where it is effectively reduced to a mercenary army. The biggest consequences, however, would be political as it will probably encourage radicalized anti-American sentiment, which might start a vicious cycle of violence and intervention. Thus, the present US strategy may be counterproductive. The two major Gulf States, Iran, and Iraq, will only become more determined in militaries even as a result of the United States' insistence on a foreign military presence and expanded weapons exports to Israel and the other Arab Gulf governments. In a similar vein, the US should abandon its resistance to the creation of a nuclear-free zone, a concept that all Middle Eastern nations—except Israel—acknowledge (Sato, 2017).

However, a cursory examination of the existential realities in the Middle East now reveals that although many things have changed, many things have remained the same. A few examples include "intra-regional (the Iran-Iraq War and the Arab-Israeli Wars) as well as inter-regional (the U.S.-led War against the Taliban in Afghanistan and the U.S.-led War against Iraq)." A growing Islamic radicalism and related terrorism, uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, Iran's Islamic revolution, civil war in Lebanon, and the subsequent stationing of U.S. marines there in the early 1980s, and foreign invasions (the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the Iraqi



invasion of Kuwait in 1990) are among the other dramatic events that have shaped the political landscape of the region. Monshipouri states: "Today's Middle East is home to human rights violations, harsh regimes, an oppressive Israeli occupation, economic inequities, unelected governments, and corrupt political systems. A growing sense of disillusionment and crisis has been experienced by many Muslim societies as a result of the Arab defeat in the wars with Israel and the parliamentary democracy's inability to hold the military and ruling elites electorally accountable. This culminated in the resurgence of political Islam by the late 1970s. This revival is now seen to represent a powerful reaction against secular institutions and processes, as well as against the failure of secular nations and ideologies like Arab socialism and liberal nationalism. For example, Fathollah-Nejad claims that "a stable security order in the area has not resulted from the presence of Western powers such as the United States in and around the Persian Gulf." In actuality, their existence has historically and now fueled hostility, violence, and unrest in the area. It is impossible to impose a workable security order on the Persian Gulf area from the outside, and it is especially not possible to do so by continuously fostering a weapons race. Only the littoral nations and other key players may create it organically from within as a mutually beneficial agreement (Bayat, 2013).

The United States has traditionally benefited from the competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran, but its main ally, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has been voicing its concerns. "Saudi Arabian interests and American interests often coincide... While Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy that is hostile to Arab democracy and any democratic reform of the current monarchical regimes, the United States and Saudi Arabia often collaborate successfully in their efforts to limit Iranian influence. Iran, on the other hand, believes that the US is its greatest threat. Saudi Arabia is a traditional Sunni Muslim Arab state, while Iran is a Shi'ite state with prominent leaders who

often see their nation as the protector and natural leader of Shi'ites across the region. This is perhaps the most significant distinction between the two countries. The politics of other regional nations where these two countries have influence are influenced by the rivalry between Riyadh and Tehran. Tehran prioritizes the survival of the Islamic Republic in its current form above all else, in contrast to Saudi Arabia. Tehran has developed a Middle East policy based on both deterrence and competitiveness because it sees the United States as an existential threat. Iran is strengthening its retaliatory capabilities by creating the tools to conduct asymmetric, low-intensity warfare, both within and outside the nation, to thwart any potential military measures by the US and its allies (Cooper, 2012).

### **3.3 The Saudi-Iran Rivalry and Britain**

Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom discussed possible means of countering Iran in March 2018. It was also mentioned how Iran's influence in West Asia is expanding. During a one-on-one conversation, British Prime Minister Theresa May and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman spoke about "the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, which has been recently undermined by US President Donald Trump's pullout." Two of the biggest opponents of the agreement dubbed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have been Saudi Arabia and Israel. Iran, however, has criticized the British strategy and charged it with being hypocritical. Iran accused Britain of upholding double standards, using the events in Yemen as an example. Iran said that Britain was being hypocritical when it stated that it should cease arming rebels in Yemen. "There's no denying that Britain bears primary responsibility for the war crimes carried out in Yemen over the last three years, having sold weapons and given logistical and intelligence support to the aggressor nations." "This country should stop its opportunistic and profit-driven approach to this blind war as soon as possible. It is in no position to accuse other countries. "Saudi Arabia

has been attacking Yemen's Huthi rebels from the air for the last three years, claiming that Iran is providing them with supplies. Tehran has refuted the accusations on many occasions. Oh, dear... Iran was urged to "stop sending in weapons which prolong the conflict, fuel regional tensions, and pose threats to international peace and security" by the British Secretaries of Foreign Affairs and World Development. Saudi Arabia has just received weapons worth billions of dollars from the US and Britain. Another multibillion-dollar contract to provide Typhoon fighter planes to Riyadh is about to be signed by London (Shehu, 2021).

The Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's tour to the UK [in 2018] concluded with two statements. A £100 million assistance agreement was made first. Although DfID claims it would combine resources to improve infrastructure in developing nations, others claim the purpose is to protect Saudi Arabia's image, which is in dire need of such publicity given its pivotal involvement in the Yemeni conflict. Finalizing a long-awaited agreement to purchase 48 Typhoon warplanes in Saudi Arabia. There are now 72 in the nation's military, some of which are in Yemen. Since the bombing started in 2015, the UK has authorized £4.6 billion in weapons sales to Riyadh, according to the Campaign against Weapons Trade. Even though Theresa May is said to have expressed her "deep concerns" about the conflict to the crown prince, Britain continues to back the Saudi air campaign and provide the weapons that are driving the world's greatest humanitarian disaster. 8.5 million Yemenis, according to the UN, are in danger of starvation. The situation, according to its humanitarian leader, is "catastrophic." Former British diplomat Martin Griffiths, the nation's new special envoy, has to try to revive the flagging efforts to find a political way out. Despite the Saudi crown prince's best efforts, a military solution is not possible (Cochran, 2019).

The position of Mr. Trump. The UK, France, China, Russia, Germany, and other signatories to the pact assert that they are still committed to it. Iran has said that if it is unable to

keep the deal intact, it would resume uranium enrichment. ..The foreign secretary said that while the United Kingdom and the United States had similar worries about Iran, the "painfully negotiated" deal was successful in delaying Tehran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. He said that Iran has complied with the agreement's conditions nine times, according to watchdog reports. Additionally, Mr. Johnson said that the government will make every effort to shield UK business interests in Iran from US sanctions. Sanctions on Iran jeopardize the North Sea agreement The US president was correct, according to Sir Michael Fallon, the UK defense minister at the time the pact was struck, to criticize the "rather flimsy agreement," which "should never have been called comprehensive." "Instead of limiting Iranian actions, it has given the Iranian regime more financial freedom, which it has used to meddle in Syria, Iraq, and most importantly, Yemen, as well as to fund Houthi attacks against our allies in Saudi Arabia."

### **3.4 France Factor as a Reconciliation Process**

The three countries who signed the 1955 Baghdad Pact were friendly with one another: France, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. The parties to the agreement had a shared understanding with one another, and it was signed under US supervision. Combating the Soviet threat or influence in the West Asian area was the main goal of the agreement. However, the progressive changes implemented by the previous Iranian monarch, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, had angered the clergy. There were planned protests against the changes and the Shah's autocratic style. The Iranian people started to unite around Ayatollah Roohullah Khomeini as their leader. Khomeini became well-known when he started the demonstrations against the Shah's rule in the name of Islam. As a result, he was banished to Iraq and then sought safety in France. Using print and audio cassettes, he spearheaded a determined campaign against the Shah from France. Ultimately, the movement against the Shah was successful, resulting in his ouster in November of 1978. In February 1979,

three months thereafter, Khomeini made his way back to Iran. Every treaty previously signed was deemed null and void. Khomeini adopted an anti-Western posture and harshly criticized them(Yesilbursa, 2005).

Nevertheless, Iran was placed under international isolation as a result of anti-Western rhetoric, and a verbal spat broke out between the opponents and the recently established Islamic Republic of Iran. Eventually, the situation took a dark turn, and the verbal conflict escalated into a real conflict in which Iran was isolated and the West sided with Iraq. Thousands of people died and there was no way to terminate the eight-year conflict between Iran and Iraq. However, France had every right to anticipate having extremely strong political and economic ties to the new Teheran administration after the establishment of the Islamic republic, more so than any other nation in West Europe. After all, throughout Ayatollah Khomeini's four months in Paris, France had been a kind host. Furthermore, the French government had said that it would neither side with the Ayatollah nor the Shah in their dispute. Additionally, the Ayatollah praised France for hosting him when he returned to Iran in a letter to French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing. He said, "I am very grateful to my French friends who allowed me to send my messages from Paris to the Iranian people." Shireen Hunter claims that an Iranian news commentary indicated that "the French government hoped to hold the status of a favored nation in Iran, in return for the treatment it meted out to Imam Khomeini," suggesting that the new administration was aware of the French expectation(Ghavam, 2023).

Mason states that President Nicolas Sarkozy swiftly altered this strategy the following year after making comments about Iran that placed France back in the same category of bad relations as the UK. During the Iran-Iraq War, European nations were often reluctant to openly assist Iran for fear of losing Arab support. Particularly France believed that its bad ties with Iran were a result

of its assistance to Iraq during the conflict. However, there are other concerns, including the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which have caused difficulties. Report: That being said, this does not imply that Iranians think there is no tension around the nuclear issue. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Mohammad Ali Hosseini, responded to Saudi and French demands that Iran follow the terms of the NPT by saying that his country "supports the Middle East free of nuclear weapons" and that its program was "peaceful and under the supervision of the IAEA." "We hope that our Saudi friends are not influenced by the satanic temptations of extra-regional powers," Hosseini said. The Iranian media also portrays Saudi Arabia as being afraid of a possible military confrontation between Iran and the US. In a March 2008 meeting with U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, Tabnak and other sources claim that Saudi King Abdullah opposed "any sort of military attacks on Iran" and believed that "negotiations are the best way to reduce tensions between Iran and the U.S." Saudi Arabia and Iran have maintained an outward tone of cooperation in the interest of threat management, even though Saudi Arabia and its Gulf Arab neighbors have grave concerns about Iran's nuclear intentions, to the extent that Saudi Arabia is even debating whether to purchase its nuclear deterrent. Each party has specific reasons for continuing down this path: Saudi Arabia wants to avoid the consequences of a U.S. military intervention, while Iran benefits from the cover of Saudi "approval." However, this kind of pragmatism has managed to keep tensions in check so far(Mason, 2014).

As Iran started to advance its nuclear program, Saudi Arabia's concerns grew. Before this, Saudi Arabia was scheduled to modernize its 84 Panavia Tornado IDS fighter aircraft in 2005, enabling it to self-designate as a target for laser-guided munitions. The purpose of this upgrade was "to improve the accuracy of their missile guidance systems and provide updates to the Saudis' targeting." However, in a contract valued at around \$3.125 billion, France consented to deliver

Saudi Arabia tanker planes, anti-aircraft missiles, and helicopters in 2006. "Ten NH90 medium transport helicopters and thirty AS/550/555 Fennec light utility helicopters built by Euro copter along with two A330-200 Multi-Role Tanker Transport aircraft and logistic equipment" were the items included under the deal. The Saudis are moving away from the United States, their longtime weapons supplier, as seen by the arms transactions with France and the United Kingdom. Following the lead of other Western nations, France has stood with Saudi Arabia in the face of any Iranian attempts to corner it. Nonetheless, France was among the nations that backed the 2015 nuclear agreement reached by the US, Iran, and the other P5+1 members. Because this was done at a time when Saudi Arabia was fighting a war in Yemen to counter the Houthi threat, it infuriated the Saudis. Nevertheless, France continued to provide the Saudis with information and logistical help against the Houthi rebels, which they had said were getting assistance from Iran(Cordesman, 2008).

### **3.5 European Union and Saudi-Iran Rivalry**

"The European Parliament adopted two resolutions related to human rights: on the situation of the dual EU-Iranian nationals imprisoned in Iran and the recent arrests of women's rights activists in Saudi Arabia," said a statement from the European Parliament in Strasbourg. MEPs were cautious when it came to Iran, refraining from passing judgment on all of the detained dual nationals' guilt. However, they took issue with the way the inmates were treated, citing examples such as solitary confinement, denial of access to their preferred solicitors, and national embassies (in reality, Iran regards dual citizens as Iranians alone). The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which ended the nuclear agreement in 2015, did not change the EU's semi-adversarial relationship with Iran. Some non-nuclear sanctions are still in place from the EU, including ones for grave abuses of human rights. They were extended by an additional year on April 12. Thus, we

may anticipate the EU to censure Iran. In contrast, Saudi Arabia is seen as an ally and friend by powerful EU members like France and Great Britain. Despite the idealistic views of committed human rights advocates, in the actual world, those who are seen as friends or allies are often given considerably more latitude for their misbehavior than those who are viewed as enemies. Therefore, it is always significant when Western legislators or governments criticize Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia decided to establish a permanent embassy in the EU in addition to its bilateral mission in Belgium. A crucial component of this strategy is seducing corporate leaders and politicians in Europe with the notion that Vision 2030 has "goldmine" levels of economic potential. Furthermore, the Saudis felt more confident after Trump decided to pull out of the JCPOA, believing that Europe would now be persuaded by its transatlantic ally to adopt a more aggressive stance against Iran, give up on its Middle East policy of moderate engagement, and support the United States and Saudi Arabia in their attempts to isolate Iran. In this regard, the Saudi authorities were taken aback by the resolution's breadth and its stern wording(Struwe, 1998).

However, once the US withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, often known as the Iran nuclear agreement, imposing sanctions on Tehran, Iranian authorities rejoiced that the EU was on their side. The president of Iran, Rouhani, is also well-known for having promised to boost the country's tourism sector and attract more visitors to strengthen its economy. Indeed, the president often emphasized the relationship between the private sector, tourism, and foreign countries, and he actively invited foreign nationals to visit Tehran. Iranians targeted foreign nationals to achieve several goals by holding them as hostages. Using the hostages as political prisoners and exerting pressure on their governments was one of the goals. This action was also taken in response to top IRGCC officials' concerns that Western culture and way of life might incite more Iranian youngsters to rebel against the government. Foreign people should proceed with



considerable caution while visiting the Islamic Republic, especially during this crucial period. One of the main tenets of the revolutionary ideology of the governing mullahs and their foreign policy is the kidnapping of hostages. More foreign captives would be much needed by the theocratic system so that they might be used as financial, geostrategic, and political puppets. The UN needs to hold the Iranian government responsible and take seriously its strategy of capturing hostages(Pieper, 2019).

However, some sources claim that the European Union has been deceitful and disingenuous, taking advantage of the competition between the two nations for its gain. To grasp the problem from a neutral standpoint regarding the Saudi-Iranian rivalry and the role of the European Union, it will be worthwhile to quote the Russian narrative in its entirety, which has maintained that: The European Union is using the Saudi-Iranian rivalry to its benefit. Said the 'historic' EU decision that demands a weapons embargo against Riyadh has fueled the flames. The humanitarian situation in Yemen is unrelated to the EU's decision from February that called for the imposition of a weapons embargo against Saudi Arabia, according to Salman Rafi Sheikh, a research analyst of international relations and Pakistan's foreign and internal affairs. The expert says that the resolution is really a political ploy to pressure Riyadh into making further commercial concessions and that Brussels has yet to denounce Saudi Arabia's financing of Islamists in Iraq and Syria(Henning-Bodewig, 2006).

#### *Chapter IV*

### **POSSIBILITY OF LONG-TERM CONTINUATION OF THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS**

When the charter was "ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and by a majority of other signatories," on October 24, 1945, "the United Nations officially came into existence. A "charter was signed by the delegates of the 50 nations on June 26, 1945, before that. Poland signed the agreement after not being represented at the Conference and joining the initial 51 Member States (United Nations). The United Nations admitted Saudi Arabia and Iran as members on October 24, 1945. Nevertheless, before Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979, Saudi Arabia and Iran had a rather friendly relationship with the UN. Both had signed the 1955 Baghdad Pact and belonged to the anti-Soviet faction. But after the Islamic revolution, Saudi Arabia and Iran found themselves at odds with one another at the UN during the Iran-Iraq war, accusing the other of destabilizing the other, and the charges have persisted to this day. Although there was some agreement on the need to mend the relationship, the United Nations turned into a battlefield where Saudi Arabia and Iran would engage in combat following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. The Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia and Iran were contacted by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2016 to encourage them both to refrain from taking any action that may heighten tensions.<sup>42</sup> This demonstrated how serious the dispute was between the two countries in West Asia. To appreciate the seriousness of the turbulent relationship between the states, it would be worthwhile to quote the United States in its entirety: During his conversation with Saudi Foreign Minister Abel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir today, Mr. Ban underlined his strong opposition to the death penalty and expressed his unhappiness with Sheikh NimrBaqir al-Nimr's execution. He had brought up Sheikh Nimr's situation with the Saudi authorities on several occasions. He further

reaffirmed how horrible the assault on the Saudi Embassy in Tehran, the capital of Iran, was, but he also said that the news of a rupture in Saudi diplomatic ties with Iran was very concerning. He asked Saudi Arabia to reaffirm its commitment to a ceasefire in Yemen. Speaking with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif yesterday, Mr. Ban referred back to his previous comments in which he expressed shock at Saudi Arabia's death on Saturday of Sheikh al-Nimr and 46 other detainees (Alam, 2021).

Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Tehran, and he asked the Minister to take the appropriate action to safeguard diplomatic premises. For the sake of the area and beyond, he asked both Ministers to refrain from taking any steps that would worsen the situation between the two nations and the region at large. He emphasized the significance of their sustained constructive engagement. Sheikh al-Nimr and several other executed individuals "had been found guilty following trials that raised serious concerns over the nature of the charges and the fairness of the processes," according to a statement released by Mr. Ban's spokesperson on Saturday. Yesterday, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, emphasized the stringent conditions that must be met for the death penalty to be carried out in those nations that still allow it. These conditions include the exclusion of confessions obtained through torture, a fair trial, complete transparency, and the application of the death penalty only for the most serious crimes. In general, he expressed his continued concern about whether the strict due process guarantees—which include the right to an effective defense—were upheld in every case. He urged the Saudi government to put an end to all executions and collaborate with the UN and other allies on alternative counterterrorism measures (Nakhavali, 2013).

However, some writers contend that Saudi Arabia and Iran are equally at fault for the problems plaguing the West Asian area. Saudi Arabia behaves as if it is a backward nation that

violates human rights and is fixated on religion. On the other side, Iran consistently violates human rights and behaves like a theocratic regime from the Middle Ages. Persecuted by the Iranian Shia dictatorship are the "Sunni Baluchis," who live close to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Kurds have also been subjected to persecution by the Iranian authorities in recent years. It is a recognized fact that Iran has supported several Shia factions in several locations, including Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain, and Pakistan. It backs the Tehrani NifasiFiqahiJafria (TNFJ), a Shia organization in Pakistan that has criticized the Sunni interpretation of Islam. Conversely, Saudi Arabia provided backing to Sunni extremist groups against Shia organizations seen to be radical. The proxy conflict dates back many decades. In addition to a significant \$98 billion deficit, the Kingdom's foreign currency reserves decreased from \$728 billion to \$640 billion in 2015. The future of Saudi Arabia was also threatened by its aggressiveness in the region. The percentage of GDP allocated to defense and security increased from 7% in 2012 to 10% in 2015, and it was expected to climb once more in 2016.<sup>45</sup> Saudi Arabia has incurred significant costs in its quest for a new ally. Egypt was given \$8 billion by the Saudis. It had fought a full-scale war in Yemen that lasted longer than anybody thought. It had been used to fund the Syrian fight against the Assad government. However, others saw that Saudi Arabia's strong defense of Sunnis against Shia Iran was a necessary component in countering the extremists' diabolical worldview. Recent Saudi moves seem to be motivated by compulsion rather than philosophy. Iran needs to end its isolation immediately. The United States of America acknowledges several nations with whom it has significant differences. Gaining some clout to influence Iran is the goal. The nuclear agreement with Iran was a significant first step in that direction(Cooper, 2012).

Whenever there is a deterioration in ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the United Nations moves quickly to protect peace initiatives in that region. Relationship breakups are often described

as distressing and disappointing. As an example, Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic relations with Iran after demonstrators incensed about the death of Shiite preacher Nimr al-Nimr ransacked and set fire to the Saudi Embassy in Tehran. To "avoid any actions that could further exacerbate the situation," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Iran. "The Iranians even before the break of diplomatic relations have not been very supportive, not very positive in these peace efforts(Mason, 2014).

#### **4.1 Economic Effects**

Iraq has an excellent chance to take advantage of Saudi Arabia's investments in numerous Iraqi businesses as a result of the reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Riyadh has made a number of investments in Iraq in recent years: Iraq built two border crossings with Saudi Arabia in 2020–22 and asked Saudi Arabia to engage in business and agriculture in the southern provinces. The issue, however, is that these kinds of investments are opposed by Iran and Iraqi Shiites who support Iran. There were suspicions of grid sabotage over the project to link Iraq's energy to Saudi Arabia, which the government chose to overlook. In the best-case scenario, Saudi Arabia's investment in Iraq would rise as a result of the reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. On the other side, given Iran's inadequate infrastructure and US financial sanctions, the Kingdom's Finance Minister, Mohammed Al-Jadaan, said that his preparedness to invest in Iran after the agreement suggests that this investment may instead go via a third nation, like Iraq. For instance, it may discuss less controversial and unapproved initiatives like food and medicine that Saudi Arabia and Iran could work together to carry out in Iraq. Iraq may also put money into cutting-edge banking and financial initiatives that connect Iran and Saudi Arabia. Both parties trust Iraqi banks, and Baghdad may get waivers from Washington on sanctions for specific infrastructural and strategic projects, such as connecting and integrating Saudi Arabia's and Iran's gas and power

networks with the Gulf Cooperation Council via Iraq. All three of these nations desperately need to make investments related to climate change. A significant portion of the geographical area in each of the three nations is made up of deserts. Dust storms in Saudi Arabia's and Iraq's deserts bring fine dust to Iran's west, south, and even its central region. The Iranian authorities have sent stern warnings to the Saudi Arabian and Iraqi environmental agencies about this matter. The three parties may choose to jointly invest in this region given the respiratory issues that the fine dust is causing for the inhabitants of each of the three nations (Terrill, 2011).

During the October 2021 negotiations in Baghdad between Riyadh and Tehran, the idea of an "international highway" was put forth. This would connect Mecca, the center of Muslim importance, and Mashhad, the largest pilgrimage site in Iran, by rail and road via the holy city of Karbala in Iraq. Taking into account the strategic initiatives slated for all three nations, such as Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to draw in 100 million visitors yearly, generate one million new employment opportunities, and raise the tourism sector's contribution to domestic output to over 10%<sup>34</sup>. This initiative has a good possibility of succeeding, and it will also strengthen social, religious, and cultural ties between the three nations.

#### **4.2 Advancing the Saudi-Iranian Rapprochement Applying a Realist (realism) Lens**

According to realism, governments function as unitary players in an international system that is motivated by the desire for power. Mearsheimer argues that the ultimate objective of the major powers is to become the hegemon, and they are always looking for methods to gain an advantage over their competitors.<sup>78</sup> Because of this paradox of power conflicts, governments' current condition of affairs is characterized by an ongoing battle for hegemony. State dominance within the area is known as regional hegemony. According to its interests, the regional hegemon

rules and shapes the area. Furthermore, the regional hegemon does not want peers and does not let others downgrade its standing. Mearsheimer argues that the essence of the international system is anarchic. The Middle East has historically been the center of global problems, a region that is prone to war and has seen some of the longest-lasting hostilities on earth. It seems that the area reflects the anarchic, security-competitive, and war-prone realism region. Over the last forty years, the area has seen conflict, with Saudi Arabia and Iran emerging as significant players. The behavior of both nations to increase their influence in the area and achieve regional hegemony (i.e., the dominant influence in the region) is explained by realists' anarchy and the battle for power under the current conditions.

Another theory is that major countries are potentially threatening one another since they are militarily capable of aggressive actions. In keeping with the preceding premise, this one asserts that states can never be assured of another state's desire to use force against another state. It is from these presumptions that large powers are forced to act as anarchistic allies. This idea is also grounded in the actual world, where governments act as enemies because they can do damage to one another. Given that Saudi Arabia and Iran are two of the major Middle Eastern powers, the actions of each state may be explained by the presumptions described above. Each nation has pertinent military capabilities intended to undermine the other's territorial integrity. Similarly, when they possess strong military capabilities and are unsure of each other's intentions, they often get into a power struggle. Mearsheimer claims that the major powers are afraid of one another and have misgivings about one another. Whether correctly or not, they see one another as threats, and there is limited opportunity for nations to have mutual trust. Mearsheimer goes on to say that the other big power in the area is seen as an adversary by the other great powers. Furthermore, the states' violent behavior is motivated by their desire to live. States also look out for their existence

and see other states as possible dangers. Every state view itself as vulnerable and strives for its assured security since the realist international order lacks a central authority to ensure the security of any state. States therefore take a firm and uncompromising stance in defending their interests. As a result, there is a never-ending power struggle between the states.

F. Gregory Gause has proposed an additional rationale for governments acting in a way that jeopardizes security against one another. He talks about the phenomena known as the "regional security complex," in which governments perceive reciprocal threats from one another. By this method, reciprocal dread and threats from one another characterize such a regional structure. The Persian Gulf has been dubbed a regional security complex by him. According to Gause, such regional networks should include governments whose main security concern is one another, as seen over time by the conflicts they wage and the time and resources they invest in their interactions. Be aware that attempts at regional integration and other constructive interactions are not given priority in this idea of a regional system.<sup>87</sup> Security relations' duration and severity characterize such a system. Particularly in the modern age, the Persian Gulf has developed into a complex regional security environment in which Saudi Arabia and Iran have become important actors. Both nations act in a manner that has been harmful to the stability of the area because they see one another as security threats. A variety of subcategories of realism have been developed, such as classical, neo-classical, and neo-realism. Neo-realism holds that security concerns dominate the international system, with states once again playing a major role. States are always looking for new strategies to improve their security. Self-help mechanisms in which governments strive to improve their security are what define the international system. The states are seen as unitary actors in the neo-realist interpretation. Kenneth Waltz contends that security is maintained by a balance of power in which governments fend against challenges to maintain equality in their



relations with one another. The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is more complicated; although it has undoubtedly played a significant role, it is not the only element that defines the two countries' conflict. Other important players include geopolitical interests, the existence of trans-state identities, ideological disagreements, and economic considerations.

Neo-classical realism blends neo- and classical realism with an emphasis on power dynamics. Gideon Rose established neo-classical realism, which maintains the realist balance of power theory and holds that the extent of a nation's foreign policy is dictated by its relative material might. Neo-classical realism goes on to say that mistrust and an inability to correctly recognize one another among nations may lead to under-expansion or under-balancing behavior, which in turn causes imbalances among the states in the international system. According to Steven E. Lobell, "Neo-classical realism contends that the impact of power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex because systemic pressure must be translated through intervening unit-level variables such as decision-makers perceptions and state structure." It also argues that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy are driven first and foremost by the country's relative material power.

#### **4.3 Ramifications of Saudi Arabia and Iran Reconciling**

Due to divergent interpretations of Islam, geopolitical rivalries, disparities in political systems, competing OPEC oil policies, political miscommunications, and their relationships with the US and other Western nations, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have always gone through periods of tension. However, after seven years of enmity and strife, diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored on March 10 of this year after a meeting in China between Ali Shamkhani, the then-secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security

Council, and his Saudi counterpart, Musaad Bin Mohammed Al-Aiban, the Kingdom's national security adviser. A new chapter in the long history of ties between the two nations was opened when their foreign ministers met in Beijing in May and Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud visited Tehran in June. Moreover, the riddle of reviving relations between Riyadh and Tehran was completed by Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's travel to Saudi Arabia and his meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman on September 1. The accord was described as "a political earthquake" and "means the post-US era in the Gulf region has begun" by Rahim Safavi, a prominent military advisor to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, indicating how significant these developments were. President Ebrahim Raisi's "Look East" and "Neighborhood Policy" doctrines. The Neighborhood Policy prioritizes Iran's 15 neighbors as its primary economic and political allies, while the Look East policy seeks to deepen ties with China and Russia. The purpose of outlining this theory is to offset the influence of the West and America. The reconciliation between Tehran and Riyadh has actually given the Raisi government a sense of diplomatic success and dignity. From September to November 2022, Iran experienced internal turmoil; yet, the country's standing both domestically and internationally was enhanced by its diplomatic efforts with Saudi Arabia. While there is little chance that the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear agreement will be revived in the current political climate, Iran's economic hardships can be lessened and its regional position strengthened by reconciliation with Saudi Arabia even though the US has imposed severe sanctions on Iran. Tehran argues that it can partially fix its economic issues and lessen the impact of US sanctions by mending relations with Saudi Arabia. Raising Iran's relations with its neighbors and avoiding a reliance too much on the JCPOA were two of Raisi's main campaign pledges(Cooper, 2012).

Moreover, this may be considered one of the benefits of his campaign for the 2025 election. The majority of Saudis and the ruling Al-Saud dynasty contest Bin Salman's legitimacy as the legitimate successor to the Saudi monarchy, contributing to the country's succession problem. Muqrin Bin Abdulaziz, the crown prince, was ousted after King Salman took the throne in 2015, and Muhammad Bin Nayef, a strong candidate for the throne, was forced to step down. In addition, the man who was meant to take over, Ahmed Bin Abdulaziz, was behind bars. It is still difficult to persuade the Saudi public of this, even though the royal family may have found some resolution to this internal conflict. However, Bin Salman has suppressed possible opponents. Another factor contributing to Saudi Arabia's reconciliation with Iran is that Riyadh's top objective for the next ten years is to carry out the social and economic reforms stated in Vision 2030. The Kingdom has understood that normalizing ties with Iran is the only way to secure regional stability, which is necessary for the accomplishment of this big undertaking. The Middle East, with Saudi Arabia at its center, has the potential to become a "new Europe," according to Bin Salman.

## **MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Major Findings**

The recent rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, facilitated by China, has emerged as a momentous event in the Middle East, with profound consequences for regional stability and world geopolitics. The agreement, reached in March 2023, signifies a significant change in the enduring competition between the two countries, which have historically been involved in conflicting regional disputes. The reconciliation process was initiated due to a complex combination of historical, cultural, and geopolitical causes. An important reason was the increasing acknowledgment by both parties of the need for collaboration in response to common regional issues, such as the continuing crisis in Yemen and the menace presented by extremist organizations like ISIS. Moreover, the enhanced economic advantages resulting from stronger connections, namely in the domains of commerce and investment, were probably a significant factor for both countries. In addition, China's role as a mediator facilitated the establishment of a favorable atmosphere for constructive discussions and reaching mutually acceptable agreements.

#### **Objective 1: Factors Necessitating Reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran**

The factors necessitating reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran are multifaceted and can be categorized into three levels: domestic, regional, and international. At the domestic level, Iran's actions can be understood as part of President Ebrahim Raisi's doctrine of "Look East" and "Neighborhood Policy," which aims to strengthen relations with China and Russia while prioritizing Iran's 15 neighboring countries as its main economic and political partners. This doctrine is outlined to neutralize the pressures of America and the West. The reconciliation with Saudi Arabia has brought a kind of diplomatic victory and prestige to the Raisi government, which faced internal unrest from September to November 2022 and strengthened the country's position at the domestic and international levels.

At the regional level, both sides have come to acknowledge their undeniable role in managing regional crises. Iran has accepted that without Saudi Arabia, it is not able to solve the dilemmas in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. Although Iran may have the upper hand in these regional crises, Tehran recognizes that it cannot address the problems alone and eliminate the sources of perpetual strife. Hence, cooperation with Riyadh is necessary. Iran understands that it

cannot be engaged in multiple conflicts simultaneously in the region. Furthermore, an agreement with Saudi Arabia holds strategic value for Tehran in deterring threats from Israel. The normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel was prioritized by the Biden administration in the Middle East during its first term, but it seems unlikely to occur during the lifetime of King Salman.

The international level also plays a significant role in the reconciliation process. The United States has historically been a major foreign influence in the Middle East, but China's increasing involvement in the region through its diplomatic efforts has led to a shift in the balance of power. The restoration of diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran has the potential to significantly reshape the Middle East map, although not in the way former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice would have liked. There is a great opportunity in this development to ease a multitude of situations and continue what appears to be a general trend of reconciliation in the Middle East.

### **Objective 2: Possibility of Long-term Continuation of the Reconciliation Process**

The possibility of long-term continuation of the reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran is influenced by several factors. Firstly, the two countries have demonstrated a willingness to push their reconciliation forward. Shortly after the joint statement announcing the rapprochement, the two resumed diplomatic relations and re-established an embassy in the capital of the other, per the agreed schedule. In November, Iran's President Ibrahim Raisi visited Saudi Arabia and attended an extraordinary joint Islamic-Arab summit in Riyadh regarding the situation in Gaza. In early February, Iran announced a visa-free travel policy for nationals of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar.

Secondly, the two have shown a strong interest in security dialogue. On November 30, 2023, Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, the chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, spoke by telephone with Khalid bin Salman Al Saud, the Saudi minister of defense. The two announced they were ready to promote bilateral military ties, reflecting willingness on both sides for more intensive engagement. This increased cooperation in security matters can contribute to the sustainability of the reconciliation process.

Lastly, the reconciliation process is also influenced by the internal dynamics of both countries. Saudi Arabia is grappling with a succession crisis; the legitimacy of Bin Salman as the

rightful heir to the Saudi throne is disputed by the ruling Al-Saud family and most of the Saudi people. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have always experienced periods of tension due to various historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors. However, the current reconciliation efforts have brought a kind of diplomatic victory and prestige to the Raisi government in Iran, which faced internal unrest from September to November 2022 and strengthened the country's position at the domestic and international levels.

### **Objective 3: Regional Implications of the Reconciliation Process**

The regional implications of the reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran are significant and far-reaching. Firstly, the reconciliation has de-escalated the tension between the two major conflicting parties in the region. For years, Riyadh and Tehran had engaged in a fierce competition for geopolitical influence, with fronts in Lebanon and Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, and Yemen. Their normalization of relations has halted and even reversed the trend of tense competition across the whole region.

Secondly, the reconciliation has served to maintain a modest form of stability. The events of October 7 and the subsequent war in Gaza have served as a reminder that stability in this neighborhood is always fragile. The desperation of Palestinians resulting from Israel's long-term occupation, and Israel's disproportionate retaliation, have plunged the region into yet another disaster. But given the potential for spillover from the Palestine-Israel conflict, the reconciliation between Saudi and Iran has served as a vital anchor for a bare minimum of regional stability.

Lastly, the reconciliation has the potential to promote the legitimate cause of the Palestinians. Saudi Arabia and Iran are not just powerful in the Gulf but also across the region and the Muslim world. The unity of the two as a result of reconciliation gives strength to the Muslim world in the fight for the Palestinian cause, which affects the peace and stability of the whole region.

The long-term prospects for the peace effort between Saudi Arabia and Iran remain questionable. Although both parties have shown a dedication to enhancing their relationship, there remain notable obstacles to be surmounted, such as the continuing crisis in Yemen and the profound distrust between the two countries. Furthermore, the participation of outsider entities, such as the United States, in the area has the potential to complicate the process of reconciliation.

The regional consequences of the reconciliation effort between Saudi Arabia and Iran are substantial. The agreement can reduce tensions in the area, namely in Yemen, where a delicate truce has been in effect since 2018. Moreover, the enhanced contacts may result in heightened collaboration on matters like as counter-terrorism and economic advancement. Nevertheless, the reunion also gives rise to apprehensions over the possibility of heightened Iranian influence in the area, which may be seen as a threat by other significant countries in the region, such as the United States and Israel.

The results of this research indicate that the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is a momentous advancement in the Middle East, with extensive consequences for regional stability and world politics. The agreement, reached in March 2023, signifies a significant transformation in the enduring competition between the two countries, who have historically found themselves on opposing sides of several regional disputes. One important discovery of this research is that the causes from history, culture, and geopolitics that led to the start of the reconciliation process are complex and varied. A crucial reason was the increasing acknowledgment by both parties of the need for collaboration in response to common regional issues, such as the continuing crisis in Yemen and the menace presented by extremist organizations like ISIS. Moreover, the enhanced diplomatic ties between the two states were probably driven by the anticipated economic advantages, namely in terms of commerce and investment.

Additionally, the research revealed that China's participation as a mediator facilitated the establishment of a favorable atmosphere for constructive conversation and mutual agreement. China's impartiality and its reputation as a dependable mediator in local disputes made it an appealing option for both parties to start negotiations. Moreover, China's economic stakes in the region, namely in the domains of energy and infrastructure, served as a motivation for both parties to agree. The study's results indicate that the process of reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is not devoid of hurdles. The persistent hostilities in Yemen and the profound lack of confidence between the two countries pose substantial challenges to be overcome. Moreover, the participation of outsider entities, such as the United States, in the area has the potential to complicate the process of reconciliation.

F. Gregory Gause has proposed an additional rationale for governments acting in a way that jeopardizes security against one another. He talks about the phenomena known as the "regional

security complex," in which governments perceive reciprocal threats from one another. By this method, reciprocal dread and threats from one another characterize such a regional structure. The Persian Gulf has been dubbed a regional security complex by him. According to Gause, such regional networks should include governments whose main security concern is one another, as seen over time by the conflicts they wage and the time and resources they invest in their interactions. Be aware that attempts at regional integration and other constructive interactions are not given priority in this idea of a regional system.<sup>87</sup> Security relations' duration and severity characterize such a system. Particularly in the modern age, the Persian Gulf has developed into a complex regional security environment in which Saudi Arabia and Iran have become important actors. Both nations act in a manner that has been harmful to the stability of the area because they see one another as security threats.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the research discovered notable advantages to the process of reconciliation. Enhanced diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran may result in heightened collaboration on matters such as counter-terrorism and economic advancement. Moreover, the agreement has the potential to reduce tensions in the area, namely in Yemen, where a delicate truce has been in effect since 2018. The research furthermore discovered that the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran has noteworthy consequences for regional stability and global politics. The agreement has the potential to alleviate tensions between the two countries and provide a favorable atmosphere for discussion and collaboration. Moreover, the agreement has the potential to enhance regional stability by reducing the likelihood of hostilities and fostering economic progress.

### **Future Projections**

The results of this research indicate that the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is a noteworthy advancement in the Middle East, with extensive consequences for regional stability and worldwide politics. The agreement, reached in March 2023, signifies a significant transformation in the enduring competition between the two countries, who have historically found themselves on opposing sides of several regional disputes. This research has identified that the commencement of the reconciliation process was influenced by several complex historical, cultural, and geopolitical elements. A crucial component was the increasing acknowledgment by both parties of the need for collaboration in response to common regional issues, such as the



continuing crisis in Yemen and the menace presented by extremist organizations like ISIS. Moreover, the enhanced economic advantages resulting from stronger connections, namely in the domains of commerce and investment, were probably a significant factor for both countries.

The research further discovered that China's participation as a mediator facilitated the establishment of a favorable atmosphere for conversation and consensus. China's impartiality and its reputation as a dependable mediator in local disputes made it an appealing option for both parties to start negotiations. Moreover, China's economic stakes in the region, namely in the domains of energy and infrastructure, served as a motivation for both parties to come to an agreement. The study's results indicate that the process of reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is not devoid of hurdles. The persistent hostilities in Yemen and the profound lack of trust between the two countries pose substantial challenges to be overcome. Moreover, the participation of outsider entities, such as the United States, in the area has the potential to complicate the process of reconciliation.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the investigation discovered that the reconciliation procedure yields noteworthy advantages. Enhanced diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran may result in heightened collaboration on matters such as counter-terrorism and economic advancement. Moreover, the agreement has the potential to alleviate tensions in the area, namely in Yemen, where a delicate truce has been enforced since 2018. The research further discovered that the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran has substantial consequences for regional stability and global politics. The agreement has the potential to mitigate tensions between the two countries and provide a favorable atmosphere for discussion and collaboration. Moreover, the agreement has the potential to enhance regional stability by reducing the likelihood of hostilities and fostering economic progress.

## **Conclusions**

### **Conclusion for Objective and Findings 1: Factors Necessitating Reconciliation Saudi Arabia and Iran**

The findings of this study have revealed that the factors necessitating reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran are multifaceted and can be categorized into three levels: domestic, regional, and international. At the domestic level, Iran's actions can be understood as part of President Ebrahim Raisi's doctrine of "Look East" and "Neighborhood Policy," which aims to strengthen relations with China and Russia while prioritizing Iran's 15 neighboring countries as its main economic and political partners. This doctrine is outlined to neutralize the pressures of America and the West. The reconciliation with Saudi Arabia has brought a kind of diplomatic victory and prestige to the Raisi government, which faced internal unrest from September to November 2022, and strengthened the country's position at the domestic and international levels.

The reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran has significant implications for the regional dynamics. The two countries have come to acknowledge their undeniable role in managing regional crises. Iran has accepted that without Saudi Arabia, it is not able to solve the dilemmas in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. Although Iran may have the upper hand in these regional crises, Tehran recognizes that it cannot address the problems alone and eliminate the sources of perpetual strife. Hence, cooperation with Riyadh is necessary. Iran understands that it cannot be engaged in multiple recognizes of conflicts simultaneously in the region. Furthermore, an agreement with Saudi Arabia holds strategic value for Tehran in deterring threats from Israel. The normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel was prioritized by the Biden administration in the Middle East during its first term, but it seems unlikely to occur during the lifetime of King Salman.

The international level also plays a significant role in the reconciliation process. The United States has historically been a major foreign influence in the Middle East, but China's increasing involvement in the region through its diplomatic efforts has led to a shift in the balance of power. The restoration of diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran has the potential to significantly reshape the Middle East map, although not in the way former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza

Rice would have liked. There is a great opportunity in this development to ease a multitude of situations and continue what appears to be a general trend of reconciliation in the Middle East.

### **Conclusion for Objective and Findings 2: Possibility of Long-Term Continuation of the Reconciliation Process**

The findings of this study have revealed that the possibility of long-term continuation of the reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran is influenced by several factors. Firstly, the two countries have demonstrated a willingness to push their reconciliation forward. Shortly after the joint statement announcing the rapprochement, the two resumed diplomatic relations and re-established an embassy in the capital of the other, per the agreed schedule. In November, Iran's President Ibrahim Raisi visited Saudi Arabia and attended an extraordinary joint Islamic-Arab summit in Riyadh regarding the situation in Gaza. In early February, Iran announced a visa-free travel policy for nationals of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar.

Secondly, the two have shown a strong interest in security dialogue. On November 30, 2023, Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, the chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, spoke by telephone with Khalid bin Salman Al Saud, the Saudi minister of defense. The two announced they were ready to promote bilateral military ties, reflecting willingness on both sides for more intensive engagement. This increased cooperation in security matters can contribute to the sustainability of the reconciliation process. The reconciliation process is also influenced by the internal dynamics of both countries. Saudi Arabia is grappling with a succession crisis; the legitimacy of Bin Salman as the rightful heir to the Saudi throne is disputed by the ruling Al-Saud family and most of the Saudi people.

Lastly, the reconciliation process is also influenced by the regional dynamics. The events of October 7 and the subsequent war in Gaza have served as a reminder that stability in this neighborhood is always fragile. The desperation of Palestinians resulting from Israel's long-term occupation, and Israel's disproportionate retaliation, have plunged the region into yet another disaster. But given the potential for spillover from the Palestine-Israel conflict, the reconciliation between Saudi and Iran has served as a vital anchor for a bare minimum of regional stability. The reconciliation has the potential to promote the legitimate cause of the Palestinians. Saudi Arabia and Iran are not just powerful in the Gulf but also across the region and the Muslim world. The

unity of the two as a result of reconciliation gives strength to the Muslim world in the fight for the Palestinian cause, which affects the peace and stability of the whole region.

### **Conclusion for Objective and Findings 3: Regional Implications of the Reconciliation Process.**

The findings of this study have revealed that the regional implications of the reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran are significant and far-reaching. Firstly, the reconciliation has de-escalated the tension between the two major conflicting parties in the region. For years, Riyadh and Tehran had engaged in a fierce competition for geopolitical influence, with fronts in Lebanon and Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, and Yemen. Their normalization of relations has halted and even reversed the trend of tense competition across the whole region.

Secondly, the reconciliation has served to maintain a modest form of stability. The events of October 7 and the subsequent war in Gaza have served as a reminder that stability in this neighborhood is always fragile. The desperation of Palestinians resulting from Israel's long-term occupation, and Israel's disproportionate retaliation, have plunged the region into yet another disaster. But given the potential for spillover from the Palestine-Israel conflict, the reconciliation between Saudi and Iran has served as a vital anchor for a bare minimum of regional stability.

Lastly, the reconciliation has the potential to promote the legitimate cause of the Palestinians. Saudi Arabia and Iran are not just powerful in the Gulf but also across the region and the Muslim world. The unity of the two as a result of reconciliation gives strength to the Muslim world in the fight for the Palestinian cause, which affects the peace and stability of the whole region. The reconciliation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran has significant implications for the regional dynamics, and its long-term continuation can lead to a more stable and peaceful Middle East.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, here are five recommendations:

1. Saudi Arabia and Iran should continue to engage in regular diplomatic talks to solidify their reconciliation and address any emerging issues. This can include regular meetings between high-level officials, joint economic projects, and cultural exchanges.
2. Building on their willingness to engage in security dialogue, both countries should explore areas of mutual interest, such as counter-terrorism, maritime security, and cybersecurity cooperation. This can help build trust and promote regional stability.
3. Saudi Arabia and Iran should leverage their reconciliation to address ongoing regional conflicts, such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Yemen, and Syria. They can work together to find peaceful solutions and promote stability in the region.
4. Both countries should explore opportunities for economic cooperation, including trade, investment, and joint infrastructure projects. This can help promote economic growth and development in the region.
5. Saudi Arabia and Iran should use their reconciliation as a model to promote regional dialogue and cooperation among other Middle Eastern countries. This can include hosting regional conferences, promoting people-to-people diplomacy, and encouraging other countries to resolve their differences peacefully.

By implementing these recommendations, Saudi Arabia and Iran can consolidate their reconciliation, promote regional stability, and create a more peaceful and prosperous Middle East.

## REFERENCES

- Abbasian, P. (2022). *Four Decades of Irreconcilable Enmity between Iran and the United States: An Analytical and Historical Account* (Doctoral dissertation, Murdoch University).
- Afary, J., & Anderson, K. B. (2023). Woman, Life, Freedom: The origins of the uprising in Iran. *Dissent*, 70(1), 82-98.
- Ahmad, N. (2023). The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): Opportunities and Challenges for Practicing Culturally-Sensitive Mediation in Intra-Muslim Conflicts.
- Al-Alkim, H. H. (2012). *Dynami of Arab Foreign Policy-Making in the Twenty-First Century: Domestic Constraints and External Challenges*. Saqi.
- Alam, F. (2021). Role of External Factors in Iran-Saudi Relations. *Asia Social Issues*, 14(3), 247046-9.
- Alam, F. (2021). Role of External Factors in Iran-Saudi Relations. *Asia Social Issues*, 14(3), 247046-9.
- Al-Kahtani, M. Z. (2004). *The foreign policy of King Abdulaziz (1927-1953): a study in the international relations of an emerging state* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leeds).
- AL-MOSLEMANI, S. H. A. I. K. H. A. (2018). *GCC PERCEPTION of THREATS from IRAQ AND IRAN: EXPLAINING THE ENDURING ALLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STAES* (Master's thesis).
- Alsharif, R. (2021). Saudi-Iranian rapprochement may require a new third party. Al-Monitor. Retrieved from <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/02/saudi-iranianrapprochement-may-require-new-third-party>

- Alsharif, R. (2021). Saudi-Iranian rapprochement may require a new third party. Al-Monitor. Retrieved from <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/02/saudi-iranianrapprochement-may-require-new-third-party>.
- Amiri, R. E., Samsu, K. H. B. K., & Fereidouni, H. G. (2011). The Hajj and Iran's foreign policy towards Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 46(6), 678-690.
- Bahgat, G., & Ehteshami, A. (2021). *Defending Iran: From revolutionary guards to ballistic missiles*. Cambridge University Press.
- Barbosa, L., & Kuster, R. (2019). The Coordination Between International and Regional Organizations (Third Party Actors) as an Effective Recourse for the International Conflict Resolution Through Mediation. *Willamette Journal of International Law and Dispute Resolution*, 26(1/2), 138-172.
- Bayat, A. (2013). *Life as politics: How ordinary people change the Middle East*. Stanford University Press.
- Baylis, J., Smith, S., & Owens, P. (2017). *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations*. Oxford University Press.
- Bazoobandi, S. (2012). Iran's Domestic Political and Economic Challenges. *Gulf Re-43 DünyaBankası*, [http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/overview\\_search](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/overview_search) Center.
- Berti, B., & Guzansky, Y. (2014). Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy on Iran and the Proxy War in Syria: Toward a New Chapter?. *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 8(3), 25-34.
- Beyers, J. (2017). Religion and culture: Revisiting a close relative. *HTS: Theological Studies*, 73(1), 1-9.
- Bokhari, I. H. (1982). The War in Afghanistan: A Study of Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency. *Strategic Studies*, 5(3), 19-47.

- Bsheer, R. (2020). *Archive wars: The politics of history in Saudi Arabia*. Stanford University Press.
- Cochran, J. A. (2019). The rise in power of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 28(2), 369-385.
- Cooper, A. S. (2012). *The oil kings: how the US, Iran, and Saudi Arabia changed the balance of power in the Middle East*. Simon and Schuster.
- Cooper, A. S. (2012). *The oil kings: how the US, Iran, and Saudi Arabia changed the balance of power in the Middle East*. Simon and Schuster.
- Cooper, A. S. (2012). *The oil kings: how the US, Iran, and Saudi Arabia changed the balance of power in the Middle East*. Simon and Schuster.
- Cordesman, A. H. (2008). *Saudi national security and the Saudi-US strategic partnership*. Center for Strategic & International Studies.
- Gause III, F. G. (2019). The Saudi-Iranian Rivalry and the Future of Middle East Security. *Security Studies*, 28(4), 636-667. doi: 10.1080/09636412.2019.1615629.
- Gause III, F. G. (2019). The Saudi-Iranian Rivalry and the Future of Middle East Security. *Security Studies*, 28(4), 636-667. doi: 10.1080/09636412.2019.1615629.
- Gharagozli, B. (2017). *Understanding the Islamic Republic of Iran's 38 Years of Survival Since the Revolution* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge).
- Ghasemi, A., & Nasehi, M. (2019). The Competition Between Iran and Saudi Arabia: Internal Factors. *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs*, 10(30), 251-280.
- Ghavam, L. S. (2023). *The Good, the Bad, and the Mad: Representations of Iran (ians) in Mainstream European News Sites* (Doctoral dissertation).



- Grumet, T. R. (2015). *New Middle East Cold War: Saudi Arabia and Iran's Rivalry* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver).
- Hadzikadunic, E. (2019). Iran-Saudi Ties: Can History Project Their Trajectory?. *Singapore Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore*, 1-22.
- Harvey, K. (2022). *A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: The Saudi Struggle for Iraq*. Oxford University Press.
- Henning-Bodewig, F. (2006). *Unfair competition law: European Union and member states* (Vol. 18). Kluwer Law International BV.
- Hicks, K. H., & Dalton, M. G. (Eds.). (2017). *Deterring Iran After The Nuclear Deal*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jones, S. (2009). The Islamic Republic of Iran: An introduction. *Economic indicators*, 3(09).
- Juneau, T. (2023). The UAE and the war in Yemen: From surge to recalibration. In *Survival August-September 2020: Crisis and response* (pp. 183-208). Routledge.
- Kamrava, M. (2018). Multipolarity and instability in the Middle East. *Orbis*, 62(4), 598-616.
- Katzman, K. (2021). *Iran and Saudi Arabia: Current Issues and US Policy*. Congressional Research Service. Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R44968.pdf>.
- Khan, A., & Mashwani, H. F. (2024). Saudi Arabia-Iran Conflict in the Middle East: A Struggle for Regional Hegemony. *Arbor*.
- Maarefi, H. (2021). The Saudi-Iran détente: what to expect. *The Arab Weekly*. Retrieved from <https://theArabweekly.com/saudi-iran-detente-what-expect>.

- Mason, R. (2014). Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia. *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia*, 1-288.
- Mason, R. (2014). Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia. *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia*, 1-288.
- Mason, R. (2014). Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia. *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia*, 1-288.
- Mason, R. (2014). Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia. *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia*, 1-288.
- Mazurek, K. D. (2018). Kissingerism and Iranian-American Relations: Prospects for Reconciliation and the Establishment of a New Order.
- Moosavian, S. S., Ghadbeigy, Z., & Jafari, M. (2022). Factors Influencing Iran and Saudi Arabia Foreign Policies towards Each Other. *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(1), 23-34.
- Mousavian, S. H. (2020). *A New Structure for Security, Peace, and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Mousavian, S. H. (2020). *A New Structure for Security, Peace, and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Nakhavali, M. (2013). DIPLOMATIC, CONSULAR AND POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND UNITED STATES. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(14).
- Nyangchak, N. (2022). Emerging green industry toward net-zero economy: A systematic review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 134622.
- Panaite, A. C. (2017). *Cold War in the Middle East: Iran and Saudi Arabia* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami).

- Pasha, A. K. (2016). The Gulf Cooperation Council: a regional approach to peace, security and development. In *Indian Ocean Regionalism* (pp. 90-98). Routledge.
- Petito, F. (2004). Khatami's Dialogue among Civilizations as International Political Theory. *The International Journal of Humanities*, 11(3), 11-30.
- Pieper, M. (2019). An Iran nuclear deal without the United States? Chinese, European, and Russian interests and options after the US Withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. *Contemporary Issues in International Political Economy*, 35-53.
- Pollack, K. (2013). *Unthinkable: Iran, the bomb, and American strategy*. Simon and Schuster.
- Putnam, H. (2020). The many faces of realism. In *Pragmatism* (pp. 163-181). Routledge.
- Rose, R. L., & Wood, S. L. (2005). Paradox and the consumption of authenticity through reality television. *Journal of consumer research*, 32(2), 284-296.
- Saïd, A. (2016). Iran and The United States relations in the context of the Nuclear Deal.
- Saikal, A. (2021). The rise and fall of the Shah: Iran from autocracy to religious rule.
- Sato, S. (2017). Labour's clinging on to the Gulf, 1964–67. In *Britain and the formation of the Gulf States* (pp. 29-50). Manchester University Press.
- Schreck, T. (2019). No End to Saudi Arabia and Iran's Proxy War in Yemen. Foreign Policy. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/22/no-end-to-saudi-arabia-and-irans-proxy-war-in-yemen/>.

- Schreck, T. (2019). No End to Saudi Arabia and Iran's Proxy War in Yemen. Foreign Policy. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/22/no-end-to-saudi-arabia-and-irans-proxy-war-in-yemen/> 21.
- Shehu, E. (2021). United States and China Power Transition in the Middle East: The cases of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Shehu, E. (2021). United States and China Power Transition in the Middle East: The cases of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Struwe, M. V. (1998). The policy of "critical dialogue": an analysis of European human rights policy towards Iran from 1992 to 1997.
- Takeyh, R. (2009). *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs*. Oxford University Press.
- Terrill, W. A. (2011). *The Saudi-Iranian rivalry and the future of Middle East security*. Department of the Army.
- Waltz, K.N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill.
- Weddington, D. (2017). Rivalry in the Middle East: The History of Saudi-Iranian Relations and its Implications on American Foreign Policy.
- Weddington, D. (2017). Rivalry in the Middle East: The History of Saudi-Iranian Relations and its Implications on American Foreign Policy.
- Weddington, D. (2017). Rivalry in the Middle East: The History of Saudi-Iranian Relations and its Implications on American Foreign Policy.
- Wohlforth, W.C. (2011). Realism. In A. Collins (Ed.), *Theories of International Relations*, 3-29. Sage Publications.
- Yesilbursa, B. K. (2005). *The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American Defence Policies in the Middle East, 1950-59*. Routledge.