A History of Saudi Foreign Policy

From Reaction to Proactivity

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Ph.D. Thesis

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July, 2017

Abstract

The Saudi foreign policy has, since the nation's establishment, consistently been reactive and characterised by the complete absence of self-determining initiative, the tendency toward showing restraint and adopting a moderate policy is one such feature, as Saudi Arabia sought to a position of mediation in order to maintain the status quo. Officials involved in national foreign policy decisions preferred to employ the political and economic components of the country's foreign policy instrument. This pattern of behaviour is most apparent when Saudi Arabia acted in historical regional issues. However, as more current events demonstrate, it has changed to a decidedly more proactive stance, assuming a more interventionist approach from 2011 onwards due to a range of external and internal factors that have influenced its behaviour regarding different political issues in the region.

The objective of the research project is to examine Saudi foreign policy as it developed in relation to the most important historical events that occurred from 1936 onwards in order to determine the conventional pattern of behaviour, examine the circumstances that created the pattern that will provide a standard against which to measure the major changes that occurred in 2011, and to, analyse the changes in foreign policy that occurred during 2003-2013, by choosing two case studies, the Iraq War in 2003, and the Arab Spring of 2011, to identify the substantial changes in Saudi foreign policy and demonstrate how these changes were influenced by a variety of both internal and external factors.

This different pattern of behaviour substantiates the main argument of this thesis, namely, that Saudi foreign policy underwent a radical alteration as officials completely departed from the firmly established tradition of tending toward understated diplomacy and ensuring distance from regional conflicts that historically characterised the country's foreign policy strategy. A new pattern of behaviour became evident as officials adopted a more proactive approach in how they employed all its foreign policy instruments, adopted a proactive policy of deterrence, relying increasingly on its military capacities.

Acknowledgements

Ever since I arrived in the U.K, I worried for and felt a sense of longing for my father. The first time I sat at my desk in university, my father was in both my thoughts and heart. When I was about to begin my project, I created a file entitled "To My Father" and this file has come to represent the motivation and incentive I required to overcome the numerous challenges I would encounter over the next few years. If my father was still here, I would tell him that he is the real reason that I have achieved this accomplishment and that this file is a gift to him because without his name I would never have had this opportunity. Without his name, I would not have been able to overcome the struggle of my Masters or the worry and alienation I felt; his name assisted me in accomplishing my dream. This accomplishment is dedicated to the man who is and always will be my father; I am and forever will be your son.

To my mother, the love of my Life, for raising me according to virtues and sublime love, who struggled to ensure I was educated in the best school and who I feel so comfortable in conversation with her, I am not as proud of my accomplishment as I am yours.

To my sisters, Lama and Lamia, who have been my dearest companions since my childhood and are, and always will be, of the highest value to me you. I extend the same love and appreciation to your beautiful sons and daughters, Thamer, Saad, Khalid, Ghada and Anoud. Lama, my sweet little sister, I am always overwhelmed by the concern you show for me and will be forever grateful for the support you provided me with during this period.

To my brothers, Zayed, Mohammad and Saud, no one will ever properly know what you mean to me, each of you are examples of manhood to aspire to, how to behave with generosity and tenderness in difficult situations. You have been my companions during both good and bad times, and without you I am nothing.

To my wife, my partner throughout life, I love you with all my heart and will never underestimate or take for granted your understanding and patience; you are the most beautiful companion and friend a man could ever desire and you are of the most superior standard of purity. You have experienced alienation on two different occasions and I will never forget that.

To the other loves of my heart, Reema, Nouf and Abdullah. We have shared such wonderful days together in Norwich and they will forever live in my heart. Words cannot adequately express how much you each mean to me, I love you and want you to know that you are essential to my future and my happiness.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Johan Franzen for the continuous support throughout this period of research and study, and the patience, motivation and immense knowledge he has shown me. I could not have asked for a more supportive and encouraging mentor during this period, and the example he showed throughout was truly inspirational. I would also like to thank the administrative staff at UEA, in particular Claire Thornett, for her permanent smile and willingness to help with any problem.

To Abu Saba, the closest friend and inspiring role model, I want to express my sincerest gratitude for respecting my father's health conditions, helping me to complete my Masters and challenging the rules to secure the opportunity for me to obtain a scholarship to complete my PhD.

Finally I would like to extend a special acknowledgement to the person who truly knows me, without your assistance and advice, David Mc Carthy, this thesis would not have been completed. For the hundreds of hours of reading and re-reading, and for staying in touch with me after you left Norwich, I am eternally grateful. My sincere gratitude also to his girlfriend and partner Melissa, for welcoming me into her home and allowing David and I to spend long hours working together.

Images and Tables

Map 1-1 Map of Saudi Arabia
The map has been sourced from zilon.com.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Since its establishment in 1902, then subsequently named the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, Saudi foreign policy can be described as being relatively ambiguous. In addition to particular events that will be discussed in this research project, a significant amount of literature addressing Saudi foreign policy characterises it using repeatedly occurring features. These features determine how Saudi Arabia behaves in both the immediate regional and the larger international environment. The tendency toward showing restraint and adopting a moderate policy is one such feature, as Saudi Arabia sought to a position of mediation in order to maintain the status quo. Officials involved in national foreign policy decisions preferred to employ the political and economic components of the country's foreign policy instrument. This pattern of behaviour is most apparent when Saudi Arabia acted in regional issues, as it became the predominant means through which officials involved in Saudi foreign policy decisions pursued their national and geopolitical objectives, while always ensuring to avoid the employment of the military and intelligence instruments at their disposal. Such emphasis on restraint and favouring mediation as opposed to direct intervention represent the conventional pattern of Saudi foreign policy that this research project will examine and ultimately contest.

In this regard, even when there are instances of deviation from conventional foreign policy decisions, these still occur within clearly demarcated parameters and continue to adhere to a strategy of moderation and restraint. In other words, as assumed by Laura Neack, et al., foreign policy is the output of a state into the international system, which is defined as "the patterns of interaction that exist among the actors around the world. Thus, the international system affects foreign policy by way of the constant interactions that occur between actors, with each interaction forcing the affected actors to reevaluate their needs and adjust their policies."[1] According to James N. Rosenau in "The Study of Foreign Policy," there are three conceptualisations of foreign policy, one of which posits foreign policy as an activity and concrete behavior of sates "vis-a-vis" practice in the international

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[1] Laura Neack, Jeanne A. K. Hey, Patrick Jude Haney. *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in its Second Generation*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1995), p. 34.

system.[2] In 1962, George Modelski defined foreign policy as the "system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behavior of other states and for adjusting their activities to the international environment."[3] According to these definitions, it can be confidently argued that foreign policy in general is a variable policy that results from responding to external circumstances and is always subject to the interpretation of new information. Such an understanding of foreign policy means that Saudi Arabia's behaviour should develop in response to and change in accordance with new information. However, as the historical evidence demonstrates, even on occasions when officials deviated from the conventional pattern of Saudi foreign policy, the tendency toward considered restraint persisted. Developing from this, such restraint often appeared as a lack of suitable initiative, as Saudi foreign policy was reactive toward regional events and committed to ensuring a non-interventionist position. As a result, this pattern of behaviour gradually led to the complete absence of self-determining initiative and the intentional distancing of Saudi Arabia from regional conflicts.

However, from 2003-2013, Saudi foreign policy did not adhere to this conventional pattern of behaviour or pursue well-defined objectives. Instead, its foreign policy underwent a dramatic change. Saudi Arabia's political, financial and military intervention in Bahrain in 2011, alongside its support for the Syrian opposition during the crisis, raise multiple important questions about its foreign policy, ultimately signaling an important change toward proactively pursuing its own strategic, regional interests. In 2011, however, there was a significant alteration to Saudi foreign policy, when officials decided to pursue a transition from its existing reactive policy toward a more proactive, interventionist policy. This change is best illustrated by Saudi support of the Bahraini government during a period of domestic unrest in 2011, which ensured that Saudi Arabia could maintain a vital strategic ally in the region to further protect its national interests. Those familiar with the country's foreign policy did not expect such action, primarily because it was inconsistent with previous decisions regarding intervention in regional affairs; Saudi Arabia' attitude toward the Iraq War in 2003 is a case in point. In addition, its mobilisation of political, financial and military resources to support the Syrian revolutionary

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[2] James N. Rosenau, 'The study of Foreign Policy', In James N. Rosenau, et al.(eds.), *World Politics: An Introduction*, (New York: The Free Press Studies Quarterly, 1976), pp. 15-17.
[3] George Modelski, *A Theory of Foreign Policy*, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), p.6.

opposition in its struggles against the regime of Bashar al-Asad was a significant departure from previous foreign policy decisions. In the case of the Iraq conflict in 2003, for example, the presence of Islamic extremist factions prevented Saudi Arabia intervening, whereas, in the case of Syria in 2011, Saudi Arabia was willing to risk being seen as supporting radical Islamic factions and mujahedeen sympathisers operating amongst the opposition by intervening in this civil conflict. This radical change from non-intervention to intervention represents a new orientation in Saudi foreign policy, one that is characterized by a more proactive stance but which also demonstrates one of the major inconsistencies in the pattern of behavior. This research project is intended to analyse Saudi foreign policy to attempt to explain the recurring, and often prominent, ambiguities involved in the decision-making process. Ultimately, this analysis will determine the factors and stimuli that led to Saudi foreign policy deviating from its conventional pattern, which is normally characterized by its reactive nature. Another distinguishing feature of Saudi foreign policy is the tendency toward assuming a mediatory role, with the intention of maintaining the status quo, which inadvertently results in the denial of self-determinacy regarding its national and regional interests.

The primary task of this research project is to, firstly, examine Saudi foreign policy as it developed in relation to the most important events that occurred from 1902 to 2003, and to, secondly, analyse the changes in foreign policy that occurred during 2003-2013 using two case studies. These case studies will be used to identify the substantial changes in Saudi foreign policy and demonstrate how these changes were influenced by a variety of both internal and external factors. Although the main focus of this study will be on the period from 2003-2013, it is necessary to consider the specific historical circumstances and events from 1902 onwards in order to determine the conventional pattern of behaviour that will provide a standard against which to measure the major changes that occurred in 2011, the degree of difference between decisions, and the level of consistency in the decision-making process. To determine the pattern, this study will identify the properties and features that occur most frequently and ascertain whether or not this pattern is a dependent variable that can be used as the standard to measure the recent changes in Saudi foreign policy. Saudi policy is difficult to understand because it cannot be quantitatively measured, therefore, operationalization provides a research method through which repetitions can be identified and a recurring pattern discerned so that Saudi foreign policy can be

qualitatively measured within its historical context. Specific questions are necessary to understanding this pattern in its historical context, such as: How important are foreign affairs to the Saudi Kingdom? Do the foreign affairs occupy a central or a marginal position within Saudi and to what extent does it determine this position itself? Can the effectiveness of its foreign policy be measured in proportion to its allocated budget, the number of staff assigned to it, or the amount of time devoted to it? What instruments are primarily used during the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, e.g. military, media, economic, diplomacy, intelligence agencies, etc? What are the primary strategic objectives that motivate the dominant behavioural pattern? To what extent is Saudi foreign policy independent? Answering these questions will provide an outline of the conventional pattern Saudi foreign policy follows as the standard against which to measure more recent digressions, changes, and aberrations.

The primary objectives of this research project are to examine the circumstances that created the conventional pattern of Saudi foreign policy and, subsequently, to determine the principal factors that engendered such radical changes in Saudi foreign policy from 2003-2011 and to analyse exactly what led to the apparent inconsistencies. Explaining the ambiguity associated with Saudi foreign policy requires an analytical and qualitative examination of existing secondary material as well as primary sources, while the two case studies will allow for a study of the effects of specific regional conflicts and domestic political issues within the Middle East on Saudi foreign policy. In addition, these case studies will be used to ultimately ascertain if Saudi foreign policy is primarily reactive, as it develops in response to the dictations of the country's strategic allies and the constraints imposed by the hostile regional environment, or if it is proactive, that is, influenced by domestic factors and informed by commitment to the country's national interests. This will mitigate the difficulties for heuristic purposes and subsequently allow for analyses of the foreign policy decisions in the context of the events, individuals and political circumstances that influenced them.

This study will analyse the complexities of foreign policy by accessing various sources of primary information and critically assessing the roles of the multiple strategic participants in the region. In practical terms, it is problematic to arrive at a comprehensive interpretation due to the inevitable inaccuracies involved. To remedy this, this study will be based on a methodology that concentrates primarily on the

interconnections between Saudi foreign policy through a selection of events in the regional environment using case studies to analyse how the decision making process has been influenced by these. Focusing on these specific events will allow for a qualitative analysis of this process while also critiquing the current presuppositions. This study will be supported by interviews with those involved in the development and implementation of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy and a detailed analysis of the official documents issued in relation to it. Difficulties remain even when that policy is placed in its general historical context. However, by choosing two regional case studies, the Iraq War in 2003, and the Arab Spring of 2011, particularly the Bahrain Crisis in 2011 and the Syrian Crisis in 2011, the Saudi policy can be analysed as it interacts with the strategic interests of the other primary regional participant in these crises, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since the establishment of this relationship following the Iranian revolution, there have been more instances of political difference than convergence, meaning that opposition has been a salient feature of their relations despite the apparent indicators of rapprochement in 1997 engendered by policies of cooperation in regional security, market economics and a variety of other political and socio-economic fields. However, this tentative relationship of cooperation failed to materialise into an alliance of stability and the events subsequent to 2005 exemplify how both nations' respective regional interests have become a site of major contestation and further divergence, eventually resulting in heightened political tensions and even proxy military conflict.

Rather than simply delineating how the various disagreements and disputes between Iran and Saudi Arabia developed over time as other previous studies have done, my analysis will consider their regional rivalry as it manifests in their involvement in the three regional issues mentioned above and the inevitable influence this had on Saudi foreign policy. Iran's foreign policy is similarly motivated by strategic interests and political obligations, meaning that despite the gestures of rapprochement toward Saudi Arabia, the security and economic treaties concluded in 2001 while Iran continued to pursue the goals outlined before this arrangement of cooperation. This is evidenced by Iran's continued support of Iraq through the bilateral coordination of their intelligence services and consistent agitation through the media and diplomatic departments, in addition to the presence of the Republican Guard in its facilitative role in Syria. Regardless of the changes in leadership, Iran's objectives remain unchanged and it continued to mobilise its political, economic and

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financial resources to achieve these. In contrast, Saudi Arabia distanced itself from Iraq by refusing direct intervention, favouring public condemnation as opposed to direct and active tools of foreign policy to achieve its interests in Iraq. This is not to deny the immense difficulties and complexities, but the question remains regarding why it failed to provide either financial or military support to the pro-Saudi Sunni movements in Iraq that opposed the pro-Iranian government forces like it has in Syria or activate its tools in foreign policy. Similarly, the radical shift in attitude toward the Bahraini crisis will raise questions about the consistency of Saudi foreign policy, especially since the political government, its regional rival and its strategic allies have not changed during this period. Identifying the other, less apparent, circumstantial conditions that may have motivated this shift requires a detailed analysis of the decision-makers' comprehension of the consequences a policy of intervention would involve. In addition, my project must also consider whether or not this radical policy shift is part of a new and more complete strategy, and if so, the extent to which it was influenced by the geopolitical and economic conditions of the region.

In order to comprehend the radical shift in foreign policy, this study will attempt to determine the extent to which this change was either intended to ensure the maintenance of Saudi Arabia's pre-existing geopolitical objectives or involved a complete amendment to these objectives and the methods designed to achieve these. Ultimately inquiring, what were the options available and why was one chosen over its alternative during a particular period, for example, avoiding intervention in Iraq in 2003 in order to alleviate the contemptuous relation with Iran only to renege on such a position by intervening in Bahrain and Syria less than a decade later. It is hoped that this research project will definitively determine if these foreign policy decisions were motivated by the attitudes of individual officials or the interests of a strategic ally, either within or outside the region, and if so, quantify exactly the extent to which these conditions influenced the radical shift in Saudi Arabia's strategy. This information informs the preliminary hypothesis of this research project; that Saudi foreign policy has, since the nation's establishment, consistently been reactive and characterised by the complete absence of self-determining initiative, as officials insist on distancing the country from regional conflicts. However, as more current events demonstrate, it has changed to a decidedly more proactive stance, assuming a more interventionist approach from 2011 onwards due to a range of external and internal factors that have influenced its behaviour regarding different political issues in the

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region. In order to test this hypothesis, it is necessary to pose a number of important questions. This study will examine Saudi foreign policy from 1902 onwards in order to understand the conventional pattern of the behaviour displayed by the government as it participated in important historical events. Ultimately, this provides a historical context for comprehending the important changes illustrated in the two case studies, the Iraq War (2003) and the Arab Spring (2011-2013), chiefly the Bahrain Crisis and the Syrian Civil War.

This study consists of six chapters, the second, third, and fourth of which delineate the development of Saudi foreign policy since the establishment of the Third State as the country engaged with and participated in the major events of the period. These three chapters will provide an overview of the historical and political background informing Saudi foreign policy from 1902-2003, which is best understood as four different but nevertheless interrelated components. The first is the historical context of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy from 1902-2003; the second is the country's relationship with the U.S. according to their shared economic, political and security interests in the region; while the third is Saudi Arabia's foreign policy as it relates to Iran in terms of the primary ideological, religious and political differences between them and the resultant regional issues arising from these. Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, is how the balance of power in the Middle East shifted between Saudi Arabia and Iran as they engaged with and developed strategic alliances with world superpowers on different occasions during this period. These four components also allow for the determination of Saudi Arabia's official position toward other the other nations involved in the two case studies. Chapters two, three and four will also pose the range of secondary questions, chiefly, is Saudi foreign policy reactive and determined solely by contemporaneous circumstances or is there evidence of it being proactive, and why is a particular position officially adopted in a given context? These questions help provide a more detailed explanation of the various internal and external factors that influence the foreign policy decision-making process. Determining both how and why certain decisions were arrived at will allow for an understanding of the conventional pattern that characterizes Saudi foreign policy from 1902-2003 and which functions as the standard against which the more recent decisions addressed in the case studies can be measured, decisions which often mark significant departures from normative behavior. Furthermore, it will also provide the information required to identify the logic determining Saudi foreign policy and to

understand how this logic developed in response to the strategic objectives of the country in domestic and foreign terms, and to its position regarding a range of geopolitical, economic and security issues in the Middle East.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 consist of two case studies. The first case study is the Iraq War (2003), which provides an opportunity to examine the decision-making process and analyse the first-hand accounts of those officials involved in the deliberation between the options of intervention and non-intervention. This case study will ultimately be used to explore Saudi Arabia's relationships with Iran and the U.S., and determine the influence each exerted as Saudi Arabia attempted to pursue its own strategic interests in the region. In addition, chapter six will explore what Saudi Arabia's objectives were during this time; the alternatives available to decision-makers immediately prior to and after events in 2003; the extent that officials and advisors were aware of the potential consequences of both intervention and non-intervention; and the circumstantial conditions that made increased political distance from the conflict in Iraq appear the most viable option at the time. Chapter 6 will examine Saudi Arabia's position toward the Arab Spring and explore the implications of this event on its strategic relationships with two regional Arab states, Bahrain and Syria. The second case study will use the examples of the revolutionary civil opposition that manifested in these countries and how these events provided a catalyst for the radical change in Saudi foreign policy from 2011 onwards.

In terms of Bahrain, a regional neighbor that held significant influence over Saudi Arabia's own political and economic stability, this analysis will identify the exact circumstances that motivated the radical shift in Saudi foreign policy from the complete avoidance of, to commitment to, strategic intervention and to appreciate how this shift would be perceived by both Iran and the U.S., especially since the latter had invested such substantial military and financial resources to ensure stability in the region. A further purpose of chapter six is to examine the process that resulted in the policy of intervention and to determine if the decision was an instance of Saudi Arabia assuming the initiative regarding regional affairs or if it was the result of complex bargaining within the GCC. It is also intended to determine the extent of the U.S.'s involvement in and awareness of this radical policy shift, in addition to examining if it constitutes a strategic, proactive pursuit of both foreign and domestic interests or is merely a logical response given the immediate consequences a policy of non-intervention had in Iraq less than a decade earlier.

In terms of Syria, this analysis will examine the extent of Saudi Arabia's support of oppositional groups through the deployment of financial and military resources, and the pursuit of diplomatic channels. It is necessary to determine the official position of those involved in deciding Saudi foreign policy regarding the long-term objectives of the Syrian opposition, especially given the current stalemate and the fact that complete victory by either side is becoming increasingly unlikely. One pertinent question is what motivations necessitated intervention in Syria and why did such motivations not have the same effect in the case of Iraq in 2003. Chapter six will examine the extent of Saudi Arabia's involvement in the deposing of Bashar al-Assad's regime and whether or not this policy of intervention was a further example of Saudi officials assuming the initiative regarding regional affairs or if it was the result of collective agitation from amongst the international alliance of oppositional sympathisers. Ultimately, the previous tendency toward maintaining the status quo will be shown to be incompatible with Saudi Arabia's more recent attempts to assume a more active role in regional disputes and the domestic affairs of other states in the region.

The two case studies in chapters five and six raise important questions about Saudi foreign policy, chiefly, "what were the primary internal and external factors that influenced Saudi foreign policy and led to the radical change that occurred between the decision to not interfere in the Iraq War (2003) compared to the commitment to intervention in the case of Bahrain and Syria in 2011. The decision to intervene militarily in Bahrain and to provide political and financial support to the opposition in Syria makes it necessary to examine why Saudi officials did not display a consistent pattern of behavior and did not pursue clearly defined objectives. Answering this question will allow for a more complete understanding of why Saudi foreign policy departed from its reactive position, as officials sought to distance the country from direct involvement in regional issues, and moved toward being more proactive regarding the pursuit of the country's strategic objectives and its political, economic and security interests as they related to regional issues. The intention of these case studies is to determine if this radical shift in orientation and strategy in Saudi foreign policy is indicative of a larger change in the political objectives, both domestic and regional, of the country and, if so, what circumstances affected this change.

(1.1) Methodology and Conceptual Framework

By conducting a comprehensive study of Saudi foreign policy, this research project intends to provide an original contribution to the subject that reveals the unique features that differentiates it and to identify additional information that discredits the prominent ambiguities associated with it. This will inevitably challenge the existing assumptions regarding Saudi foreign policy and work toward addressing the important omissions and limitations in the existing literature on the subject. Overall, the project will employ a qualitative methodology that consists of mixed research methods, chiefly historical methods and case studies.

In the first instance, historical methods, it rests on observation and experience, which involves interpreting past events, synthesizing data from different sources. A historical method involves two distinct activities. Firstly, primary sources, such as speeches, official statements, memoirs and archival material will be analysed to identify how those involved in the decision-making process sought to develop and ultimately implement Saudi foreign policy.[4] Such primary material will also ensure that the hypothesis of this research project is convincingly tested. Secondly, Oral history method, interviews with officials involved in Saudi foreign policy decisions will be used so the motivations and objectives of those individual can be understood in more detail. Both sources of primary material will be contextualized through critical engagement with contemporaneous printed and digital media from both national and international sources, while also analysing secondary material. This historical analysis will help in identifying common patterns between events as a comprehensive amount of primary material will be gathered regarding Saudi foreign policy that can then be critically analysed in order to explain the persistent ambiguities associated with it and to reveal the considered logic informing what are often understood as inconsistencies within it.

It is impossible to properly examine the political dynamics of Saudi foreign policy without a preceding understanding of the historical context informing it. By analysing Saudi foreign policy from a historical perspective, the numerous political circumstances that determined it can be properly understood. Furthermore, this

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[4] David E. McNabb, *Research Methods for Political Science: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. (London: Routledge, 2010), pp.224-251.

approach will also allow for the strategic objectives motivating foreign policy decisions to be identified and analysed as they manifest over a prolonged period of time rather than in just isolated instances.

In the second instance, case study methods will be utilized to provide empirical examples in support of the critical analysis of Saudi foreign policy, with the intention of expanding specific examples into broader generalisations.[5] The case studies allow for analyses of particular events in the context of the contemporaneous circumstances and the individuals that influenced to be developed into more comprehensive observations about Saudi foreign policy. By using case studies, the actual occasions when foreign policy decisions materialize can be examined, while the individuals involved in the decision-making process can be identified and understood within the complex of domestic, regional and international variables influencing, even determining the particular situation. The case study methods offers a depth and richness of date by determining as various variables in that cases to identify how a complex set of factors andconditions come together to produce a a particular foreign policy.

With regard to the conceptual framework of this research project, which will attempt to determine the variables and factors that will have to be explored in the research, and illustrates the connection between variables identified in the research, and on how the research hypothesis will have to be examined, and embodies the particular technique by which this study will have to be undertaken, this framework will be "the way ideas are organized to achieve a research project's purpose."[6] It allows for the synthesizing of a variety of critical concepts in international relations field. By a comprehensive analysis of both the internal and external variables can be undertaken by using specific critical concepts to examine how these variables, and the interrelationships between them, influence foreign policy decisions. This will help to provide a comprehensive analysis of internal and external variables, and demonstrate how these spheres of influence are intimately interrelated. There is no denying that the decision-making process is highly complex and, as Stephen Salmore notes, this makes any general study of foreign policy an extremely difficult task due to the

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[5] David E. McNabb, Op.Cit., 2010, pp. 224-251.
[6] Patricia M. Shields and Nandhini Rangarajan, *A Playbook for Research Methods: Integrating Conceptual Frameworks and Project Management*. (Stillwater, OK: New Forum Press, 2013). p. 24.

multiplicity of factors and variables.[7] Saudi foreign policy derives from a complex interrelationship between numerable variables both internal and external.

However, such an observation does not mean that this study intends to follow a certain theory or a particular model, since, as Fatih Tayfur argues, "it is not possible to explain the foreign policies of states with a common methodology and a common approach. Rather, what one needs are different approaches and methodologies."[8] This research project instead adheres to the principles informing the case study approach, that "there is no state whose foreign policy is the same as others" Tayfur added " creating patterns, models and theories, and trying to fit the foreign policy behaviours of states into these ignore the essence of the foreign policy that is being explained,"[9] due to the differences in the culture, history, decision-making structures and processes, and perceptions of decision makers. As a result, each state's foreign policy is unique. The case study approach was developed by British scholars, such as Steve Smith,[10] who opposed the American approach to studying foreign policy, which was based on the assumption that foreign policy could be comprehended through comparative analyses as otherwise different countries still shared common domestic, regional and international experiences.[11] This study prefers to avoid such a generalized theory of foreign policy analysis. This study will be based on the historical and case study methods to answer the questions and hypotheses presented in this research. Furthermore, it will be supported with interviews as a source of data gethering, which is appropriate within the Saudi Arabian context because of its distinct features in comparison to democratic Western states. While international relations theories may fit in well for Western states, in terms of the nature of the political system, they may prove more problematic within the Saudi Arabian context because of the sources and nature of its political institutions such as the monarchy and the official institutions involved in the making of Saudi foreign policy.

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[7] Stephen Salmore, el.al., "Conclusion: Toward Integrating the Perspectives in Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior," in Maurice A. East, Stephen A. Salmore, and Charles F. Hermann (eds.), *Why Nations Act*. (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1978), pp. 191-110.

[8] Fatih Tayfur, "Mine Approaches to the Study of Foreign Policy: A Review", *METU Studies Development*, Vol. 21, no.1, 1994, pp.125-126.

[9] Ibid, p.125-126.

[10] Steve Smith, "Foreign policy Analysis", in Steve Smith (ed.), *International Relations: British and American Perspectives*, (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 45-50.

[11] American School studies, such as; Snyder R., Bruck W., Sapin B., *Foreign Policy decision Making*. James N. Rosenau, "Toward the study of National-International Linkages". James N. Rosenau, 'Comparative Foreign Policy: Fad, Fantasy, or Field?'

This study will, however, use a variety of concepts from international relations field that correspond with the Saudi case. In order to synthesise a framework designed to incorporate both the internal and external variables that affect the decision-making process. As a result, this approach will allow for a more logical and practical approach to Saudi foreign policy that will ultimately mitigate the uncertainty and ambiguity often surrounding it by developing a particular methodology suited to the case of Saudi Arabia, the different inputs and outputs associated with the country's foreign policy decisions. These inputs include three fundamental components, the internal environment, the external environment and the decision-making process, and are discussed individually below.

One of the main objectives of this research project is to provide an exhaustive list of the internal and external factors influencing the decision-making process in Saudi Arabia without separating these two spheres of influence. The international environment and regional and international events constitute an important external variable, which, as Philip Gregg has identified in his study, is no less important than the internal variables. Ultimately, these external variables are the key variables that influence the external behavior of a state.[12] In the same context, K.J. Holsti has suggested that every decision and behavior is influenced by both internal and external factors. He further notes that these determine the pattern of foreign policy, where external factors include the system and form of global politics and economics, the goals and behavior of the other international actors, the nature of the regional or international issue, and global public opinion, while internal factors include the general characteristics of the state, such as its geographical size, population and economic development, the form of the political system, that is, its ideology, political philosophy and domestic public opinion, and all the other domestic forces and their interests that might influence the decision.[13] In addition, Holsti observes how the behaviours of the majority of states and their foreign policy decisions are affected by other states, which can often have a negative impact on their national interest. Saudi Arabia's relationship with its regional neighbours and international partners is ultimately influenced by the vision of those involved in the decision-making process and whether they choose the option of cooperation or

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[12] Maurice East and Philip M. Gregg, "Factors Influencing Conflict and Co-operation in The International System", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.11, no.3, 1976, pp. 258-261.
[13] Holsti, K. J. *International politics: A Framework for Analysis*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1995). pp. 252- 281.

conflict. Furthermore, Stephen Salmore, in *Why Nations Act: Theoretical Perspectives for Comparative Foreign Policy Studies*, suggests that in order to understand the nation's external behaviour, it is necessary to comprehend the decision-making process and the official, bureaucratic structure.[14]

As a result, this research project will analyse Saudi foreign policy using a selection of concepts in the field of International Relations, each of which emphasize the central role played by both internal and external environments in the decision-making process.[15] Their perspective is essentially based on the supposition that foreign policy options could be analyzed logically if the objectives of the decision-makers are understood and the extent to which their definition of the international situation determines their particular response. These perspectives deal with a large number of both internal and external variables that are irrevocably intertwined with each other, and represents a significant shift in the study of foreign policy because it seeks to provide concrete and accurate analysis of both the decision maker's perception of the internal environment and the external environment as they influence the individual as an inherent part of the decision-making process.[16] For this reason, this study will follow a qualitative methodology by using interviews with a wide range of princes and government ministers, and their respective officials, involved in the foreign policy decision-making process to understand their different objectives and appreciate their perception of the situation at hand. The princes involved include King Faisal's son Prince Saud al-Faisal al-Saud, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Mohammad bin Saud al-Saud, the individual responsible for the Syria portfolio in the Foreign Ministry; and Khalid al-Tuwaijri, Chief of the Royal Court and a special aide and secretary of King Abdullah. In addition, the interviews were conducted with government and military officials, such as Dr. Ali Hassan Jaafar, the Deputy Vice Foreign Minister; and Major General Mutlaq Alazema al-Mutairi, the commander of the Peninsula Shield Forces who conducted the operation in Bahrain in 2011. A range of individuals attached to the Ministry of Intelligence and former diplomatic ambassadors were also interviewed to gather a more comprehensive understanding of the decision-making process and to determine how the objectives of those involved

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[14] Stephen Salmore, Op.Cit., 1978, pp. 191-210.

[15] Snyder R., Bruck W., Sapin B., *Foreign Policy Decision Making*, (New York The Free Press, 1962).

[16] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, (New York: Wesley Educational Publishers Inc., 1996), p. 458.

interacted with changing political realities as certain courses of action were decided upon and then implemented.

In the same context and confirming the correlation between the internal and external variables, Rosenau identifies the interdependence of domestic and external variables and how the interaction between them impacts foreign policy. Ultimately, the concept of "linkage" proposes that clear demarcations cannot be established between these internal and external factors.[17] Holisti emphasizes in *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis* that any issue in the external environment concerning national sovereignty, security or the economy will influence how the state acts within this external environment. However, these influences themselves are affected to a certain extent by three primary internal variables; the perception and vision of the decision-maker, domestic needs and demands, and internal public opinion.[18] Rosenau has identified five distinct sets of variables that affect the foreign policy and behavior of nations in this manner. Firstly "idiosyncratic variables," which include the personal traits of the decision makers, such as values, individual talents and prior experiences. Secondly, "role variables," those that correspond to the organization decision makers are operating within. Thirdly, "governmental variables," the inter-organizational aspect of a state's foreign policy. Fourthly, "societal variables," the various interactions between the formal or inter organizational aspects of foreign policy and its more informal components, such as public opinion, interest groups, societal cohesion, etc. Fifthly, and finally, "systemic variables," the events and processes occurring in a state's external environment, including the behavior of other states directed toward it, the structure of the international system, etc.[19]

This study seeks to examine state behaviour in an external environment as "sequences of interaction, which span national boundaries" by focusing on the following three stages;[20] the initial stage involving the central historical events and the separate crises in Bahrain, Syria and Iraq that forced Saudi officials to make the

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[17] Rosenau N. James, "Toward the Study of National-International Linkages". In James N. Rosenau ed., *Linkage politics: Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems*, (New York: Free Press for the Princeton Center of International Studies Press. 1969), pp. 30-205.

[18] Holisti K.J, Op.Cit., 1983, pp. 347-350.

[19] Quoted in Zeev Maoz, *National Choices and International Processes*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1990), p. 79.

[20] James N. Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, (New York: Nichols Pub. Co., 1980), p. 90.

decision to either intervene or not intervene, that is, to either radically change the current situation or to maintain the status quo as an extension of the country's own interests. The second stage consisting of the activities through which Saudi officials attempted to influence the respective situations in Bahrain and Syria to align them with their strategic interests. The third and final stage is defined as the responsive stage, which refers to the conditions and influences that comprise the reactions of the objects of the attempts at modification, in this instance, the states addressed in the case studies, their regional neighbours and the international community.[21] All three stages include dependent, independent and intervening variables that impact on Saudi foreign policy.

The dependent variables include the activities, attitudes, relationships, institutions, capacities and conditions in the international system that are altered or preserved as a result of the foreign policy undertaking directed toward them. In the first instance, the dependent variables can be divided into two major types: firstly, those that involve an alteration or preservation of behaviour internal to the object of the foreign policy undertaking, and, secondly, those that pertain to the object's changed or unchanged external behaviour. In the second instance, the independent variables refer to all conditions, individuals and non-human factors that influenced decision-makers in Saudi Arabia to follow an interventionist policy toward particular issues. The independent variables could be conceptualised as "policy input"; these variables come from either the domestic or external environment. Moreover, independent variables can be divided into two categories. Firstly, there are all those factors and relational conditions occurring outside the country, which are considered external independent variables, for example, diplomatic incidents and historic enmities.[22] These variables represent the stimuli that motivate officials to either continue acting in a certain manner or alter their actions. Secondly, there are those internal or domestic independent variables; those factors and stimuli that influence decision-makers and which originate from within the state, such as geography, culture, religion, economic resources, and military capabilities. Finally, in the third instance, the intervening variables denote procedures, techniques, actions, foreign aid programmes, the structure of decision-making, and the decision-makers whose task it

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[21] James N. Rosenau, 'Comparative Foreign Policy: Fad, Fantasy, or Field?', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 12, no.3, (September 1968), pp. 311-312.
[22] Ibid.

is to translate independent variables as 'inputs' into policy 'outputs,' in particular their values and attitudes, as well as their willingness to threaten the use of military force.[23]

Firstly, it is necessary to divide the internal environment into different categories of factors, such as, the level of education, the form of government and the extent to which the state may experience domestic disturbances.[24] There are also others who further divide it according to its political demographic properties, its economic and technical development, and the particular characteristics of public opinion at the time in question.[25] Determining these internal factors and analyzing their influence on how foreign policy decisions are made is one central aspect of this project because numerous theorists fail to give appropriate attention to these, consequently resulting in foreign policy not being understood accurately.[26] However, there are other theorists who identify these internal variables as particularly influential, ultimately asserting that foreign policy is simply a reflection of these internal policies.[27] A further component of this project will be determining additional categories within the internal environment that impact foreign policy decisions, similar to those proposed by Rosenau, for example, military power, economic and social aspects, and other idiosyncratic variables such as the personality traits of the decision-makers.[28] Moreover, analyzing the internal environment is important because it allows researchers to determine the extent to which domestic stability of state ensures that foreign policy decisions are made and subsequently implemented with strength and confidence due to popular support and do not have to be concerned with internal pressures.[29] The internal environment and the variety of factors that constitute it will be one central facet of this project but they will not be separated from the external environment influencing the decision-making. Pedelford and

[23] Christopher Clapham, *Foreign Policy Making in Developing States: A Comparative Approach*, (London: Saxon House, 1977), pp. 44-66. See also, James N. Rosenau, Op.Cit., 1968, pp. 311-315.

[24] Dina Zinnes, "Some Evidence Relevant to the Man-milieu Hypothesis," in James Rosenau, Vincent Davis and Maurice East, (eds.), *The Analysis of International Politics*, (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 214.

[25] Roy C. Macridis (ed.), *Foreign Policy in World Politics* (London: Prentice Hall International, 1967), pp. 5-48.

[26] William D. Coplin, *Introduction to International Politics : A Theoretical Overview*. (Chicago: Rand Mcnally College Publishing, 1974), p.66.

[27] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 23.

[28] James N. Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, (New York: Free Press; London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971), pp. 21-97.

[29] F. S. Northedge , *The Foreign Policies of the Powers*, (London, Faber and Faber Limited, 1974), pp. 22-23.

Lincoln in *The Dynamics of International Politics*, where they propose that "a state's foreign policy is essentially an extension of its domestic purposes to its dealing with the world beyond its borders." [30]

Secondly, the external environment as defined by Dawisha includes "all situational and relational conditions and activities existing outside the territorial boundary of the state".[31] In order to illustrate how foreign policy is affected by this external environment, Rosenau identifies certain key motivations that might lead to the official reaction, such as difficulties in diplomacy, problems in economics, military maneuvers and technological experiments, changes in the balance of power and historical animosities.[32] Furthermore, Rosenau demonstrates how the external environment includes a wide range of other actors in the international arena, thereby meaning that any act by a particular one which changes the status quo or affects its interests will engender a response to this new and altered situation. This inevitably exerts considerable influence on how different states behave toward each other. Rosalind Feierabend confirms this phenomenon in "Level of Development and International Behavior," in which she studies the policies of over 80 countries' policy for more than five years, arriving at the conclusion that "aggression generates aggression."[33] Other studies have also reached the same conclusion regarding the mutual effect a nation's policies have on other's, for example. Dehio's analysis of the policies of several European countries between.[34] Robinson's notion of "penetration" explains how patterns of foreign and domestic policies are affected by another state.[35] However, the extent to which this occurs depends on the particular context. Therefore, this project divides Saudi foreign policy goals into the Gulf-Arab context, the regional and Islamic context and the international context.

Thirdly and finally, foreign policy decision-making itself. The preference for non-intervention in Iraq in 2003, the implementation of an interventionist approach to Bahrain in 2011 and the decision to form a coalition designed to topple the Assad

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[30] Quoted in *International Review of History and Political Science*, Vol. 6, University of Michigan, Review Publications, (1969), p.94.

[31] Adeed Dawisha, "The Middle East" in Christopher Clapham (ed.), *Foreign Policy Making in Developing States: A Comparative Approach*, (London: Saxon House, 1977), pp. 44.

[32] James N. Rosenau, Op.Cit., 1971, pp. 80-81.

[33] Rosalind Feierabend, "Level of Development and International Behavior" in R.Butwell (ed.) *Foreign Policy and the Developing Nation*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), p.146.

[34] Ludwig Dehio, *The Precarious Balance: The Politics of Power in Europe 1494-1945*. (London, Chatto and Windus, 1963), pp. 13-15.

[35] James A. Robinson and Richard Snyder, "Decision Making in International Politics", In Herbert C. Kelman (ed.), *International Behavior*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 65.

regime by supporting the moderate rebels both financially and politically are examples of 'foreign policy decision making' (FPDM). This term refers to the decisions individuals, groups and coalitions make that influence a nation's actions on the international stage and are often characterized by enormous uncertainty and substantial risk.[36] It is important because the way in which decisions are made can fundamentally determine the eventual choice. Put simply, a decision-maker could arrive at a large range of decisions depending on the process itself. As a result of this, significant cognitive limitations can frequently distort the processing of information, with some decisions being calculated quite carefully in advance while others are more immediate and intuitive. World politics are ultimately determined by leaders' decisions and the uncertainty involved can pertain, for example, to an opponent's motives, beliefs, intentions and calculations.[37]

The Classical School posits that decision-makers are entirely characterized by rationality, with many scholarly analyses of FPDM adhering to this assumption of the "rational actor." On the other hand, the realist paradigm asserts that states operate as unitary actors and act in order to 'maximize gains and minimize losses while navigating an anarchic international system.'[38] As Mintz and DeRouen argue, every external decision making process includes four key sequential elements: identifying the decision problem, searching for alternatives, choosing an alternative and finally executing that alternative.[39] Such a process is characterized by pervasive uncertainty because the decision-makers are human and therefore face multiple situations and circumstances subject to numerous factors that influence each of the key elements. The decision-making process, as Mintz and DeRouen highlight, is affected by multiple determinants and influential factors surrounding it, such as the time factor, risks from the external environment and constraints regarding the amount of accurate information available in addition to the more individual factors that might affect it, such as personal values, personality traits and perceptions, international affairs, such as economic circumstances, the international system and the behavior of other nations, and domestic affairs such as public opinion.[40] Robinson and Snyder argue

[36] Jonathan Renshon and Stanley A. Renshon, "The Theory and Practice of Foreign Policy Decision Making", *Political Psychology*, Blackwell Publishing Inc, Vol. 29, no. 4, (2008), p. 509.

[37] Ibid, p.514.

[38] Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr, *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). p.7.

[39] Ibid, p.4. For more information see James A. Robinson and Richard Snyder, Op.Cit., 1965, p. 437.

[40] Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen, Op.Cit, 2010, pp. 130-146.

that the decision-making process is a collective one since it involves a lengthy consultation between the various different institutions invested in the issue under consideration.[41] Each decision is aimed at either achieving particular objectives or avoiding undesirable results, meaning that it must represent the most informed selection from the range of alternatives available at that time following the deliberation of the various actors involved and consideration of the pre-existing norms and standards.

The decision-making process is exposed to a variety of pressures. Firstly, it can be argued that if the influence of the external environment increases significantly, then the potential for the decision-maker to arrive at a decision that represents the most appropriate action and best serves its interests is reduced.[42] Secondly, the internal environment, which consists of the type of political governance, non-governmental institutions and other economic and social conditions, also exerts significant influence. For example, a democratic political system would exert more influence on the decision-making process due to the prominence of public opinion and separation of power into the tripartite structure of the legislative, executive and judicial. Whereas a non-democratic political system enjoys a complete monopoly over this process due to the fusion of power within the ruling class, the absence of any supervision according to public opinion and the removal of accountability through political censorship. Thirdly and finally, it can readily be observed that countries with a large amount of natural resources have the advantage of both an increased number of alternative options being available and better capabilities to ensure the successful implementation of its foreign policy decisions. Unlike those countries without such resources which are often forced to pursue unsuitable courses of action due to their inability to generate alternatives and must accept whatever situation is forced upon them, countries with economic advantages are capable of immediately reacting to the behaviour of other countries.[43]

Before addressing Saudi foreign policy, it is necessary to clarify the difference between reactive and proactive foreign policies. A reactive policy arises "in response to a concern or crisis that must be addressed" and is based on reacting to events after they have occurred, whereas a proactive policy is "introduced and

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[41] James A. Robinson and Richard Snyder, Op.Cit., 1965, p. 437.

[42] Sabri Muqallad, *al-ʿalāqāt al-Siyāsiyyah al-Dawlīyah: Dīrāsah fī al-ʾUsūl wa al-Naẓārīyāht*, Issue.4 (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-ʾAkādīmīyah, 1991), p.135.

[43] Ibid. p. 376.

pursued through deliberate choice" to eliminate difficulties and complications before they have a chance to emerge.[44] However, there is noticeable ambiguity in both terms since "all countries are reactive in a sense that their foreign policies are shaped in response to changing external circumstances."[45] While both types of policy may be formulated based on reacting to specific events, a proactive policy seeks to be suitably forward-thinking to predict and prevent any undesirable consequences of the events in question. Therefore, it would be preferable to select a clear and accurate term. In this case, "interventionism" may be considered an appropriate term to use in the analysis of Saudi foreign policy, and to determine if it is characterised by initiative and is proactive in achieving the nation's objectives. To be considered proactive would require significant acts of intervention in crises and events involving other states that are not directly under its sovereignty; to seek to control the outcomes of events via the threat, or the use, of power.[46] Therefore, "interventionism" will be a central criterion in the following historical analysis of Saudi foreign policy and the two case studies, the Iraq War (2003) and the Bahrain and Syria Crises (2011-2013), as it allows for an examination of the justifications for choosing intervention and an understanding of Saudi Arabia's decisions. This will require answering the following questions: 'why Saudi Arabia intervened; what the intrinsic nature of Saudi intervention was; what the reasons and underlying factors behind that decision were; what the desired objectives and unforeseen circumstances that resulted in intervention were; and how those officials involved arrived at the decision to intervene. The ideas, methodologies and practices discussed above will ensure that each variable impacting Saudi foreign policy is identified and properly examined, especially as officials depart from the conventional position of non-intervention in the case of Iraq in 2003 and move toward a more interventionist policy, as seen materialising in Bahrain and Syria in 2011.

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[44] Sherri Torjman, 'What is Policy?', *The Caledon Institute of Social Policy*, Canada, (September 2005), p.3.

[45] Miyashita Akitoshi and Yoichiro Sato, *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific: Domestic Interests, American Pressure, and Regional Integration*, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p.176.

[46] Alexander Moseley, 'Interventionism', in Internet Articles (Peer Reviewed), *the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (2001). Accessed April 21, 2014: http://www.iep.utm.edu/interven/. See also: Sergiu Mişcoiu et al., *Radicalism, Populism, Interventionism: Three Approaches Based on Discourse Theory*, (Cluj-Napoca: The Publishing House of the Foundation for European Studies EFES, 2008). See also: Robert Higgs and Carl P. Close, *Opposing the Crusader State: Alternatives to Global Interventionism*, (Oakland: Independent Institute, 2007).

(1.2) Literature Review

Because Saudi Arabia is a relatively new nation state, there are relatively few comprehensive studies of its foreign policy. Prior to the 1973 oil crisis, this subject received little to no attention in the Western world. However, following this pivotal event and Saudi Arabia's subsequent exertion of its own economic strength through the oil embargo, its foreign policies began to attract the attention of political analysts and diplomatic observers. This interest only increased following the three Gulf conflicts and its involvement in other prominent regional geopolitical disputes. Despite this, however, only a small number of studies relating to Saudi foreign-policy exist that attempt to give the necessary critical attention to the internal bureaucratic structures and the external circumstances that influenced the decision-making process.

On the one hand, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is of immense importance to the international Muslim community because it contains both Mecca and Medina, two sacred sites that receive millions of pilgrims each year. This Islamic has been highlighted in the literature. One of the dominant trends in the early existing analyses was to concentrate, and in certain cases place too great an emphasis, on how Saudi foreign policy was solely concerned with advancing the interests attendant to its position as leader of the Islamic world. In the absence of a democratic political system, emphasising its pivotal role in Islamic issues leant legitimacy to the governing authority amongst the population while also ensuring Saudi Arabia attained geopolitical leverage in the immediate region and the larger Islamic world.[47] These studies lack objectivity and fail to provide the type of in-depth critical appraisals that would remove the ambiguities and allow patterns of behaviour to be predicted.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is the largest oil exporter in the world and is consequently also of central importance to the West, specifically the U.S., whose economy is significantly dependent on the importation of this energy commodity. For this reason, early studies had significant limitations because of the misinterpretation of Saudi Arabian foreign policy as entirely dependent on the U.S. and, therefore, acting in accordance with U.S. directives and acknowledging its hegemonic authority.

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[47] For example, al-Suwaigh's study *al-Mammlakah al-'Arabīyah al-Sa'ūdīyah wa Tanmīyaht al-'ālam al-Islāmī,* (2011)(The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Development of the Islamic world), and Nizar Madani's study, "The Islamic Content of the Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia King Faisal's Call for Islamic Solidarity 1965-1975.

Certain studies,[48] are entirely committed to describing Saudi policy in terms of an exaggerated dependence on the dictates of the U.S. For instance, in Anthony H. Cordesman's study *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century: The Political, Foreign Policy, Economic, and Energy Dimensions* (2003), those studies assumed how the U.S. achieved a position of authority over Saudi Arabia through initiatives. Firstly, the U.S. made considerable economic and infrastructural investments to facilitate the development of the petroleum and petrochemical industries to guarantee its immediate access to Saudi resources. Secondly, the U.S. propagated the notion of an external threat to Saudi Arabia with the intention of both establishing lucrative arms deals with American companies and security contractors and achieving consensus that its position within the region was dependent on the U.S.'s geopolitical and military leverage. Those authors conclude that Saudi Arabia's security was reliant on its willingness to renege absolute authority over its national resources and allow the U.S. to assume a consultancy role in its economic, specifically global export, issues. However, unlike what studies such as Cordesmans' conclude, Saudi foreign policy is not solely dictated by the geopolitical concerns and economic investments of the U.S.

while the U.S. continues to be an important ally and a vital economic partner to Saudi Arabia, it is incorrect to assert that it is entirely dependent on it for either its status or its agency in both the international and regional geopolitical arena. There are other important indicators of how Saudi Arabia is pursuing independently from the U.S., which will be addressed in later chapters. Suffice to say here, however, that this complex issue is one of the primary reasons for the ambiguities surrounding, and the perceived inconsistencies within, Saudi foreign policy.

These two dominant trends inadvertently serve to actually increase the ambiguities and uncertainties surrounding Saudi foreign policy rather than make them the subject of logical interpretations. To remedy these limitations, therefore, this study will initially expose the inconsistencies and limitations in these analyses and demonstrate how they do not correspond with the material reality of the decision-making process. In addition, this study will assess the literature that also examines the

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[48] For example, Tim Niblock, *Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival* (2004), Richard F. Nyrop, *Saudi Arabia: A Country Study* (1982), Aaron D. Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy*, (1991), F. Gregory Gause III, "The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia" in Raymond A. Hinnebusch, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (2002).

two case studies being analysed in the larger research project. These case studies, the first Iraq War and the Bahrain and Syria Crises, were chosen for their relevance to Saudi foreign policy with the material reality that inherently influences it and addressing the ambiguities, inconsistencies and the extent to which the decision-making process is dependent on external circumstances that are not considered in the small number of existing studies. The analysis of these elements is intended to examine the extent to which they correspond with the material reality of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy decision-making process and to ascertain the actual circumstances that engender these decisions.

When Saudi Arabian foreign policy has been studied according to the two dominant trends identified above, it is normally subdivided further into two separate sections. Firstly, how internal factors and external circumstances influence the decision-making process. Such an approach is exemplified by al-Gabbaa, al-Suwaigh, and al-Hadrami's studies,[49] which each tried to expose the internal factors that influence the decision-making process and the individuals that participate in it. Secondly, how particular strategic interests and political obligations toward immediate neighbours and other participants in the region, chiefly Iran and the U.S., as represented in the three case studies aforementioned, also influence the decision-making process. This approach informs F. Gregory Gouse's *Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question* (2007), Frederic Wehrey's "Saudi-Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam" (2009) and Mehran Kamrava's "Mediation and Saudi Foreign Policy" (2012).

Firstly, al-Gabbaa's study attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of Saudi foreign policy in order to determine the various factors influencing the decision-making process and objectives motivating it. The study makes a significant contribution to explaining the mysteries surrounding Saudi policy from a theoretical perspective and providing a framework that might explain its evolution as it interacted with the U.S., Britain and numerous other regional neighbours. He argues that the decision-making process is generally uncomplicated due to the continuous stability of

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[49] Abdallah al-Gabbaa, *al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah al-Saʿūdīyah*, [Saudi Foreign Policy], (1986), al-Abdul-Aziz H. Suwaigh's *al-Islām fī al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah al-Saʿūdīyah* [Islam in Saudi Foreign Policy], (1992), and Omar al-Hadrami, *al-Buʿd al-Iqtiṣādī fī al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah al-Saʿūdīyah* [The Economic Dimension of Saudi Foreign Policy], (2002).

the government.[50] In the same context, Abdulrahman Hussein proposes in his study "Alliance Behavior and the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1979-1991" that the influence of Saudi foreign policy is primarily derived from its political stability, thereby considerably increasing the Kingdom's international status.[51] In addition, al-Gabbaa suggests that because the institutional frameworks are consistent foreign policy can be predicted. Consequently, he argues that Saudi policy will continue to maintain the status quo and avoid decisions that might be considered enacting radical change. Fouad Kazem's *Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy*, (1989) extends the logic of al-Gabbaa's original study by providing a comprehensive analysis of the objectives motivating the decision-making process and a description of its attitude toward some of the issues and events in the external environment. It is worth noting, however, that al-Gabbaa fails to provide an appropriately in-depth analysis of the decision-making process and instead relies on constructing a historical narrative of Saudi foreign policy. Ultimately, he concludes that because of the domestic governmental and institutional stability, foreign policy will continue to maintain the status quo resulting in a pattern that can be predicted well into the future. However, as the three case studies will prove, there is considerable evidence, both internal and external, proving that a commitment to maintaining the status quo by moderation and constraint and avoiding any radical change is now a thing of the past.

In "Saudi Arabia: Status Quo Amidst Unrest" (2011), Anna Viden also confirms al-Gabbaa's proposal, claiming that "maintaining the status quo both internally and externally has been Saudi Arabia's prime concern since its inception".[52] However, there is an inherent contradiction here that Viden does not address appropriately. While I agree with her claim that the decision to intervene in Bahrain "constitutes a break with Saudi Arabia's policy of silent diplomacy",[53] she does not consider exactly how this decision to implement change in order to maintain the status quo proves inconsistent in relation to previous foreign policy decisions. According to Christopher Boucek in his article "U.S. – Saudi Relations in the Shadow of the Arab Spring":

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[50] Abdallah al-Gabbaa, *al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah al-Saʿūdīyah*, (Riyadh: Maṭbaʿat al-Farazdaq al-Tijārīyah, 1986).

[51] Abdulrahman A. Hussein, "Alliance Behavior and the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia"*, 1979-1991*, PhD Thesis, Washington D.C: The George Washington University, 1995.

[52] Anna Viden, "Saudi Arabia: Status Quo Amidst Unrest." *Focus Quarterly Journal*, Vol: V, no. 4, The Jewish Policy Center, (2011). p. 1.

[53] Ibid.

The Arab Spring caught Saudi Arabia off guard. This is not a situation that benefits Saudi Arabia or its foreign policy interests. Saudi Arabia likes to see stability and the continuation of the status quo… Riyadh has preferred to fly under the radar rather than be an overt player in international issues.[54]

Similarly, Yoel Guzansky argues in "Saudi Activism in a Changing Middle East" (2011) that:

Saudi Arabia has traditionally tended to avoid direct confrontation with strong enemies. Instead, it uses its deep pockets to increase its influence and focuses on attempts at mediation in the Arab world in order to neutralize dangers". [55]

While these arguments may be correct about previous foreign policy decisions, more recent events prove that Saudi Arabia is no longer assuming the silent role and avoiding radical changes as studies like Al Gabbaa's and those who support his thesis would suggest. The decision to intervene in Bahrain, and later Syria, raises the question about how Saudi Arabia's foreign policy should be interpreted given the radical change in orientation represented by this and how it signals a further change in its traditional behaviour of moderation and restraint in regional conflicts and political disputes.

Contrary to the above arguments, Saudi foreign policy has obviously changed given the intervention of the Peninsula Shield Force in the Bahrain crisis in 2011. In this event bore significant connotations of a new orientation in Saudi foreign policy that involves a refusal both of moderation and restraint and to distance itself from regional conflicts and instead choosing a strategy of intervention, unlike what al-Gabbaa and others argue, when considered in relation to the decision not to intervene in Iraq, the examples of Bahrain and Syria serve to demonstrate the pertinent

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[54] Christopher Boucek, "U.S.-Saudi Relations in the Shadow of the Arab Spring", *Carnegie Endowment For International Peace* , 2011. Accessed 17 August 2014. http://carnegieendowment. org/2011/06/21/u.s.-saudi-relations-in-shadow-of-arab-spring.

[55] Yoel Guzansky, "Saudi Activism in a Changing Middle East." *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 14, no 3, Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), (October 2011), p.1.

inconsistencies within Saudi foreign policy that have led to the accusation of ambiguity and the associated difficulty with predicting how the nation will behave in future similar events. This new information also exposes the limitations within al-Gabbaa et al.'s proposal that Saudi foreign policy will continue to maintain the status quo by moderation and restraint, and avoiding radical changes. In contradistinction to his argument, the change in orientation means it is not actually characterized by either transparency or clarity as he and others claim. One reason for this limitation, perhaps, is that he employs a solely theoretical analysis of foreign policy without correlating the decision-making process with the material reality of the internal and external circumstances influencing it.

Secondly, al-Suwaigh's *al-Islām fī al-siyāsah al-khārijīyah al-Saʿūdīyah*, (*Islam in Saudi Foreign Policy*) (1992), and Piscatori "Islamic Values and National Interests: The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia" (1983) concentrate on how Islamic concerns function within the decision-making process and ultimately determine Saudi foreign policies. Their aim is to analyze how religious interests and obligations operate at the local, regional and international levels as the country attempts to establish a community of solidarity with other Islamic countries.[56] They assume an intellectual perspective to determine the various responsibilities associated with the implementation of this policy as well as addressing particular issues relevant to sectarian Islamic tensions in the region. al-Suwaigh primary argument is that adherence to particular Islamic conventions and doctrines constitute the foundational motive behind Saudi foreign policy and are the most important factors in comprehending the decision-making process. In the same context, Abdulaziz, in his study "Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: Regional Perspectives and Objectives"*,* argued: "Islam plays a major role in the perceptions and images of the political elites and the decision makers, therefore constituting an important input in the policy formation".[57] Supporting this argument, Nawaf Ahmed al-Madkhli, in his study "Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy: During King Khalid's Reign*,* 1975—1982" observes that because Saudi-Arabia is an Arab-Islamic state, it is simultaneously part of the Arabian Peninsula and a constitutive part of the larger Arab world, containing two of the holiest sites within its territory, Mecca and Medina. He further argues that "Islam has

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[56] James P. Piscatori., "Islamic Values and National Interests: The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia". In *Islam in Foreign Policy*. Edited by Adeed Dawisha. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[57] Abdulaziz, B. Bashir, "Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: Regional Perspectives and Objectives," PhD Thesis, Arizona: Northern Arizona University,1991. p. 62.

played a major role in determining the orientation of Saudi foreign policy within the Islamic and Arab world,"[58] more particularly, that during King Khalid's reign Islam was employed as a highly influential ideological instrument to guarantee the successful pursuit of foreign policy objectives. In further support of this analysis of Saudi foreign policy, Nazir Madani in "The Islamic Content of the Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia: King Faisal's call for Islamic Solidarity 1965-1975" argues that there are three main aspects that interpenetrate one another and are fundamentally inseparable: the religious, the political and the cultural. His argument ultimately focuses on the Islamic aspects by concentrating on its influence on the political, social and economic systems in Saudi Arabia and analyzes how it manifests in foreign policy decisions. Ultimately, this analysis establishes beyond doubt that an Islamic dimension exists which exerts significant influences upon the social, economic and political systems in Saudi Arabia and that its manifestation in particular foreign policy decisions can be discerned on numerous occasions. As Madani argues, "Saudi Arabia's uncompromising stand against Communism and its active expression of the impact the Islamic dimension in the Saudi foreign policy had in influencing the drive for Islamic solidarity which was initiated by the adoption of the call for Islamic solidarity and culminated in the establishment of the various political, social and economic institutions".[59]

In accordance with al-Suwaigh's et al.'s argument, Hassan Abu Taleb's "'Usūs Sūn' al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah al-Saʿūdīyah"(1987) proposes that the religious ideologies and philosophies contained in Islam are integral to understanding how Saudi Arabia behaves in both the immediate regional and the larger international environments. However, while he agrees with al-Shuwaigh that Islam provides a framework for determining the values implicit within Saudi foreign policy, he disagrees by suggesting that its willingness to display the Islamic character of such policies should not be confused with identifying them as purely or fundamentally Islamic. While ideologically important, a foreign policy strategy determined solely by Islamic concerns is impractical because Saudi Arabia must inevitably participate in economic and geopolitical networks, and establish international relations with other

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[58] Nawaf A. al-Madkhli, "Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy during King Khalid's Reign1975-1982," PhD Thesis, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 2007, p. 186.
[59] Nizar Madani, "The Islamic Content of the Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia King Faisal's Call for Islamic Solidarity 1965-1975." PhD Thesis, Washington, D.C: The American University, 1977, pp. 176-178.

non-Islamic nations. Islam is without doubt historically important to understanding Saudi policy but its influence alters from one period to the next and depending on the predispositions of the elite. This means that during different periods, Islam can be either of relatively little importance or it can overwhelm realistic political expectations. Therefore, unlike what al-Shuwaigh, et al.'s proposes, Islam cannot and should not be considered a stable foundation for understanding foreign policy decisions. Abou Taleb suggests adopting a more pragmatic and realistic perspective to supplement al-Shuwaigh's initial proposal.[60]

Islam undeniably plays an important role in this process but it would be incorrect to argue that it constitutes the keystone to understanding the behaviour manifest in its policy decisions. During the 80s and 90s, for example, Saudi foreign policy was understood as advancing Islamic causes. However, more recently, this dimension has not received the same amount of attention. It is now normally confined to issues specific to the region as represented by the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League but this orientation has led to accusations of it assuming a dominant role in Islamic isolationism. While this dimension remained important, the primary officials realized that following 9/11, its greater interests would be damaged through complete adherence to advancing Islamic concerns and it would encounter additional pressures from Western, non-Islamic nations. Saudi Arabia's decision to participate in the Arab peace initiative in 2002 despite the opposition from its Muslim neighbours, therefore, represents its desire to move beyond allowing Islamic concerns to exert the primary influence on its decision-making process.

Deciding to subordinate Islamic issues to its own geopolitical and economic strategic interests represents a major reorientation in Saudi foreign policy. This constitutes a more pragmatic approach toward the influence of Islamic issues on questions of national, regional and international importance. Islam continues to lend a profound legitimacy to the various economic and socio-cultural aspirations that Saudi foreign policy seeks to advance but it is no longer the fundamental motivating factor. It serves a more utilitarian purpose in helping Saudi Arabia achieve its strategic interests in the immediate region and the larger international Muslim community. As Hans J. Morgenthau observes in his book *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (1948), achieving the national interests of a country is the ultimate

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[60] Hussain Abu Taleb, , "ʾusūs sūnʿ al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah Al-Saʿūdīyah." *Majallat al-Siyāsah al-Dāwlīyah*, Cairo, Issue.198, (1987).

goal for states in international politics and values and ethics cannot be determinants in foreign policy.[61] Such strategic interests are beyond the parameters of either religious ideology or morality and are the genuine foundations of any foreign policy and the attendant decision-making process. In support of this argument, A. Abdulrahman suggests that the Saudi objectives were concerned with establishing a united Islamic front. If it successfully managed to do so, Saudi Arabia would not only accomplish its mission of upholding the cause of Islam but also succeed in protecting the core of its national interests, that is, the security and independence of the country. As Abdulrahman further argues, "Saudi Arabia has called for Islamic solidarity for diffrent purposes: to counter the threats of ideological encirclement by the communist-led Arab radical movements in the Arab Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s, and to confront Zionism and to resist the Israeli occupation of al-Aqsa Mosque".[62] Despite this, however, al-Suwaigh's et al.'s studies maintain that the Islamic dimension and the attendant concerns are the primary motivating factors in Saudi foreign policy. While religion did play an important role during the earlier period of Saudi Arabia's existence, this view must be reconfigured to acknowledge that the restrictions imposed by Islamic conventions on the decision-making process have more recently been curtailed, with the result that Saudi Arabia now has the ability to establish a balance between strategic objectives and religious conventions. This engenders a similar balance between the internal and external demands exerting influence on its foreign policy mechanism, a phenomenon that will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapters.

Thirdly, and finally, Hadrami's *al-Buʿd al-Iqtisādī fī al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah al-Saʿūdīyah*, (*The Economic Dimension of Saudi Foreign Policy)* (2002), attempts to analyse Saudi foreign policy from an economic perspective,[63] ultimately arguing that the country has compensated for its lack of military presence through its status as a, if not the, primary participant in the region's economy. This means that, as noted by Gerd Nonneman in *Saudi Arabia in the Balance: Political Economy, Society and Foreign Affairs* (2005), Saudi Arabia also has considerable financial resources at its disposal that can be utilized in support of foreign policy objectives whether in direct

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[61] Henrry, R. Davis and Robert C. Good, eds, *Reinhold Niebuhr on Politices*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p.75.
[62] Abdulrahman A. Hussein, Op.Cit., 1995, pp. 415-416.
[63] Omar al-Hadrami, *al-Buʿd al-Iqtisādī fī al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah al-Saʿūdīyah*, Ed.1, (Amman: Dār al-Fath lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 2002).

aid to governments or as assistance to activities by Saudi or foreign organizations. Even disregarding direct financial support, leverage may be derived from the country's willingness to invest in economic and infrastructural programs other than those associated with its petroleum and petrochemical industries. Furthermore, he identifies how Saudi Arabia has been extremely calculating in its decisions whether or not to intervene in regional geopolitical conflicts, preferring the economic option rather than any radical actions such as potential military intervention. This course of action has obvious benefits for its economic interests both in the region and in the international marketplace that a military option would not. He further suggests that Saudi Arabia's approach prioritises patience and informed diligence when negotiating conflicts, hence its numerous decisions to pursue settlements through the formation of regional and international blocs designed to resolve the conflict and protect the religious, economic, military and cultural interests of its members. [64] Nawaf al-Madkhli observes that Saudi Arabia possesses one-fourth of the world's already discovered oil reserves, making it the world's third largest oil producer and the largest exporter of oil in the world. Undoubtedly, its importance to the Arabs, Islam and the world is eminent and the resultant influence of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy derives primarily from its financial wealth and its consequent role in international economics. However, he identifies certain important limitations associated with Saudi Arabia's status as the most influential participant in the international economy. When Saudi Arabia was asked to play a major regional and international role, it did not yet possess such basic capabilities as a stable industrial base, a system of well-developed transnational organizations, a prominent military force or a skilled workforce. As a result of this, Saudi power was not only one-dimensional but was entirely subject to oscillations in the global oil market that were beyond its control. This inevitably resulted in Saudi Arabia being considerably exposed and forced to address the issue of having to immediately establish a reliable foundation from which to manage its foreign policy in an ever-increasingly more complicated and dynamic environment.[65]

While Hadrami's study is convincing and allows us to understand Saudi Arabia's decision to avoid intervention in the 2003 Iraq War, it fails to explain the radical reorientation in foreign policy represented by the subsequent change in

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[64] Paul Aarts, Gerd Nonneman, *Saudi Arabia in The Balance: Political Economy, Society, Foreign Affairs*. (London: C. Hurst and Co. Ltd, 2005), pp. 325-330.
[65] Nawaf A. al-Madkhli, Op.Cit.,2007,150-191.

behavior toward both Bahrain and Syria. Rather than simply acting in accordance with its economic interests, Saudi Arabia's foreign policy involved providing military, political and financial support to the Free Syrian Army. This new strategy does not correspond with Hadrami's original hypothesis and raises an important question regarding the external circumstances exerting influence on the internal decision-making process. As Walter Lippman argues in *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (1943), a balance must be found between the state's commitments and the various constraints that exist.[66] Did Saudi Arabia's decision to intervene in Bahrain and Syria arise from a new strategy that evolved from different obligations and a newfound economic authority that it did not possess when it decided upon a strategy of non-intervention in Iraq? To answer this question, a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the factors responsible for this radical reconfiguration of foreign policy must be undertaken. Moving beyond the traditional conservative stance explained by Hadrami's study exposes the limitations of his argument, which essentially portrays Saudi foreign policy as rigid and incapable of assuming the initiative. There are important variables that help explain the change in behaviour and it is vital to determine the extent to which those involved in the decision-making process were aware of these and how they influence the differences in strategy between one case study and another. Analysing these will remove the perceived ambiguities surrounding Saudi foreign policy, which provides the main thesis of this research project, and ultimately explains whether a particular geopolitical strategy motivated this change or whether it was determined by the individual responses of those involved in the practical decision-making process.

The second major trend in analysis of Saudi foreign policy is addressed in F. Gregory Gause's "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question" (2007), and Anthony H. Cordesman's *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-first Century: The Political, Foreign Policy, Economic, and Energy Dimensions* (2003) in which they argue that a large proportion of autonomy is sacrificed due to the influence of the U.S. in matters relating to foreign and economic policy.[67] However, this argument is dependent on a number of previous studies. For example, Helen Lackner, in *House Built on Sand: Political Economy of Saudi Arabia,*

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[66] Walter lippman, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*. (Boston: Little, Brown and company, 1943), p.9.
[67] F. Gregory Gause, "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question." *Strategic Insights*, Vol. 6, VI, Issue. 2, March 2007.

Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans* (1974*),* Tim Niblock, *Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival* (2004), Richard F. Nyrop, *Saudi Arabia: A Country Study* (1982), Aaron D. Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy*, (1991), and F. Gregory Gause III, "The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia", in *The Foreign Policy of Middle East States*, have each argued that Saudi Arabia's role in the international system is a classical example of dependence due to its close alliance with the United States. These studies have also argued that Saudi Arabia was coerced into adhering to the policies of the U.S. in the international arena and avoid any decisions that might contradict them in order to achieve both political and economic stability for the nation. This dependence, as F. Gregory Gause propose, is further accentuated by Saudi Arabia's military inferiority when compared with its regional neighbours, particularly Iran, and its consequent reliance on the U.S. for protection.[68] It is worth noting, however, that there is a significant exaggeration in the argument that foreign policy is solely intended to protect the interests of United States and the ruling classes. While this alliance has benefitted Saudi Arabia in terms of military strength and economic stability, it has resulted in considerable regional tensions and domestic criticism since this intimate relationship is considered inappropriate for the nation considered to be the leader of the Islamic world. This tension is best illustrated by the difficult relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Contrary to this, Gerd Nonneman, in *Saudi Arabia in The Balance*, suggests that rather than following the conventional, historic pattern of international politics, where smaller, weaker nations inevitably lost their autonomy to superpowers, Saudi Arabia actually deviates from this. The pattern of its foreign policy and international relationships was formulated by King Abdulaziz and followed since the establishment of the state in 1902, and implements a more pragmatic orientation, referred to as "multi-dependence," where a nation is part of a network of international interrelationships rather than being solely reliant on a single nation.[69]

As a result of the differences between arguments proposed regarding the extent of Saudi dependence on the U.S., there is a pronounced uncertainty and perceived ambiguity about its foreign policy. It is an incontrovertible fact that a US-Saudi alliance has existed since the discovery of oil, but the assumptions made in

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[68] F. Gregory Gause III, "The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia" in Raymond A. Hinnebusch, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002). pp. 194-202.
[69] Paul Aarts, Gerd Nonneman, Op.Cit., 2005, pp. 246-250.

studies like Gause's and those who support his dependence on the U.S. is no longer the reality. In recent years, the relationship between the two countries has undergone significant changes due to the different crises that will be addressed in this thesis and how Saudi's foreign policy decisions regarding intervention no longer adhere to, and sometimes even directly violate, the U.S.'s interests in the region. This raises an important question about the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the extent to which Saudi foreign policy is autonomous and exactly how influential the U.S. is a determinant in these decisions. Ultimately, it is vital to determine whether the U.S. continues to be the primary influence on foreign policy decisions or if it has only a secondary role that is significantly curtailed now that Saudi Arabia is concentrating on its own strategic interests and emphasising its sovereignty.

Complementing the economic aspects of this relationship is the additional component of national security. As Adeed Dawisha in *Saudi Arabia's Search for Security* (1979), Hussein Abdulrahman in *Alliance Behavior and the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (1995), Robert Mason *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia: Economics and Diplomacy in the Middle East* (2015), Neil Partrick in *Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: Conflict and Cooperation* (2016) insist, national security is actually the most significant determinant in Saudi foreign policy issues. International alliances and coalition building are two avenues that can be pursued depending on the orientation of the nation's foreign policy and the above analyses suggest that the perception of an external threat to the country's security or national interest is in fact the predominant factor motivating its external alliances. Abdulrahman's study ultimately proposes that due to its limited national capabilities, the existence of an expansionist and revolutionary regime in the Arabian Gulf and the nature of Middle East politics, Saudi Arabia has no alternative but adopting a policy designed to achieve a balance of power by building alliances with great powers in the region. He also argues that "pan-Arabism, communism, and Islam have been used by Saudi Arabia to justify its regional and international alliances."[70] In addition to this, it draws attention to the costs and benefits of Saudi security-related alliances. Abdulrahman's study ultimately concludes that Saudi alliances with prominent international players in the geopolitical arena can protect the national interest of the Kingdom more than specifically regional alliances can due to the nature of the Middle

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[70] Abdulrahman A. Hussein, Op.Cit.,1995, p.Vi.

East's ideological rivalries. Saudi alliances with regional powers were quite frequently inconsistent and involved conflicting interests.[71] For example, during October 1955 Saudi Arabia signed a five-year mutual defense pact with Egypt and Syria and publicly declared their collective opposition to the Western-endorsed Baghdad Pact.[72] This agreement also provided for joint military resources and declared that "an attack upon one member would be regarded as an attack upon all signatories."[73] This exemplifies how established regional alliances may result in adverse consequences for a nation's national security which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters. Subsequently however, Saudi Arabia withdrew from this pact in order to return to alliances with Western nations and essentially to the pattern of behaviour first established by King Abdulaziz. Hussein observes that Saudi-Western alliances were characteristically more stable because they encompassed more realistic and common strategic interests.[74]

The constitutive objective of maintaining national security in Saudi foreign policy is undeniable and it is predominantly pursued through strategic alliances and the established balance of regional powers and interests. However, according to other studies, an alternative means for ensuring national security was pursued through guaranteeing the stability of the monarchy and the body politic by means of a policy of counter-revolution that would preclude any radical changes that might threaten the status quo and the pre-existent political structures. For example, Nasser Abdullah's *Principles and Policies in Saudi Arabian Foreign Relations with Special Reference to the Superpowers and Major Arab Neighbours* (1990) argues that the Saudi Kingdom opposes any revolution or radical change in the region and that its foreign policy has always been fundamentally opposed to the establishment or growth of revolutionary socialism on the Arabian Peninsula due to the perceived danger that any such trend poses for its own autocratic and oppressive socio-political system. As a result of this, its foreign policy normally assumes the dominant counter-revolutionary role in the

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[71] Ibid, pp.29-33.

[72] The Baghdad Pact was a regional defence organization linking Britain to Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, in 1955. The Pact's purpose was the "maintenance of peace and security in the Middle East region" (Preamble) to limit the rising influence of the Soviet Union and that of Arab nationalism in the Middle East. For further details see Waldemar J. Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press1964), pp. 21-65.

[73] Sydney N. Fisher and William Ochsenwald, *The Middle East: A History*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 563.

[74] Abdulrahman A. Hussein, Op.Cit.,1995, pp. 29-33.

area, as Abdullah observes, "supporting the royalists against the republicans in North Yemen (1962-1970), the South Arabian League (SAL) against the National Liberation Front (NLF), and the Sultanate against the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG) in Oman".[75] Additionally, foreign policy decision-makers have actively agitated against unity in Yemen, fearing that a united Yemen might possibly pose a considerable threat to Saudi national security.

In support of this particular argument, Faisal A. Hafiz's "Changes in Saudi Foreign Policy Behavior 1964-1975: A Study of the Underlying Factors and Determinants,"[76] analyses the behaviour of the Saudi Kingdom and divides it into distinct historical periods. The first period covers 1932-53, during which foreign policy is characterised by inactivity and a general absence of initiative due to the fact that, as Nizar Madani also observes, "until the mid-1950's, Saudi Arabia was inactive in international politics, even at the regional level. This was attributed to the fact that at the early stage of Saudi history, the country's energies were absorbed in affairs related to building and consolidating the nation".[77]

Finally, several more recent studies, such as Kevin Downs' "A Theoretical Analysis of the Saudi-Iranian Rivalry in Bahrain" (2013), Anthony H. Cordesman in *Saudi Arabia: National Security in a Troubled Region* (2009), Ariel Jahner' "Saudi Arabia and Iran:The Struggle for Power and Influence in the Gulf," (2012) analyze the Saudi-Iranian rivalry from both a social constructivist and rationalist perspective. Downs argues that Saudi Arabia utilised the GCC to bolster state stability, confront Iran, seek benefits for its member states and ultimately maintain the status quo.[78] These studies analyse Saudi foreign policy from a theoretical perspective informed by Western discourses and reductive assumptions regarding Middle Eastern politics with relatively limited engagement with the practical geopolitical and socio-economic circumstances that condition these decisions. Consequently, it adopts a methodology that generalises the complex situation and fails to properly engage with the reality of the situation. They are often,

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[75] Nasser M. Abdullah, "Principles and Policies in Saudi Arabian Foreign Relations with Special Reference to the Superpowers and Major Arab Neighbours." PhD Thesis, (Glasgow: Glasgow University, 1990).
[76] Faisal A. Hafiz, "Changes in Saudi Foreign Policy Behavior 1964-1975: A Study of the Underlying Factors and Determinants," PhD Thesis, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1980, p. 30.
[77] Nizar Madani, Op.Cit., 1977, p.V
[78] Kevin Downs, "A Theoretical Analysis of the Saudi-Iranian Rivalry in Bahrain", *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, Vol. 8, (Winter 2012/13). pp. 232-233.

therefore, incapable of explaining the perceived ambiguities and apparent inconsistencies within Saudi foreign policy due to this deficiency in information and primary sources.

In conclusion, the majority of previous studies posit that Saudi Arabia's foreign policy is moderate and restrained, essentially intended to maintain the status quo by adopting a procedure of mediation and utilising economic and diplomatic alternatives instead of military intervention as its primary geopolitical instruments. Those who support this hypothesis argue that Saudi Arabia refuses to assume an overt position in international affairs in order to guarantee that internal political and economic stability is preserved and to avoid direct confrontations with regional rivals. Other analysts also claim that Islam constitutes the fundamental component in the formation of Saudi foreign policy and argue that it utilises the media as an instrument to achieve its national interests in addition to other purposes. Finally, the other dominant trend claims that Saudi foreign policy simply reflects the attitudes of the U.S. and replicates its behaviour in the international arena, with the kingdom ultimately avoiding any decisions that might contradict the U.S.'s national interests to ensure its own national security is maintained. However, all of the above assumptions do not correspond with the new information emerging regarding Saudi Arabia's decision about military intervention in Bahrain and its support for the moderate rebels in Syria, both of which occurred in 2011. These events represent a radical change in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy strategies, from a reactive position to a proactive orientation and interventionist policy in its foreign policy, and bear significant connotations of a new attitude that involves a refusal of both moderation and restraint. Therefore, this research project will address the important qualitative change in the pattern of Saudi foreign policy and will challenge the existing assumptions and remedy the current omissions and limitations in empirical analyses to date. The new perspective provided by this particular methodology will use both new and existing evidence to prove a new conclusion regarding the orientation of foreign policy and contribute a more comprehensive and informed understanding of that policy and the decision-making process that engendered it.

Chapter 2: Historical Background, 1902-1964

This chapter will concentrate on the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia, which was named Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd (*al-Ḥijāz wa Nājd*) until 1932,[1] between 1902-1964, to analyse it from a historical perspective. The period in question saw the rule of two King Abdul-Aziz (1902-1953) and his second son, King Saud (1953-1964). On the one hand, foreign policy during King Abdul-Aziz's reign from 1932-1953 was characterised by its consistent tone of appeasement and conciliation with international superpowers. Based on the previous experiences of his predecessors during the Saudi Arabian State,[2] King Abdul-Aziz refrained from provoking any international powers, such as the Ottoman Empire, for fear they could severely threaten his newly emerging, third Saudi state. In addition, his foreign policy also avoided involvement in regional conflicts unless protection from other allies could be guaranteed or the initiative was guaranteed to be successful. Ultimately, Abdul-Aziz believed that support and protection from both regional and international allies was vital to the continued survival of the state, thereby confirming that security questions were central to both the formation and implementation of Saudi foreign policy during his reign. However, economic alliances were no less significant to Abdul-Aziz, who exploited the newly discovered natural economic resources of Saudi Arabia to form multiple, and often competing, strategic allies, such as Great Britain, to further ensure the protection and security of his emergent state. On the other hand, foreign policy during King Saud's reign, 1953-1964, took a different direction than that of Abd al-Aziz, with Saud gradually distancing Saudi Arabia from its primary international allies, primarily the U.S., in favour of establishing relationships with regional neighbours such as Egypt, despite the pronounced ideological differences between them. In addition to not giving the same amount of attention to security questions as his father had done, there was a marked deterioration regarding internal economic conditions during Saud's reign, which consequently witnessed the emergence of radical opposition against the political system. Therefore, Saud's foreign policy

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[1] Madawi Al-Rasheed. *A History of Saudi Arabia*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002). p. 40.
[2] For example, what happened to the first Saudi State, which was established in 1744. This historic era ended in 1817, when King Abdul-Aziz's predecessor provoked the Ottoman Empire, which sent its troops to invade the Arabian Peninsula under the command of Ibrahim Mohammed Ali Pasha.

decisions had to contend with and respond to variables that had not yet emerged when Abdul-Aziz was formulating and implementing the foreign policy of the newly emergent Saudi State.

(2.1) The Third Saudi State's Foreign Policy

Following the initial unification of the country, there was a lack of modern institutions and governmental structures. Therefore, Abdul-Aziz established the relevant offices and appointed his sons Faisal as Foreign Minister and Mansur as Minister of Defence in 1932. After the expansion of the state, to include regions such as al-Hasa, Hijaz, and other regions, Adulaziz created the Council of Ministers [*Majlīs al-Wūzārā' alSuʻūdī*] in 1952, to assist him in the management of state affairs. As an organisation, the Council continues to offer legislative and constitutional assistance in domestic and foreign policy issues to this day however its initial role was limited to providing advice and guidance without recourse to any executive authority. Because Abdul-Aziz was focused at the beginning to establish a modern state that unified the various warring tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, his capacity to be involved in the international affairs of the early twentieth century was limited, especially prior to World War One (WWI). Several studies of Saudi foreign policy, such as M. al-Kahtani's "The Foreign Policy of King Abdul-Aziz,"[3] support this claim but, nevertheless, this did not prevent him from adopting an expansionary policy in the more immediate region.

During this period, the foreign policy of the emerging state competed with the strategic interests of a number of influential powers in the region. For example, the new Saudi State was surrounded by the Ottoman Empire since its inception, resulting in its isolation at both the regional and international levels. Following the collapse of this empire after WWI, western colonial powers sought control of its territories.[4] A particularly severe rivalry increased between Great Britain and France, with the former gaining control over most of the Gulf States from Kuwait to Aden.[5]

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[3] Mohammad, Z. al-Kahtani, *The Foreign Policy of King Abdul-Aziz: 1927-1953*, (Leeds: Leeds University, PhD Thesis, October 2004). pp. 80-86.
[4] Leon C. Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East*: *Old Rules, Dangerous Game*. (London: B. Tauris, 1984), pp. 85-88.
[5] Ibid, pp.113-119.

Thereafter, relations were established with the Soviet Union in 1929, but these gradually deteriorated and eventually disintegrated, due to different economic alliances, strategic interests and political ideologies.[6] The U.S. eventually emerged as Saudi Arabia's primary economic and security ally, as Brown notes, replacing Great Britain for a number of reasons.[7]

(2.1.1) The Foreign Policy of the Emerging State

After capturing Riyadh on 14th January 1902, Abdul-Aziz was surrounded by the Ottoman Empire, which was allied with the ruler of Ha'il, ibn Rashid, in the north, the ruler of Yemen, Imam Yahya in the south, al-Hasa in the east and Hijaz in the west.[8] Based on his knowledge of what happened to the First Saudi State, Abdul-Aziz avoided intentionally provoking the Ottomans for fear they would once again threaten and ultimately prevent the emergence of a new, unified Saudi state.[9] Despite this, the Ottomans still viewed the presence of Abdul-Aziz in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula as a direct challenge to their authority and made concerted to efforts to remove him. The Governor of Basra was instructed by the Ottomans to support Ibn Rashid in Hail by sending four thousand troops and providing artillery equipment. These forces came from Hijaz and Iraq to defeat Abdul-Azziz in Qasim,[10] however, the campaign was unsuccessful and Abdul-Aziz defeated ibn Rashid and expanded his territories to include the north.[11] Abdul-Aziz exploited the Turkish defeat in the Balkans in 1913 when he undertook an abrupt attack on al-Hasa that deposed their troops from the east.[12] Afterwards, with global warfare becoming an ever-increasing

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[6] Malcolm Yapp, *The Near East of First World War*, (London and New York: Longman, 1991), pp. 388-389.

[7] Leon C. Brown, Op.Cit., 1984, pp. 101-105.

[8] Elizabeth, Sirriyeh, 'Unbelievers and the Problems of Exclusivism', *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 16, no. 2., 1989), pp. 123-132

[9] Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad Ali Pasha, Wali (Governor) of Egypt, led a campaign in the Arabian Peninsula that started in 1817, destroying Diraiyyah city in 1819 and ultimately leading to the collapse of the First Saudi State.

[10] Jacob, Goldberg, *The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia: The Formative Years 1902-1918*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 48-66.

[11] Kheireddine al-Zirikli., *Shībh al-Jazāīrah fī ʿāhd al-Malik Abdul-Aziz.* (Beirut: Dar al-ʿIalm liāl Malāyin, 1977). pp. 156-175.

[12] Sulaiman S. al-Ghannam., *al-Byi'ah al-Siyāsiyyi al-'Iqlymiyyah aw al-Dāwliyyah fī Shībh al-Jazyirah al-Arabiyyah I'būn Nuhwūd al-Mālik Abdul-Aziz li Ta'sīis al-Dawlah al-Su'udiyyah al-Had'-īithah*, (Riyadh: al-'Ubaikan Library,1999). pp. 61-65.

possibility, negotiations between Abdul-Aziz and the Turks began, ending with a treaty, on 15th May 1914, that recognized the Saudi king's right to control Najd and al-Hasa unopposed.[13] With the outbreak of WWI, Britain and the Ottoman Empire entered into a period of protracted warfare. Abdul-Aziz consequently decided to assume a position of neutrality, fearing that aligning with one over the other would expose the Saudi State to interferences in internal affairs following the conclusion of hostilities.[14] It is clear that neutrality and avoiding involvement in international conflicts was a keystone of Saudi foreign policy at the beginning of the state's establishment. When WWI ended, the Ottoman Empire was defeated, while its influence in the Arabian Peninsula collapsed only to be replaced by the more involvement of Great Britain and France in the Gulf and Arab regions.

The British presence on the East Coast of the Arabian Peninsula in places such as Kuwait, Qatar and Oman provided the opportunity for an alliance between Great Britain and the Third Saudi State. However, relations with Britain did not begin with the Third State but in the early nineteenth century.[15] Relations with Britain had begun with the First Saudi State, only to be terminated at the beginning of the twentieth century before being reconvened under the rule of Abdul-Aziz. While he was trying to protect his interests and consolidate his power in the region against the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century, Britain assumed a position of neutrality, refusing to intervene in regional affairs in case it unnecessarily provoked the Ottoman authorities. For example, in 1904, Abdul-Aziz asked for British support for and recognition of his victory in the Battle of al-Bakariyah, when he defeated the Ottomans and Ibn Rashid. Yet despite the recommendations of Sir Percy Cox, the British Political Resident in Bushire, to cooperate with the newly-emergent state, Britain chose not to recognise or cooperate with the Third Saudi State in order to appease Turkey.[16] Saudi policy continued along these lines, forcing Abdul-Aziz to concentrate on addressing internal issues and on strengthening his domestic military forces. Furthermore, the logic behind Britain's policy of non-intervention was made apparent in 1910, when Abdul-Aziz met Captain Shakespeare, the political Agent in Kuwait, to inform him that the Saudi State would imminently be annexing al-Hasa.

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[13] Gary Troeller., *The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa'ud*, (London: Frank Cass,1976). pp. 43-61.

[14] Ameen al-Rayhani, *Tāryikāh Najd al-ḥādaith*, (Beirut: Dar al-Jālil, 1988). pp. 230-231.

[15] Gary Troeller.,Op.Cit., (1976). p. 14.

[16] Hafiz Wahbah., *Jāzyirat al-Arab fī al-Qārn al-ʿīshryin*. (Cairo: Dar al-'Aafaq al-`Arabiyyah, 2000), pp. 244-248.

The King was informed that Britain's policy in dealing with the emerging state would be adhered to for fear of angering the Ottoman Empire and encouraging its alliance with Germany against the Allies.[17] This is clearly shown in a letter sent from the Indian Bureau to Sir Crow, confirming Britain's commitment to neutrality and affirming that Saudi Arabia would have to adhere to Britain's orders if it required its political support.[18] However, following the defeat of the Turks in the Balkans in 1913, Britain abandoned its policy and decided to cooperate with Abdul-Aziz in his attempt to consolidate power and unify the region by expanding his authority into the al-Hasa region.[19]

Ibn Saud perceived the defeat of the Ottomans in the Balkans as an opportunity to remedy the deterioration of the emerging state economy, which needed to support its poor economy by controlling the harbors, and needed a policy of initiative to achieve that. Prior the outbreak of World War I, which resulted in Britain and Turkey competing for Abdul-Aziz's alliance, the Ottomans established closer relations with Ibn Saud by signing a "Memorandum of Understanding" during March 1914.[20] However, when rivalry increased between Turkey and Britain for domination of the Gulf region in November 1914, Shakespeare was again sent to encourage Abdul-Aziz's alliance with the Allies but the Saudi ruler insisted on remaining neutral in conflicts involving regional neighbours as his foreign policy had dictated up to that point.[21] Following negotiations between Ibn Saud and Shakespeare, the Darin Treaty was signed on 26th December 1915,[22] the objective of which was to guarantee British recognition of the newly emerging State in addition to protecting it against any external hostilities, while in return Abdul-Aziz agreed not to enter any further treaties with foreign governments or otherwise become involved in disputes within regions under British protection.[23] Despite this, a partial deterioration in Saudi-British relations occurred due to Britain's support of Sharif Hussein in the Hijaz province after WWI and Britain's position of increased colonial authority in the Arabian

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[17] Madawi al-Rasheed., *al-Siyāsīh fī wāḥa `arābiyyah*,(Beirut.: Dar Al Saqi, 1998). p. 228.

[18] Letter from the Indian Bureau to Sir Crow, FO 371/1820 (39535). See more in: Jacob, Goldberg, Op.Cit., 1986, p.78-88.

[19] Mohammad, Z., Al-Kahtani., Op.Cit.,2004, p 33.

[20] Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia*. (London: Saqi Books. 1998). p. 231-233.

[21] Mohammad, Z., Al-Kahtani., Op.Cit., 2004, p 34.

[22] India Office, L/P&S/10/387, Copy of the Darin Treaty between Ibn Saud and Percy Cox, the British Political Resident in Bushire, dated 26 December 1915.

[23] David Howarth, *The Desert King: A Life of Ibn Saud*. (London: Collins: St Jame's Place, 1964). pp. 85-89.

Peninsula. In the dispute between Sharif Hussein and Abdul-Aziz regarding the region of al-Kherma, Britain requested that the Saudi ruler appease Hussein, who took advantage of this support by assigning forces for combat. The result was a battle between Saudi troops and the Ikhwan [24] against Sharif Hussein at Tarbh in 1919, with Abdul-Aziz ultimately being victorious, a situation which irritated Britain. The Saudi ruler was warned against further advancement to Hijaz and ordered to return to Riyadh under the threat of British military force. Abdul-aziz's policy was based on avoiding direct confrontation with the British, as a perceived ally. He therefore ordered a retreat from Hijaz.[25] Abdul-Aziz believed that capturing Hejaz would bring significant gains in the Saudi State's regional reputation, especially in the Islamic community because this region contained the holy cities Mecca and Medina. While this would help remove the newly emerging State from its position of isolation, this strategy risked increasing British support for Sharif Hussein, which threatened the stability and viability of the newly-emergent state.

The documented cables from 1919-1922, confirm contact between Mr. Scott, the High Commissioner in Cairo, and Lord Curzon, the Foreign Minister. It demonstrates the change in King Hussein's policy toward Great Britain, while also subtly hinting toward a desire to remove his country from the alliance with Britain and instead indicating his admiration of Kamal Ataturk. As a result of this, in addition to specific economic circumstances, Britain was forced to withdraw its financial support to Sharif Hussein. Abdul-Aziz saw this as Britain abandoning Hussein and utilized this opportunity to capture Hijaz.[26] With this region about to fall into Saudi control by October 1925, Britain sent Sir Gilbert Clayton, the Chief Secretary of Government in Palestine, to help solve the border issues and to prevent further hostilities between the government of Iraq and those tribes affiliated with the Saudi State, which eventually resulted in the Bahra Treaty being signed in November

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[24] The name given to the Bedouins who abandoned their nomadic life in the desert in favour of permanent settlement and adopted Islamic ideology in 1919. This group comprised of several different tribes who cooperated with Abdul-Aziz in the unification of the Saudi State, and follow the ideology of Mohammed bin Abdul-Wahab.

[25] Leslie McLoughlin, *Ibn Saud: Founder of a Kingdom*, (Oxford: Macmillan,1993). pp. 60-63. See more in: John Philby, *Arabia*. (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1930). pp. 268-272.

[26] British Library India Office Archives, (FO 371/5065 E 12529/9/44,1919), (FO 371/5063E 11236, September 10, 1920), (FO 371/5063E 11225/9/44, September 15, 1920), (FO 371/5064 E 11471, September, 16,1920), (FO 371/6245/54, December 1921), (FO 371/17774, October 24 1922).

1925.[27] Consequently, Britain adopted a policy of non-intervention in the Saudi-Hashemite War 1924-1926 because it viewed this conflict in religious terms and, perhaps more importantly, because it lacked the financial resources due to the postwar economic crisis. Abdul-Aziz's victory proved to be a pivotal point in British-Saudi relations because the king was formally recognized as the ruler of the Kingdom of Hejaz and Najd in February 1926. After the ratification of the Jeddah Treaty in 1927, the British government appointed Sir Andrew Ryan as its representative in May 1930.[28] Poor economic conditions in Britain and the signing of the Bahra Treaty meant Abdul-Aziz could use his initiative and adopt a more proactive foreign policy by annexing Hejaz and insisting on his position as the legitimate King of the region in January 1926, with him being recognized by the British Counsel and the majority of ambassadors in Jeddah. The pattern of the newly emerging State's foreign policy that emerged following these events is important because it marks the beginning of a more proactive position. Capturing Hejaz was crucial since it marked the end of the state's period of isolation at a time when other competitors for authority in the region, such as the Hashemites, were in terminal decline, thus confirming the necessity for Britain to establish productive relations with the Third Saudi State as demonstrated in the signing of the Jeddah Treaty on 20th May 1927.

(2.1.2) Regional Interactions

Several studies have argued that Saudi Arabia was established independently of European plans for colonization in terms of its policy-making.[29] After the annexation of Hijaz and the conclusion of the Jeddah Treaty, Saudi foreign policy became less isolationist and more concerned with the state's position in the region. During the first three decades, the pattern is characterised by a tendency toward expansion, with an attendant shift in concentration from the west to the Gulf emirates of the east, an argument frequently raised by many official British representatives such as Sir Percy

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[27] India Office, L/P&S/20/CI58E, copy of the Treaty of Bahrah between Ibn Saud and Sir G. Clayton dated 1 November 1925.

[28] Gary Troeller, Op.Cit., 1976, p. 195-197.

[29] Van der Meulen., *aI-Mālīk Ibn Saʿūd wa al-Jāzyīrah al-'Araʾbiyyīah al-Nāhīdah*. (Arabic Edition, Translated by Wissy A.), (Riyadh: Darat al- Mālīk 'Abd al-'Azīz, 1999). p.120. See more in Jacques, Mechin , *'Abd al-'Azīz., Saʿūd. Syrīāt Batāl wa Māwlīd Māmlākah*. (Arabic Edition, Translated by Abd al-Fattah Yasseen), (Beirut: Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi,1965). pp. 178-179.

Cox and St John Bridger Philby, a British Arabist, explorer, and writer, who had strong relationships with Abdul-Aziz and identified his desire to re-appropriate the land of his ancestors through a policy of expansion. [30]

It is also important to recognize how Abdul-Aziz differed from his predecessors in the First and Second Saudi States policy by using his initiative in foreign-policy decisions and determining the potential results and implications of such decisions in advance. As was seen in the previous section, the foreign policies of the newly-emergent state reflected the desire of its leaders to avoid conflicts with any of the superpowers. As Ryan observes, Abdul-Aziz "was in his heart hostile to all Western influences, including that of Great Britain, but he knew that British friendship was a condition of his survival," [31] hence when he reached the limit of expansion without infringing on British interests, his attention changed focus to more regional issues. Firstly, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait assumed the form of a political and military tension when Abdul-Aziz assumed control of al-Hasa, prompting fears of an economic threat to the al-Sabah, the ruling family in Kuwait, that the king would use that city as its international port instead of Kuwait. As al-Kahtani's study *The Foreign Policy of King Abdul-Aziz* suggests, this presumption was correct, as Abdul-Aziz's annexation of al-Hasa was an example of his initiative, intending to end the Saudi State's period of isolation. [32] The two countries also assumed various positions during WWI. As was seen, Saudi Arabia assumed a position of neutrality in the conflicts between Britain and Turkey. Kuwait believed that Abdul-Aziz would align with Britain and not attack the country, an assumption that continued for twenty years. In 1932, King Faisal, Abdul-Aziz's son, visited Kuwait to resolve the dispute between the two countries but failed to reach a beneficial conclusion for either side. Consequently, Britain directly intervened in 1935 to resolve the dispute between the two countries. Negotiations between them continued until 1942, finally concluding with three conventions held in Jeddah focusing on regional alliances and trade agreements. [33] However, the tribes also played a significant role in the deterioration of relations between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, a fact illustrated by a letter FO 371/5064, which conveys the anger the Sheikh of

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[30] Mohammad, Z. Al-Kahtani, Op.Cit., 2004. p. 73.
[31] Andrew Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*. (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1951), p. 83.
[32] Mohammed, Al-Kahtani, Op.Cit, 2004, p109
[33] Ibid, p.110. See more in Hafiz Wahbah., Op.Cit., 2000. p. 87-88.

Kuwait felt regarding Faisal Duwaysh's attacks on Kuwait. [34] While there had been previous disputes between Kuwait and Ibn Saud, King Abdul-Aziz did not give them any considerable attention. In this instance, however, he used this event to put pressure on the Kuwaiti government, as detailed in his response to Sheikh Salem al-Sabah, the ruler of Kuwait. Hostilities escalated between the two countries, with those loyal to Abdul-Aziz and consequently in favor of national unification, launching attacks in the border areas of Iraq, eastern Jordan and the Gulf States. Such attacks proved exceptionally dangerous as these regions were under British protection, thus confirming that rather than being incapable of controlling the tribes, Abdul-Aziz was actually employing them as an instrument in his foreign policy as a way of indirectly putting pressure on his regional neighbours. Nevertheless, he consequently faced the difficult choice of either appeasing Britain or supporting the tribes.

Secondly, the Bahrain State, whose ruling family, like that in Saudi Arabia, originate from Najd as does the ruling family in Kuwait. Political communications between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia commenced at the same time as WWI, when Abdul-Aziz appointed a commissioner to guarantee the security and protection of the largest Najdi community in Bahrain. However, a period of intense sectarian and ethnic conflict occurred with the Persian community in May 1923, eventually resulting in the intervention of Britain. [35] To resolve this conflict, Britain demanded that Saudi Arabia immediately withdrew its Commissioner from Bahrain, which inadvertently led to the emigration of a large portion of the Najdi community to the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. [36] The relationship between the two countries improved, however, when Saudi foreign policy rejected Iran's claim of sovereignty over Bahrain. The Jeddah Treaty of 1927 instead acknowledged the sovereignty of Bahrain with a British protectorate, which led to Iran's protest at the League of Nations from 1927-1935.[37] More generally, Saudi-Bahrain relations have always been better than those with other Gulf States, perhaps because the two countries do not share a common land border, which means there have never been territorial disputes, in addition to Saudi Arabia's continued opposition to Iranian assertions of sovereignty over this island nation.

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[34] Sheikh al-Mutair tribe, one of the leaders of Ikhwan. See the Letter FO. 371/5064 (E12039)

[35] Jamal Qasim., *al-Khālīj al-'Ārābi: Dirāsah lī Tʾārīkh al-'Imārat al-ʾĀrabiyyah 1914-1945*. (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-ʿārabi, 1973). pp. 225-232.

[36] Madanat, N, "al-Khūbar: Thāghr al-Khāleyūj al-Dahik", *Majāllāt Qafilat al-Zait*, Vol. 18, No. 6, (September 1970), p. 26.

[37] Jamal Qasim., Op.Cit. ,1973. pp. 227-237.

Thirdly, Saudi Arabia's relationship with Qatar is more complex. Qatar perceived the annexation of al-Hasa in 1913 as a threat, but the Jeddah Treaty (1927) extended British protection to Qatar and all the sheikhs in the Gulf region. However, the border between the two countries remained a contested issue for several years, and significant problems arose because Britain represented Qatar in foreign affairs. Further disagreements arose following the discovery of large quantities of oil reserves in Salwa and Khor al Adaid, which Britain insisted should be under Qatar authority. Relations continued to be tense between the countries until an agreement was signed in 1965 to definitively settle the border disputes.[38] Saudi relations with are now the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman, like its relations with other Gulf States, was based on anxiety regarding the newly emergent Saudi State and the perceived threat it posed to their existing independence. However, the Jeddah Treaty guaranteed British support and protection of their independence.

Fourthly, and probably most importantly, is Saudi Arabia's relationship with Yemen. A dispute occurred after Imam Yahiya claimed that the Asir region was a part of Yemen, a claim rejected by the Saudis, which eventually led to war in 1931.[39] Negotiations had been ongoing for four years previous to this, since a Saudi delegation was sent to Yemen in June 1927 to discuss these border issues but which were ultimately unsuccessful.[40] A Yemeni delegation was sent to Mecca the following year for similar purposes but this also failed to arrive at a satisfactory solution that both sides endorsed. In 1931, Yemeni military forces occupied a mountain in the southern region of Asir called *al-ʿAru* which resulted in the first period of hostilities between Yemen and Saudi-Arabia.[41] These initial hostilities were resolved with the *al-ʿAru* Treaty in December of that year, but the friendly bilateral relations between the countries were short-lived, with Yemeni forces attacking the Saudi territory of Najran from 1932-1933.[42] Abdul-Aziz consequently insisted on the immediate removal of Yemeni forces from the occupied territories and the restoration of the

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[38] Robert O. Freedman, *The Middle East and the Peace Process: The Impact of the Oslo Accords p.199.* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1998), p.312.

[39] al-Sa'ed M. Salim., *Takwīn al-Yaman al-Ḥādīith: al-Yaman wa al'-Imām yaḥyay 1904-1948*, (Cairo: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al- Arabīyyah, 1963), pp. 331-332.

[40] Amin Sa'ed., al-Yaman: al-Tārīkh al-Siyāsī Muūndh al-'āstāqlāl fī al-Qārn al-Thtāhāitha al-āhājri, (Cairo: Dar I'hya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah.1959), pp.79-81. See more in: Al-Sa'ed M. Salim., Op.Cit., 1963 , pp. 331-332.

[41] John, H. Philby., *Saudi Arabia*. (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1955), p.322

[42] Abd Almonem al-Ghulami., *al-Malik al-Rāshād: J'ālalāt al-Maghfwur lāh Abul-ʿAzīz al-Saʿūd*. (Riyadh: Dar al-Liwa', 1980), p.86.

previous border agreed by the *al-ʿAru* Treaty, threatening further hostilities if Yemen did not comply with these conditions.[43] With no response from the Imam of Yemen, Abdul-Aziz took the bold decision of sending armies commanded by his sons Saud and Faisal. Faisal's forces arrived at Hodeidah, on the western coast of Yemen in May 1934. As a result of Abdul-Aziz's offensive policy, Britain, France, and Italy decided to intervene. With Rome's support for Imam Yahiya, Abdul-Aziz concluded that the western powers would not allow him to continue his expansionist policy to acquire Yemen. Following his defeat, the Imam of Yemen accepted Abdul-Aziz's conditions and met the King's son, Khalid, at Taif in May 1934 to sign a treaty agreeing to the withdrawal of Saudi troops in return for abandoning his Yemeni claims to Asir, Najran, and Jizan.[44] The treaty also insisted on the respective recognition of each country's independent sovereignty, which resulted in improved, peaceful relationships between the two states.[45]

Another important component of Saudi foreign policy in the region was its engagement with the British government's demand since 1917 for the provision of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine.[46] In his attempt to prevent the implementation of the Balfour Declaration, Abdul-Aziz gave both political and financial support to the Palestinians.[47] Saudi foreign policy regarding this matter was based on two principles. Firstly, cooperation with other Arab leaders to coordinate resistance against the potential Jewish presence in Palestine and, secondly, to obtain the support of a nation with influential powers on both the diplomatic and political levels, such as the U.S. That Abdul-Aziz initially believed a peaceful and diplomatic solution could be found for this issue is illustrated in his speech at the Higher Arab Committee,[48] when he declared that a foreign ally should be sought to mediate instead of a military confrontation with Britain that would lead to instability.[49] However, all potential allies would continue to support the British position regarding this matter.[50] He preferred using the diplomatic instruments of political and financial support for the Palestinian

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[43] Kheireddine al-Zirikli., Op.Cit., 1977, p. 603.
[44] Mohammad Z. Al-Kahtani, Op.Cit., 2004, p. 132.
[45] Kheireddine al-Zirikli, Op.Cit., 1977, pp. 603-611.
[46] Qadri Qal'aji., *Māw'id maʻ al-Shāā'ah*.(Beirut: Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi,1971). p.19.
[47] a1-'Ash'al A.,"al-'Ūswāl al-Tārīkhīa Ii al-Māwqīf al-Saʿūdīyah min alsīraʼ al-ʻārabi al-'Isrāʼīl: Mārhalat al-Mālīk al-ʿAzīz 1915-1953", *Majallat al-Darah*, Vol. no.1, (June 1986), pp.130- 151.
[48] The Higher Arab Committee was formed in 1936 and consisted of the leaders of the Palestinian parties. It was headed by the famous Palestinian leader Hajj Mohammad Amin al-Husaini.
[49] AL-kahtina, Op.Cit, 2004. p.136.
[50] Akram Zuʿaytir., *al-Ḥārakāh al-Wātaniyāh al-Filistiniyāh:1935-1939*. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirāsāt al-Filasṭīnīyah, Silsilat al-dirāsāt,1980). p. 256.

liberation movements provided by the Arab states. While his unwillingness to adopt a foreign policy of direct confrontation with the superpowers suggests a degree of caution regarding the Palestinian question, his decision to support the liberation movements nevertheless demonstrates Abdul-Aziz using his initiative to provide military support but without directly involving Arab troops. However, when the majority of other Arab leaders agreed to send troops to Palestine in 1948, he did not oppose the use of military resources as an instrument of foreign policy.

Saudi Arabia was forced to change the language of its political and diplomatic relations after the deterioration of the Palestine situation in 1947-1948, when it became apparent that only a military solution could properly address this issue. Following the end of the British protection and the subsequent declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, Saudi Arabia decided to support the Palestinian youth, gathered in small organised groups, rather than committing regular military forces due to several assumptions: firstly, that the Arab armies were ill-prepared for military operations and, secondly, that using regular forces could be used by other nations as justification to assign their troops to support Israel. While Abdul-Aziz initially preferred to support the Palestinians themselves by empowering the liberation movements to liberate their land from the Jews, a view that differed significantly from other Arab leaders, who decided to establish a unified army, Saudi forces were eventually committed to participate in the Arab-Israel war in 1948.[51] Saudi support for the Arab National Liberation movements extended far beyond just political, financial and military support for the resistance, such as when the leaders of the movements were expelled from their countries by foreign colonizing powers, and they were welcomed as refugees in Saudi territory.[52] In his book, Wahbah states that King Abdul-Aziz was consequently named the father of the liberation struggle,[53] while the Saudi attitude toward these movements was the result of the Islamic and Arab identity variables, which became increasing influential in the Saudi foreign policy decision-making process.[54] After the unification of the Arabian Peninsula and the stabilization of security, when the emerging state found a new ally in the U.S. instead of Great

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[51] David Howarth., Op.Cit., 1964, p. 224. See more in : Hafiz, Wahba, Khāmswuān 'āman fiy al-Jāzirāh al-Ā'rbiyh, (Cairo: Māktabā't Mustafa al-Bab'āli al-Halābi wa'Awladih, 1960), p.171.
[52] For example, when King Abdul-Aziz refused to hand over Rasheed al-Kailani, who fled to Saudi Arabia in October 1945, to the Iraqi Government.
[53] Hafiz, Wahba., Op.Cit, 1960, p171.
[54] Abdallah al-Shuhail., *Fatrāt Tā'syis al-Dawlāh al-Sa'ūdīyah al-Mū'aāsirah: 1915-1932*, (Riyadh: Dar alwātan, 1987), p.181.

Britain, attention was refocused to its Arabic principles, and Islamic values and traditions. Its participation in the war in 1948 is evidence of those values' influence on the foreign policy decision-making process. At the beginning of the state's emergence, these values were influential to its foreign policies, albeit not at the same degree of intensity before 1932, because King Abdul-Aziz did not want to call attention to these Arab and Islamic values in an effort to avoid a collision with the colonial powers, which feared those values due to their call for independence.

The pattern of Saudi foreign policy has always been heavily influenced by the religious orientation of the nation, ever since the old alliance between Mohamed Abd al-Wahhab,[55] and Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud in 1744.[56] Despite important changes between the First and the Third Saudi States, Islamic values continue to provide a fundamental pillar and function as a prominent determinant in foreign policy decisions during Abdul-Aziz's reign. The coexistence of the 'Ulama'[*al-'Ulāmā'*],[57] and the political leadership represented by the House of Saud is still a characteristic feature of the Saudi legislature. Religious identity is an important motivator in foreign policy decisions but is also integral at the domestic level for ensuring stability and enhancing the legitimacy of the regime. Numerous observers,[58] have commented on this, such as Sir John Bridger Philby, a British Arabist, explorer and writer, who identified Islam as a prominent feature in the politics of Saudi foreign policy since the first emergence of the state and considered Abdul-Aziz, a devoutly religious individual.[59] Captain William Shakespeare, who had met with Abdul-Aziz several times, confirmed this, observing that Ibn Saud was spirited by a deep reverence and a respect for Islam.[60] Piscatori has consequently argued that Saudi foreign affairs at that time were based on two principles: Islamic solidarity and the Arab Union. For

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[55] Sunni religious scholar and follower of the Hanbali School, he is considered to have remade the Islamic religion in the Arabian Peninsula by encouraging Muslims to abandon polytheism and the attendant myths in favour of monotheism.

[56] Imam Muhammad bin Saud bin Mohammed al-Muqrin was the original founder of the first Saudi state or the so-called Emirate of Diriyah.

[57] Refers to the most elite religious scholars in Islamic theological matters. "Ulama" refers specifically to those who have completed several years of advanced study in the disciplines such as a mufti, allamah qadi and faqih.

[58] The studies by A. al-Rayhani (1988), J. Kechichian (1986), J. Piscatori (1983), J. Benoist (1965), and J. Piscatori (1983). They confirmed Islam as a prominent feature in the politics of Saudi foreign policy since the first emergence.

[59] Ameen al-Rayhani., Op.Cit.,1988. p.40-43. See more Joseph, A. Kechichian., "The Role of the Ulama in the Political of an Islamic State: The Case of Saudi Arabia", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. No. 18, (1986), pp. 53-57.

[60] James P. Piscatori., "Islamic Values and National Interests: The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia". In *Islam in Foreign Policy*. Edited by Adeed Dawisha. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983).p.33.

example, Tunisian liberation leaders Habib Bourguiba, and Mohammad al-Masmudi contacted the Saudi leadership in 1946 to gain its support for a resistance against French occupation through guerrilla warfare. Having met with Abdul-Aziz to gain political support, they immediately obtained it, in addition to the financial resources required to purchase weapons for their fight against the French. [61] Abdul-Aziz, therefore, used his initiative to develop a proactive policy based on the absolute rejection of any forms of imperial colonisation and policies associated with the European Mandate. Some historians even argue that Abdul-Aziz refused to join the League of Nations due to his dissatisfaction with the European policies supporting Britain in the Middle East. [62]

(2.1.3) Oil and Relation with the U.S

During the early twentieth century, U.S. foreign policy, especially in relation to the Middle East, was characterised by the principle of isolationism because its commercial interests in this part of the world were severely limited, despite the fact that numerous countries in the region, including Saudi Arabia, were actively seeking to establish relations with the U.S. to support their opposition to the British protection in the Gulf according to the principle of self- determination first advocated by President Wilson in 1918.[63] However, the corporate interests of American companies soon diverted from the national foreign policy after WWI, when companies protested against British control of the oil industry. This eventually led to the U.S. government abandoning its strategy of isolation in order to obtain equal rights of access for indigenous oil companies according to the "open-door" policy in Middle Eastern regions under British protection.[64] This new attitude in foreign policy led to a U.S. Standard Oil Company of California (SOCAL) obtaining the drilling concessions in

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[61] Fahed al-Mareq, *Min Shīym al-Mālik 'Abd al-'Azīz*, (Riyadh: unknown,1978), p. 309-310.
[62] Abdullah al-Qaba'., *al-Māmlākāh al-'arabīyyah al-Sa'ūdīyah wa al-Munazẓamāt al-Dāwlīyyah*. (Riyadh: Dar 'Ukāẓ, 1980), p.36.
[63] Richard Nolte., "United States Policy and the Middle East". In *The United States and the Middle East*. Edited By the American Assembly, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1964) .p152. See more in : Halford L. Hoskins., *The Middle East: Problem Area in World Politics,* (New York: the Macmillan Company, 1954). pp. 100-101
[64] George Lenczowski., *Oil and State in the Middle East*, (New York: Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 20.

Saudi Arabia on 29 May 1933.[65] Prior to this, a British company, The Eastern and General Syndicate, had been given a concession for exploration of an area of 30,000 square miles in al-Hasa in 1923.[66] While it had undertaken substantial exploratory operations, the contract was withdrawn in 1928 due to the company's inability to meet the agreed fees,[67] which proved a significant factor in the deterioration of Saudi-British relations and marked the beginning of the gradual decline of British influence in Saudi Arabia more generally. This is because the British believed that Saudi Arabia had no oil,[68] and therefore it was not of great significance in its agenda. Therefore, economic factors were an important, albeit not the only, determinant in the decision to change foreign policy to allying with the U.S. rather than Britain to further exploit the state's natural resources.

As a result of this change, the Saudi Finance Minister Abdullah Sulaiman signed an agreement with Lloyd Hamilton, the representative of the Standard Oil Company of California (SOCAL), on 29th May 1933. A royal decree was issued on 7th July, approving this agreement and granting a concession to explore for and extract oil for the following sixty years. [69] Oil, therefore, played a major role in the development of Saudi-U.S. relations, a fact confirmed after explorations discovered the largest oil reserve in the world and the U.S.'s consequent impetus to strengthen these relations.[70] By the 1940s, Saudi Arabia had assumed top priority in the agenda of U.S. foreign policy. However, with the outbreak of the Second World War (WWII), Saudi oil production ceased, resulting in the Axis powers' threat to cut off supply lines to the Allies, Saudi leadership requesting external assistance to avoid an imminent financial crisis.[71] Initially, the Allies were concerned about the expansion of the Axis powers into the Middle East, fearing that financial assistance from Germany would lead to increased influence in,[72] and a potential alliance with, Saudi Arabia and

[65] Samir Ghazal, *The Merger of the Two Giants, Saudi Aramco and Samarec*, (Place of publication not identified: Lulu Com, 2007), p.16.
[66] Fouad Al-Farsy, *Saudi Arabia: A Case Study in Development*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1986), p.54.
[67] Kheireddine al-Zirikli, Op.Cit., 1977, pp. 292-294. See more: David Holden and Richard Johns. *The House of Saud*, (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1981). p. 111-112.
[68] AlZirikli, Op.Cit., 1977, pp. 292-294
[69] Madawi al-Rasheed, Op.cit., 2002, p. 92-104.
[70] Prince Bandar Ibn Sultan. 'iḍā'āt Programme, on al-Arabiya TV Channel, on 9 June 2004. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA15InHTCds. Accessed December 12, 2015.
[71] Jacques, Mechin, *'Abd al-'Azīz Sa'ūd Syrīāt Batāl wa Māwlīd Māmlākah*. (Arabic Edition Translated by Abd al-Fattah Yasseen), (Beirut: Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi, 1965). pp. 251-252. See also in: Mohammad, Z., Al-Kahtani, Op.Cit., 2004, p. 2018.
[72] Lawrence P. Frank., "The First Oil Regime." *World Politics*. Vol., 37. no. 4, July 1985), p. 590.

its other Arab and Muslim regional neighbours. However, negotiations between Saudi Arabia and Britain regarding a possible loan created further anxieties in the U.S. that Britain would reassert its influence in the region and threaten the interests of American oil companies. As a result, representatives of SOCAL requested that the U.S. government provide direct assistance to Saudi Arabia to avoid both these outcomes by including it in the "Land Lease" policy, which would strengthen relations between Saudi Arabia and the Allies, while also preventing unwanted competition from British oil companies in the region. Consequently, acknowledging Saudi Arabia as an ally and extending its support and protection to the state became pivotal to ensuring the national security of the U.S. itself, with Harold Ickes, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, even insisting that "U.S national security depends on Saudi oil." [73]

Following the end of WWII, the U.S. government sent a telegram to its ambassador in Jeddah, William Eddy, conveying the desire of President Roosevelt to meet with Abdul-Aziz, which was arranged for 14 July 1945 onboard an aircraft carrier situated in the Great Bitter Lake at the Suez Canal. The two leaders had many pertinent issues and areas of common interest, including the Palestinian question.[74] Roosevelt hoped this meeting would lead to a settlement by the Islamic and Arab countries regarding the acceptance of Jewish refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe and believed he could persuade Abdul-Aziz to accept the partition of Palestine to accommodate the new Jewish State of Israel. Despite detailing the repression and persecution suffered by Jews under the Nazis and insisting that it was an international responsibility to provide a homeland for them, Abdul-Aziz's response to Roosevelt was resolutely dismissive:

> If the Jews are to be compensated for the outrages perpetrated against them, then it should be the perpetrators who carry the cost. If the United States and its allies wished to see the Jews settled on land of their own, then it should be German land that is appropriated. [75]

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[73] Mohammad, Z. Al-Kahtani, Op.Cit., 2004, pp. 218-219. See more: Hoiden, D. and Johns R., Op.Cit., 1981. p. 128.

[74] John, H. Philby.,Op.Cit., 1955, p. 338. See more: Kheireddine al-Zirikli, Op.Cit., 1977, p.1154-1160.

[75] King Abdul-Aziz (Ibn Saud) confers with the then President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, on a cruiser in the Suez Canal, 15 Feb 1945, King Abdul-Aziz Ibn Saud information Resource, http://www.ibnsaud.info/main/3661.htm. See the Statement in Arabaic: Hafiz Wahbah, *Op.Cit.,*1960, p. 168.

Although there was a lack of an official agreement between the two leaders, there was an informal agreement that any future settlement would continue to acknowledge Palestinian rights. All this changed, however, when Harry S. Truman came to power in April 1945, initiating a dramatic reorientation of U.S. foreign policy toward the demands of Israel without due consideration of the productive correspondence between Abdul-Aziz and Roosevelt regarding the rights of the Palestinian people that preceded his tenure. At the United Nations in 1947, Truman approved the formal divide of Palestine despite protestations, which Saudi Arabia considered a continuation of its old British ally's strategy in the region. Abdul-Aziz was disappointed that diplomacy with the superpowers failed to find a solution that satisfied the interests of all nations involved and that his trust in the U.S. was unwarranted.[76] With the end of the British protection came the announcement of the State of Israel in May 1948 and the commencement of the first Arab-Israel war when military options proved more viable than the diplomatic alternative Abdul-Aziz had initially preferred.[77]

Despite this, however, relations between the Saudi Arabia and the U.S. regarding security has been based on mutual coordination since 1940, with the U.S. discovering Saudi Arabia to be a prime location for establishing military bases that enjoyed quick deployment times for troops into both Europe and East Asia. Following Roosevelt's meeting with Abdul-Aziz in 1945, the U.S. Air Force requested the building of a military base in Dhahran.[78] Subsequently, facing the threat of Communist expansion into his region, Abdul-Aziz required more financial and military assistance than ever before. This resulted in a period of cooperation between the two countries against the communist threat, with the U.S. training and providing more modern weapons to the Saudi military.[79] In addition, difficult relations with the Hashemite regimes in Iraq and Jordan led to further cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the U.S., since the former saw Hashemite ambitions in the region as an immediate security threat and reacted by strengthening its safety through its ally's military support.[80]

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[76] David Howarth.,Op.Cit., 1964, p. 207.
[77] Hoiden, D. and Johns, R.,. Op.Cit., 1981, p. 142.
[78] Mohammad, Z., Al-Kahtani, Op.Cit., 2004. p. 228.
[79] Jacques, Mechin., Op.Cit., 1965, pp. 276-277.
[80] Leslie, McLoughlin, Op.Cit., 1993, p.181.

Analyzing the most important events since the establishment of the Third State under King Abdul-Aziz from 1902-1953 reveals quite the opposite to the assumptions proposed by several previous studies such as by A. al-Rayhani 1988, J. Kechichian 1986, J. Piscatori 1983, that Saudi foreign policy was inactive at both the regional and international levels. On the contrary, the policy was proactive and informed by Abdul-Aziz's initiative from the very beginning. Since the conquest of Riyadh in 1902, the Saudi State utilized its relations with tribes to facilitate its expansion and escape the isolation it suffered as a consequence of being geographically surrounded by the Ottoman Empire. The Third Saudi State was literally cut-off from the world due to its location between Hail in the north, Yemen and Asir in the south, al-Hasa in the east and Hijaz in the west, yet Abdul-Aziz managed to avoid direct confrontation with the Ottoman Empire by opting for appeasement and establishing cooperative relations with Britain that provided economic and political solutions to the Saudi state's geographical isolation. While such relations with Britain proved useful, Abdul-Aziz adopted a proactive policy toward expansion by annexing the al-Hasa region in 1913, and acquiring a naval port in the east, despite the opposition of the Gulf States. He used his initiative by utilizing tribal allegiances and the available military resources to achieve his objectives and avoid the problems associated with Britain's position of neutrality regarding regional disputes with the Ottoman Empire. His bold actions in this case allowed for the further removal of Saudi Arabia from the isolation it suffered as his strategy of expansion increased the state's openness toward both the Muslim-Arab world and the international community. Abdul-Aziz's decision to then annex Hijaz [*al-Ḥijāz*] in 1924, despite the fact it would anger the British who were supporting the Hashemites, might lead to the view that he failed to properly calculate the consequences. However, he considered it a necessary action, pre-empting British neutrality regarding this issue based on the decline of Britain's influence in the region as suggested by the collapse of its economic interests. This was the external catalyst, but an internal cause was provided by al-Sharif Hussein when he prohibited the citizens of Najd to pilgrimage to Mecca in 1924. Abdul-Aziz accordingly exploited this situation, obtaining a "fatwa" from the 'Ulamā' of Najd against Hussein, thereby demonstrating his proactive stance by using both military and tribal resources to severely curtail the influence of competitors in the Arabian Peninsula. Another, and perhaps more important, reason for British neutrality in the face of Saudi expansion was Abdulaziz's exploitation of the economic circumstances conditioning Saudi-

British relations. By granting concessions for oil exploration and extraction to British companies in 1923, Britain was encouraged to turn a blind eye to Saudi's expansionist strategy in the Arabian Peninsula, which meant Abdul-Aziz did not have to be as cautious regarding British intervention because direct confrontation was precluded and he did not have to consider the experiences of the First and Second Saudi States when calculating the implications of his own foreign policy decisions. A further example that Abdul-Aziz's policy was not limited to being solely reactive is the Yemen War between 1931-1934, in which he sent two separate armies commanded by his sons. These forces successfully reached the west coast of Yemen and did not cease their operations until Western superpowers intervened to check the expansionist impulses of the Saudi State.

National security has always been a key determinant when analyzing the nature of, and trying to identify patterns in, Saudi foreign policy, and it is important to recognize that Abdul-Aziz's attempts to establish allies were always motivated by his desire to both gain recognition and ensure the protection of the Third Saudi State. Nevertheless, while productive relations were established with Britain through oil concessions and political treaties, fundamental, and ultimately irresolvable, differences existed between the two countries, such as the Palestinian question, which was a major factor that led to Saudi Arabia seeking alternative allies elsewhere. This helps explain the establishment of relations with the U.S., which, unlike Britain, did not have a history of colonial conquests and imperial ambitions, in the region. There can be no doubt that the availability of Saudi Arabia's oil resources further consolidated relations, but these were also strengthened by the creation of an American military base in Saudi territory. As with Britain, however, the Palestinian question proved to be a major source of contention yet it serves to illustrate the importance that Islamic identity exerts in Saudi foreign policy decisions despite the overall strategy of being oriented toward escaping isolation by establishing relations with non-Arabic nations. Religion is crucial to understanding Saudi Arabia, ever since the initial alliance between Mohamed Abdel Wahab and Muhammad Ibn Saud in 1744 but the Islamic values established in that period continued as a primary determinant in the foreign policy during Abdul-Aziz's reign. The coexistence between the two different authorities, the religious scholars, and the political leadership, remains a recurrent feature of Saudi society, while religion also functions to ensure stability by enhancing the legitimacy of the regime regarding issues at both the

domestic and foreign levels. The Arab-Israeli War 1948 confirms this influence, when Abdul-Aziz sent troops amounting to approximately 1200 soldiers, [81] to Palestine to participate in the conflict between Arabs and Jews, despite the protestations of his international allies, especially the U.S. While providing financial and political support to the Arab liberation movements is a pertinent example of Abdul-Aziz utilizing his initiative, it further demonstrates the influence of Islamic identity on foreign policy decisions as it testifies to Saudi Arabia's complete rejection of European dominance and opposition to the continuation of colonial aspirations amongst foreign countries in the larger region.

To conclude, we can observe from the previous analyses that there are multiple variables that influence the formulation of Saudi foreign policy during Abdul-Aziz's reign, primary amongst these being the Islamic religion on both the domestic level and in the larger region, and tribal loyalties. Firstly, religion plays a fundamental role in the lives of Saudi citizens as well as for the leaders and tribes who formulate and implement foreign policy. Secondly, respect for traditions and being considerate of Arabic solidarity played an important role as well, especially during the initial founding of the Third Saudi Sate. However, we must not forget the importance of the economic variables, in particular, the discovery of oil reserves which were used to attract allies capable of protecting the emerging state. As is clear, it is incorrect to suggest that Saudi foreign policy during this period was not proactive given the evidence of expansion, but there is proof that while it employed initiative, it remained somewhat cautious. The Third Saudi State did not initially possess the modern institutions required for the formulation and implementation of foreign policy before 1932, but nevertheless, it utilized the opportunities available by engaging at the regional level with the larger superpowers and its more immediate neighbors.

(2.2) Saudi Foreign Policy and Arab Nationalism

This section will concentrate on Saudi foreign policy during the reign of King Saud, the eldest son of King Abdul-Aziz and the second king of the Third Saudi State from 1953-1964. He is the only one of the kings of Saudi Arabia whose rule ended when he was deposed by members of his own family and the 'Ulama' [*al-'Ulamā'*] rather than

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[81] Alex Woolf, *The Arab-Israeli War since 1948*, (London: Raintree, 2012), p.14.

being in power until his death. After the unification of the majority of the territories in the Arabian Peninsula under King Abdul-Aziz, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established. Following this, King Saud was appointed as crown prince on 11th May 1933 after being approved by the royal family and the religious scholars. This section will focus on the historical analysis of the Saudi policy as it manifested in the most important events of the period in order to determine a general pattern.

(2.2.1) The New Approach

King Saud assumed power following his father's death in 1953. Most significantly, his reign witnessed the establishment of a number of revolutionary regimes in the region that adopted the major tenets of the Arab nationalist movement as formulated by Sāti' al-Husrī. [82] This movement explicitly reflected the 19th century ideas associated with German Cultural Nationalism,[83] which prioritised the unification of the nation as the ultimate goal, even venturing as far as subordinating the will of the individual to the national will when the situation dictated. Upon this intellectual legacy of repressing individual liberty and personal freedom in instances when these contradicted the national will, al-Husrī established his theory of Arab nationalism. [84] According to Arab Nationalism, the political unity, sovereignty, and secularism of the national state was to be immediately sought after, with every Arab performing his/her national duty of supporting the leader best capable of delivering on this goal. Another central priority of Arab nationalism was the immediate reduction and ultimately the complete removal of Western influence, and more importantly perhaps those regimes seen as dependent upon Western powers, in the Arab world, which was considered a major hindrance to Arab strength.[85]

By the 1950s, several revolutionary regimes had assumed power in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. They began advancing the principle of Arab unity across the entire region. For example, after the Egyptian Revolution in 1952, Gamal Abdel Nasser rose

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[82] A prominent Syrian intellectual and one of the founders of Arab nationalist thinking, He was one of the first preachers and reformers who embraced nationalism in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

[83] Adeed Dawisha, "Requiem for Arab Nationalism." *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.10, no.1, (Winter 2003). pp. 25-41. See more in: Kedourie Elie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1960).

[84] Ibid. pp. 34-41.

[85] James P. Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*, (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), pp. 2-4.

to power by 1954,[86] due mainly to his public charisma. His position as president in Egypt meant he also held a leading role in other Arab nationalist movements in neighbouring countries.[87] The success of the revolutionary movements relied heavily on their appeals to public sentiment and the political aspirations of the masses both at a domestic and regional level. By promoting revolutionary politics and then assisting active movements, the revolutionary states were able to agitate for the complete removal of the last vestiges of foreign, imperial domination in the region. So important had nationalist politics become in certain states that revolution ceased being a matter solely of domestic concern but also began featuring in foreign policies, as decision-makers utilised the principle of Pan-Arab unity to justify interfering in the politics of other sovereign countries. Under the direct sponsorship of Egypt, a Pan-Arab propaganda apparatus started to portray the more conservative regimes as opponents of Arab unity to further enhance Cairo position as leader. Consequently, the hereditary monarchies, politicians in support of oligarchies, and the wealthy landowners and businessmen interested in protecting their economic interests were labelled as "reactionaries"[88] who wanted to ensure the Arab world remained divided.

Such developments had immediate negative effects in matters pertaining to national security amongst the more conservative states, with Saudi Arabia, for example, perceiving the Arab nationalism, as well as international communism, as the main threat to its existing political system.[89] What is known as the Arab Cold War occurred between the more conservative regimes in the region who favoured closer alliance with the West and the radical nationalists who perceived this orientation as an inherent threat.[90] As a result of the deterioration in Saudi-British relations and the tendency of King Saud to align with the nationalist ideologies becoming popular in the Arab world, he decided to abandon his father's policy of neutrality and non-involvement in relation to regional politics, drastically altering the approach that had

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[86] The second President of Egypt, he assumed power in 1956 until his death in 1970. Nasser was one of the prominent leaders of the revolution on July 23, 1952, which overthrew King Farouk, the last remaining ruler of the family of Muhammad Ali, and he served as first Deputy Prime Minister in the new government. Nasser came to power by putting the President Mohammed Najib under house arrest due to growing the differences between him and the Revolutionary Command Council. He then became President following a referendum on 24 June 1956.

[87] George Lenczowski, "The Arab Cold War," in Willard A. Beling, ed., *The Middle East: Quest for American Policy*, (Albany: State University of New York, 1973), pp. 55-57.

[88] Jacob C. Hurewitz, *Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East.* (New York: Columbia University, Praeger, 1969), pp. 2-7.

[89] Nazier A. Mughal, " The Arab world between unity and the struggle for power," *Pakistan Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 28, (1975), p.74.

[90] Faisal A. Hafiz, Op.Cit., 1980, p.125.

hitherto characterised Saudi foreign policy and in doing so enhancing his popularity in the region to justify his position as legitimate leader of the Arab world.[91] For example, when Egypt called for unity amongst Arab countries in 1954 through a strengthening of the Arab League and a harmonisation of its members' foreign policy, Saudi Arabia reacted positively and entered negotiations for closer ties between the Saudi and Egyptian armies.[92] Nassir's state visit to Saudi Arabia that same year led to the beginning of reconciliation in Arab foreign policies,[93] with Saud declaring on 21st March that:

> We are in agreement with Egypt in her foreign policy. The strong ties existing between Egypt and our country make it imperative for us and for all the Arab countries to support Egypt with all the power in our command, as well as to support the just Arab cause in any field.[94]

Following his visit to Saudi Arabia in June 1954, the Egyptian Minister of National Guidance, Major Salah Salim announced that Egypt and Saudi Arabia had agreed on opposing any attempt by Western nations to encourage or coerce Arab countries into their regional defense pacts.[95] With these developments, Saudi Arabia had reached the point of becoming deeply involved in the various tensions of regional politics, especially in inter-Arab issues. Saud aligned himself with Nasser and his policies despite the differences between the former's monarchic conservatism and the latter's radical Arab nationalism. Their mutual understanding culminated in both men promoting a tripartite security pact that also included Syria. This attempt to link Cairo, Riyadh and Damascus resulted in the signing of a five-year mutual defence pact in October 1955, which publicly announced the three nations' opposition to the Western-sponsored Baghdad Pact.[96] That pact developed on an anti-communist

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[91] Michel G. Nehme, "Saudi Arabia 1950–80: Between Nationalism and Religion.", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 30, no. 4, (1994), pp. 930–943.

[92] Daniel Crecelius, "Saudi-Egyptian Relations." *International Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 14, no. 4, (October-December 1975), pp. 573-574.

[93] Ibid, p.573.

[94] Ibrahim al-Rashid, ed., *Saudi Arabia enters the Modern World: Secret U.S., Documents on the Emergence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a World Power*, 1936-1949, Vol .IV, part I, (Salisbury, N.C: Documentary Publications, 1980), p.169.

[95] Gerald de Gaury, *Faisal: King of Saudi Arabia*, (London: Arthur Barker Ltd, 1966), p.81.

[96] Hilal Khashan., *Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism,*(Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), p.39.

military and economic alliance between the U.S., Britain, Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran, established in 1954 to include Iraq and Iran under the duress of the western countries the following year. A further response to the Baghdad Pact occurred on 21st April 1956,[97] when Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Yemen signed the Jeddah Pact, which provided for a unified army command and endorsed the formation of a Supreme Council and a Military Council.

Due to this rapprochement with the radical regime in Egypt, Saudi relations with Britain and the U.S., which had already deteriorated, began to worsen significantly. The anti-British policy adopted by Saud in 1955 was the result of numerous events. Firstly, Britain's military support for Oman and Abu Dhabi in the dispute with Saudi Arabia around the oasis of Buraimi [*Al-Būrāymī*]. The Buraimi Dispute emerge from Saudi Arabia's claim on the oasis, first made in 1949, which claimed historical precedent: the Oasis had once belonged to ancestors of King Abdul-Aziz; the claim relied on tax records. The American oil company Aramco supported the Saudi Arabia's claim. In 1952, Saudi Arabia sent more than 80 armed troops, led by Turki bin Abdullah al-Otaishan. The troops of Ras Tanura crossed into Abu Dhabi territory and occupied it, claiming it as part of Saudi territory. Oman gathered its forces to recapture the oasis, but the British Government called on Oman to exercise restraint pending an endeavour to settle the dispute via arbitration. In October 1955, the Buraimi units of Abu Dhabi and Muscat entered the region led by British officers, but after only a symbolic resistance they surrendered to Saudi troops and were returned home through Bahrain.[98] Secondly, the close association between the British authorities and the Hashemite regime in Iraq and Jordan was always a point of contention in Saudi Arabia due to Iraq's strong ties with Britain. Saudi Arabia and Iraq had viewed one another with suspicion after the fall of the Hashemites in the al-Hijaz. Thirdly, the British military alliance with Iraq formalized by the Baghdad Pact served to provoke Saud's suspicions about its imperialist claims in the region.[99] Fourthly and finally, the strength of the Arab nationalist movement throughout the Arab world had a profound effect on Saudi policies, even influencing

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[97] Ali Rahiny, *The Egyptian Policy in the Arab World: Intervention in Yemen, 1962-1967: A Case Study*, (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1983), pp. 265-271; Hilal Khashan, Op.Cit., pp. 39-40.

[98] Michael Q. Morton., *Buraimi: The Struggle for Power, Influence and Oil in Arabia*. (London: IB Tauris, Aug 30, 2013) p. 304.

[99] Ghazi al-Gosaibi., "King Faisal Foreign Policy" in *Arabian Essays*, (New York: Kegan Paul international LTD, 1982), p.28.

some of the members of the Saudi Royal family.[100] During the fieldwork conducted for this project, I interviewed Princess Nora Zayid al-Habot, King Saud's wife,[101] who expressed how he was immediately impressed and later influenced by the nationalist movement. Regarding the decline in Saudi-U.S. relations, Saud cancelled the "Four Point Economic Assistance Programme"[102] on the grounds that the amount of aid granted to Israel was disproportionate. In addition, Arab nationalists criticised the leasing of Dhahran Air Base to the U.S. as an act of subservience to western imperialist forces and sought the immediate reneging on Saudi commitments. Due to these significant disagreements, the U.S. military mission in Saudi Arabia was dismissed with Saud ordering the temporary postponement of any renewal of Dhahran Air Base to the U.S. The situation was irreconcilable as a result of the obstacles posed by the Palestinian question.[103]

In terms of the Palestinian question, King Saud's reign saw a hardening of Saudi opinion, with the ruler even claiming in an interview on 9th January 1954 that "Israel is like a cancer to the human body, and the only way of remedy is to uproot it just like a cancer," [104] declaring that Arab countries should be willing to sacrifice up to ten million men to do so and insisting that Saudi Arabia would never hold direct talks with the Jewish state because he refused to recognise it as a legitimate nation.[105] Consequently, Saud, Nasir and Shukri al-Quwatli, the President of Syria, met in Cairo from 6th-11th March 1956, issuing a communiqué stating that a cooperative plan had been devised to protect against the threat of potential Zionist aggression. [106] In addition, official letters were sent from Saudi Arabia to the governments of Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon asking them to send military representatives to Riyadh for "an urgent meeting on the Arab-Israeli crisis" to be held on 7th September 1956. During these talks, it was agreed amongst the Arab military representatives that Jordan's National Guard would be assigned a specialist budget and the necessary military

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[100] Odah ,Odah, "Saudi-American Relations 1968-1978," PhD Thesis, (University of Salford, Internetionl Studies Unit, 1988), p. 85.

[101] Author's Interview with King Saud's Wife Nora Zayid al-Habot, Riyadh, March 22, 2013.

[102] This was a technical aid program for "developing countries" declared by the Former President of United States Harry S. Truman on January 20, 1949.

[103] Naila al-Sowayel., "An Historical Analysis of Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy in Time of Crisis: The October 1973 War and the Arab Oil Embargo," PhD Thesis, (Washington, D.C, Georgetown University, 1990), p. 35.

[104] Binyamin Netanyahu, *A Place Among the Nations : Israel and the World*. (New York: Bantam Books, 1993) p.79.

[105] Ibid. pp.79-81.

[106] Mohammed Khalil, *The Arab States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record*, Vol. III, (Beirut, International Affairs, 1962), pp. 247-249.

equipment so it could respond appropriately to Israeli aggression.[107] The Palestinian question was, in actual fact, only one of the major disagreements between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. In 1957, King Saud sent a letter to President Eisenhower addressing the Palestine issue, stating that:

> Zionism is the principal question about which I wish to write so that you have a clear picture of it as you try to solve the problems of the Arab and Islamic Middle East...Zionism and Israel, its offspring, is the primary enemy of the Arabs in particular and of all Muslims in general; it is the source of their worries...They consider those who help it with money, arms or political support hostile to them and those who help them in like manner as their friends.[108]

In addition, Saudi Arabia had also opposed U.S support of Israel's claim to the right of passage through Saudi territorial waters in the Gulf of Aqaba in order to reach the port of Eilat. While offering financial aid to the Palestinians, Saudi Arabia also provided humanitarian support by accepting thousands of refugees. Quite significantly, as George Lipsky notes, many were subsequently employed at "all levels of the Saudi government, and they helped to keep hostility toward Israel alive."[109] On 13 October 1957, Saudi Arabia offered JD 100,000 to Palestinians refugees in Jordan, onwards, the amount to be paid annually to the United Nations Relief Work Agency (TJNRWA). Furthermore, the Saudi government transferred substantial annual funds to its embassies in Cairo, Amman, Beirut and Damascus, which were intended to be distributed to the official offices in charge of Palestinian refugees in the respective countries.[110] On 29 October 1956, when Israel, alongside Britain and France, attacked Egypt because of its nationalisation of the Suez Canal also referred to as the Tripartite Aggression [al-ʿIdwān al-Thalāthī], Saudi Arabia

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[107] Amin Saeed, *Tārīkh al-Dūwlāt al-Saʿūdīyah: ʿāhd al-Mālīk Saʿud bin Abdal-al-ʿAzīz*, (The History of the Saudi State: Part III, (Beirut, Matbaat Karm, 1955), pp. 87. And see in *The Middle East Journal* (MEJ), Vol. 11, no.1, (winter 1957). The Conference decided to allocate Jordanian Dinars,(JD) 3,600,000 for the Jordanian National Guard, to be paid by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon.

[108] Amin Saeed, Op.Cit., 1955, p. 86. For further Information; Khouri Fred., *Arab-Israeli Dilemma,* (New York, Syracuse University Press, 1968), pp. 24-26.

[109] Lipsky A. George, *Saudi Arabia: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture*, (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1959), pp. 144-146.

[110] Abdalrahman al-Angari, "The Palestine Issue in Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: 1936-1981," PhD Thesis, (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1989), p. 225.

quickly severed its diplomatic relations with these countries on 6th November 1956,[111] withheld planned oil shipments, and immediately ordered the general mobilisation of its military forces to allow for a "unified command" with the Egyptian authorities.[112] This event served to further consolidate Saudi-Egypt relations during this period since Saud supported Egypt's claim to nationalise the Suez Canal as an exercise of its sovereign claim to this territory. To this end, Prince Faisal told the United Press that "every Arab should be proud of the decision to nationalise the Suez Canal, which was Egypt's legitimate right."[113] Furthermore, in September 1956, Abdallah al-Fadil, the Saudi Ambassador in Egypt, gave President Nassir a message from King Saud, encouraging him to:

> Meet the President at once and inform him of our total support for the
> step he took in nationalising the Canal Company. We rest assured that the
> President knows well our stand, goals and full support for him in all fields
> of cooperation.[114]

In response to the military attack on Egypt by British, French and Israeli troops, Saudi Arabia ordered the general mobilisation on 30th October 1956, while also calling on all Arabs in the region to directly oppose the attack, with the Ministry of Defense issuing the following declaration:

> First, the Ministry of Defence orders all those on leave among officers
> and soldiers to return immediately to their bases. Second, all Princes and
> regional directors and those in charge of airports must aid all such
> personnel in reaching their bases.[115]

Subsequently, the Ministry confirmed that "the Saudi army has started its march towards Jordan and is about to cross its borders in support of and solidarity with our

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[111] *al-Bīlād*, no. 2293, 7 November, 1956.
[112] Odah, Op.Cit., 1988, p.86.
[113] Gerald de Gaury, Op.Cit., 1966), p. 81.
[114] Muḥammad H. Haykal, *Mālaffāt al-Sūwīys: Ḥarb al-Thalāthīn Sanāh*, (The Suez Records: The Thirty Years War), (Cairo: Mārkaz al-'Ahrām lil-Tārjamāh wa-al-Nāshr, 1986), p. 799.
[115] *U'mm al-Qūrā*, no.1516, 9 November 1956.

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sister Arab states."[116] Such direct and explicit military backing was complemented by increased financial and diplomatic support, with Saudi Arabia offering to bolster Egypt's precarious currency reserves after its assets in Britain and France had been frozen, and agreeing to donate the equivalent amount lost in revenue from the blockade of the Suez Canal during the conflict. Accordingly, in a speech at Al-Azhar Mosque on 10th November 1956, Nasir praised Saudi support for being "both noble and honourable" and for its "valuable aid," explaining how:

> On 4th November, King Saud phoned me, saying that the army and the wealth of Saudi Arabia are at my disposal and that Saudi Arabia is ready to do anything. My reply was that we were worried because the Egyptian army was unable to give Israel an unforgettable lesson. I asked him to contact Jordan so as to collaborate with it. But Saud informed me that the Saudi army was willing to do anything for Egypt and that Saudi wealth was at the disposal of Egypt.[117]

On 6th November 1956 Saudi Arabia announced "an embargo on the shipment of Saudi oil and oil products to Britain and France and a ban on the fuelling of British and French ships and all ships carrying oil to these two countries." [118] While shipments of "oil to Britain and France suffered interruption primarily as a result of the blocking of the Suez Canal," the Saudi embargo "added the seal of official approval to the general disruption of oil shipments already manifest."[119] The Saudi authority declined to lift the oil embargo until the Israeli militaries withdrew from Egyptian lands, with Saud himself reaffirming the Egyptian ambassador in Riyadh that " not one drop of oil should go (to the refinery at Bahrain) until all the invading armies have withdrawn from Egypt."[120]

From these events, it can be readily observed that King Saud deviated radically from his father's policy of neutrality and caution, especially in terms of

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[116] Ibid.
[117] Amin Saeed, Op.Cit, 1955, p.236.
[118] *U'mm al-Qūrā*, Op.Cit, 9 November 1956.
[119] George Lenczowski, Op.Cit , 1960, p.335.
[120] Mohamed H. Heikal, *Cutting the Lion's Tail: Suez through Egyptian Eyes*, (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1986), p. 212.

Saudi Arabia's engagement in regional conflicts and his own strategic alignment with Arab nationalism. These actions were committed in the knowledge that they would inevitably lead to severe deteriorations in relations with the West which would have negative effects on Saudi economic interests and security provisions. By cutting oil exports to Britain and France for their involvement in the Suez crisis, Saudi Arabia's sole source of revenue was severely reduced, while its military and financial support for Egypt accelerated the weakening of its economic position. Saudi security, especially in terms of its internal stability, also suffered drastically as new reform movements emerged, influenced by Arab nationalism. The internal instability increased as result, when the educated youth were affected by Arab nationalism and the left movement in general and decided to establishment a Labor Committee in Saudi Arabia in 1953 to demand better conditions for Laborers from the government. However, the movement was soon fought by the conservative and clerics. The National Reform Front Association was created in 1954 with the goal of gaining economic liberation from imperialism and the domination of Aramco, and to establish political parties. The Association distributed leaflets to spread the ideas of nationalism within Saudi Arabia. There was speculation that the Association was in contact with the movement of Arab nationalists in Egypt. Another factor that contributed to the tide of Arab nationalism was the Egyptian military mission, which was brought in to train the Saudi army, where it also helped to attract adherents toward the ideas of nationalism. In 1955 there was a plan to bring about a coup similar to the Free [*Al'-aḥrār*] Officers Egyptian coup in 1952. The group was led by the pilot Lieutenant Abdul Rahman Al Shamrani with a dozen officers but did not succeed. For the Free Princes [*Al'-aḥrār*] in Saudi Arabia, [121] the King's brother, Prince Talal, and his brothers demanded immediate changes in the system of governance. They had been affected by nationalist propaganda, and demanded that Saudi Arabia become a constitutional monarchy, objecting also to the presence of U.S. bases and US companies. This created a split within the ruling family members; eventually, those princes were expelled and carried on their activity in Egypt.[122] President Gamal Abdel Nasser was accused of being behind the instability in Saudi Arabia, which led Saudi Arabia to reconsider its relationship with Egypt because of its fears that Egypt was

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[121] The Kings brothers: Prince Mishari , Badr and Fawaz Bin Abdul-Aziz al-Saud .

[122] Saad al-Juhani, "Mūaṭalāīb wa Wū'ūd lam Tātāḥqā*q*", *al-ḥiwār al-Mūtāmaddīn*, no.1205, May 2005.

involved in these events. While other princes, such as Crown Prince Faisal, demanded a reversion back to the previous alliances with western superpowers, especially the U.S. and lack of alliance with the United States.[123] During the early stages of Saud's reign, Saudi foreign policy cannot be properly characterised as being more proactive. Instead it is better considered as being more audacious, as demonstrated in how it allowed the country to achieve a level of independence from the superpowers, most importantly, being guided by nationalism rather than religion. However, as will be seen in the next section, its policies can equally be defined as being inconsistent and lacking clear, achievable objectives.

(2.2.2) Returning to the Old Approach

Despite the development of much closer relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt during the early 1950s, the period 1957-1958 saw an abrupt change engendered by numerous domestic concerns, such as Saud's growing concern with Nasser's increased popularity and legitimacy as the supposed leader of the Arab world, and international issues, such as Nasser's ever more intimate ties with the Soviet Union,[124] and, importantly, that the attempted coup in 1955 in Saudi Arabia by the Free Princes Movement, and the spread of nationalist ideas. These concerns combined to make Saud reconsider his relationship with Egypt. When the propaganda of the military revolutionaries in Egypt began to spread in the region and instigate similar demands for the complete removal of monarchic dynasties in Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Libya, [125] Saud decided to revert back to his father's original plan by aligning once again with Western nations and opposing the rise Arab nationalism in the form of Nasserism. By 1957, it was obvious that Nasser supported an Arab revolution aimed at overthrowing the conservative, monarchic regimes in the region in order to establish a single Arab nation,[126] a fact substantiated by his vitriolic propaganda campaign against the House of Saud that year. Despite this, an instance of

[123] Ibid.
[124] Mohammad H. Heikal, Op.Cit., 1986, pp. 215-228.
[125] Robert B. Satloff, *From Abdullah to Hussein: Jordan in Transition*, (Oxford: Oxford university press, 1994). pp. 160-167.
[126] Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability: Saudi Arabia, the Military Balance in the Gulf, and Trends in the Arab-Israeli Military Balance*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 231-232.

further cooperation occurred after the 5th January 1957, when President Eisenhower attained approval from Congress for what would be known as the "Eisenhower Doctrine," a programme of economic and military aid for any nation in the Middle East requesting assistance to protect itself against armed aggression from any other state, especially those aligned with International Communism.[127] Ultimately, the plan responded to the acute fear that the Soviet Union would exploit the vacuum created by the collapse of British and French influence in the region following the Suez Crisis to expand its political and improve its economic interests. However, it was publicly criticised in the Middle East as a further example of Western neo-imperial involvement in the region. On 19th January 1957, Saud attended a meeting in Egypt with President Shukri al-Quwatli of Syria and President Nasser, which resulted in the signing of an agreement entitled "Arab Solidarity" which included an agreement to provide financial assistance to Jordan as compensation for the support Britain terminated following its decision not to ratify the Baghdad Pact. At this conference the "Eisenhower Doctrine" was also rejected, even though Saud received an invitation on 7th January to visit the U.S. and discuss this programme.[128]

Following this meeting, Saud visited Washington on 27th January, which, however, marked a major shift in Saudi foreign policy from aligning with Egypt and his own close association with Nasser toward seeking a return to closer economic and military alliances with the U.S. Following the visit, Eisenhower sought to alleviate any concerns regarding U.S. interests in the region by explaining that his administration's policy, as outlined in his proposals to Congress, were only ever "to promote the independence and proper aspirations of the Arab peoples." In response, Saud "indicated his purpose to continue close cooperation with the United States." Both leaders agreed that strengthening the Saudi kingdom to ensure its continued stability was in the interests of world peace, with Eisenhower further reassuring Saud by conveying his willingness to provide the necessary assistance to the Saudi armed forces for the purposes of defence in regional disputes and the maintenance of security regarding domestic issues. Accordingly, Saud agreed to renew the U.S. base in Dhahran, signalling a more pro-western stance in his foreign policy so that their closer relations would lead to a more efficient and concerted resistance to Communist

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[127] Peter Mansfield, *the New Arabians*, (New York: Doubleday, 1981), pp. 80-81.
[128] Benson L. Grayson, *Saudi-American Relations*, (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1982), pp. 89-91.

expansion in the Middle East.[129] King Saud's stance to return to a strategic alliance with the U.S. was the result of internal pressures, especially from the Crown and ruling family following the preceding events with respect to the 1955 coup by the Free Princes Movement.

That same month during his visit in the U.S., Saud met the Iraqi Crown Prince 'Abd al-Ilah in Washington to discuss the Middle East condition in great detail, resulting finally in an informal "Kings Alliance" designed to alleviate the historical differences and mutual mistrusts that existed between the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq and Saudi Arabia since the latter's annexation of the Hejaz region in 1926. To further cement these improved relations, Saud visited Baghdad on 17th May 1957, the capital of both the pro-western authorities in the Arab world and his age-old regional enemy, to announce "the beginning of a new era of friendship and solidarity" between the two countries and confirm their intention to resist "imperialism, Communism and Zionism" in order to "uphold Arab Stability, independence and power." [130] Subsequently, King Faisal of Iraq visited Riyadh in December of that year to further solidify relations with Saud. A similar process of improved relations occurred with the other Hashemite kingdom in the region, Jordan, when Saudi Arabia sent 3,500 troops there in March 1957 to be deployed at the Port of Aqaba as a deterrent to the increased military threats emerging from Israel.[131] Saudi-Egypt relations deteriorated further when Saud aligned himself closer with the Kings of Jordan and Iraq after 1958 due to his concern with Nasser's growing popularity in the Arab world and his pro-Soviet sympathies. At the same time, Nasser accused Saud of being reactionary, while relations worsened even more with the foundation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) on 22nd February 1958 involving Egypt and Syria, which Saud saw as further evidence of Nasser's desire to be involved in and interfere with the internal affairs of other Arab nations.[132] Following the secession of Syria from the UAR in 1961, Nasser emphasised the influence of reactionary Arab leaders in the more general secessionist movement to highlight its apparent dangers. [133]

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[129] Odah, Op.Cit., 1988, p.88.
[130] Quoted in Odah.Odah, Op.Cit., 1988, p.89.
[131] Norman C. Walpole, et al., *Area Handbook for Saudi Arabia*, (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1970). p. 169.
[132] Charles D. Cremeans, *The Arabs and the World: Nasser's Arab Nationalist Policy*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publisher, 1963), p.109.
[133] Abdalrahman al-Angari., Op.Cit. 1989, p.232.

During this period in 1958, Saud relinquished power to his brother Faisal, as a result of growing pressure from the royal family and the "Ulama"[*al-'Ulāmā'*] regarding the domestic problem of squandering the country's resources, not strengthening the infrastructure, which remained generally underdeveloped, or ensuring the state institutions were efficient. In addition, there were also external factors, as explained in the interview with Princess Nora al-Habot,[134] such as the lack of discernible, achievable objectives, his refusal to continue Abdul-Aziz's policy of avoiding regional conflicts and strengthening alliances with Western powers and the pervasive fear of nationalist ideologies spreading from its former ally Egypt. While Saud reassumed powers in 1960, he quickly appointed his younger brother Talal as Prime Minister, an appointment which failed to attract the necessary support from the royal family, religious leaders or tribal chiefs, endorsements that are absolutely vital to legitimate leadership in Saudi Arabia. Due to increased domestic tension and external pressures, Faisal was reinstated as Prime Minister in 1962, and began this tenure by issuing a ten-point reform program designed to improve Saudi Arabia's administration, education system and economy, while also solidifying the country's budgetary position through a policy of fiscal austerity.[135]

Furthermore, the subseequent foundation of the Syrian-Egyptian union in 1958, along with revolutionary socialism, had given rise to radical political ideologies that threatened the conservative Saudi monarchy even though the union was only short lived. After the disintegration of the UAR in 1961, Nasser shifted the emphasis of his Pan-Arab movement to a more explicitly militant revolutionary ideology aimed at overthrowing the conservative, and in his eyes reactionary, regimes in other Arab States. [136] Mohammad Hassanein Heikal, the official spokesperson for the Egyptian regime, defended the right of the "Egyptian Revolution" to interfere in the domestic affairs of other Arab countries.[137] To compensate for the collapse of the UAR, Nasser began searching for a means to reassert his authority in the region and the revolution in North Yemen in 1962 provided the opportunity. He dispatched an expeditionary force there to support the Republicans, with the intention of using Yemen as a

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[134] Author's Interview with King Saud's wife Nora Zayid Al-Habot, Riyadh, March 22, 2013
[135] Bligh Alexander. *From Prince to King: Royal Succession in the House of Saud in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: New York University Press, 1984), pp. 70-76.
[136] Faisal A. Hafiz, Op.Cit., 1980), pp. 121-122.
[137] Fouad K. Barradah., "Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy 1945 – 1984," PhD Thesis, (U.K: University of Aberdeen, 1989), p.185-186. See more in; Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War*, (London: Oxford: University Press, 1971), p.27-30.

foothold to achieve his ultimate objective of liberating the entire Arabian Peninsula.[138] On 26th September, Yemeni tanks opened fire on al-Badr's palace, with the Republicans quickly seizing the radio station in Sanaa and proclaiming a republic. Under the authority of Colonel Abdullah al-Sallal, the insurgents systematically deposed the ruling members of the monarchic regime, in particular, the Sayyids.[139] The Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) was declared on 29th September. It announced that it would respect the previous commitments and agreements of the deposed regime, except in instances where these jeopardized or were inconsistent with the country's autonomy and independence. [140] Despite Saudi Arabia's initial policy of non-involvement in the Yemeni revolution, the YAR, with the support of Egypt, began expressing a hostile attitude to it, culminating in the new president, Abdullah al-Sallal, publicly announcing his intention in October 1962 to extend a "republican form of government" to the entire Arabian Peninsula,[141] rather than making any overtures to Saudi Arabia to either ensure its continued neutrality in the matter or generate support for the new republic. On 1st of that month, Nasser sent paratroopers and military equipment to Yemen, while Egyptian ships carrying both ammunition and staff officers began landing at the newly completed port of Hodeida.[142] By the 8th, a royalist radio station was operating from within Saudi territory, which broadcast the first reports of arms reaching royalist tribesmen through the Sharif of Bayhan three days later. According to al-Sallal, the Sharif received five million shillings from Riyadh for the purpose of fighting the new Republican regime.[143] A mutual defense treaty was signed between Egypt and the YAR on 10th November 1962, which subsequently obliged Nasser to increase the number of Egyptian troops stationed in Yemen to protect the new republic, [144] which Saud responded to by arming the Yemeni royalists directly in an attempt to counter Egypt's growing presence in its neighboring country. To prevent the flow of financial aid and military materials to the

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[138] Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations: the Amorality of Power Politics*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), pp. 240-266.

[139] George M. Haddah, *Revolution and Military Rule in the Mliddle East*, (Santa Barbara: University of California Press 1974), p. 235-250.

[140] Harold Ingrams, *The Yemen: Imams, Rulers and Revolutions*, (London: Camelot Press Ltd., 1963), p.132.

[141] Saeed M. Badeeb, *The Saudi-Egyptian Conflict Over North Yemen 1962-1970*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1986), p. 52. See in Edgar O'Balance, *The War in Yemen*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p.73.

[142] Harold Ingrams, Op.Cit., 1963, p.133 See in Mosaed A. Nasser, Op.Cit., 1990. pp. 274-276.

[143] Robin L. Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, (Boulder, Colorado: Hestview Press, 1983), p.198.

[144] Edgar O'Balance, Op.Cit, 1971, p.73-84.

royalists, Nasser ordered UAR airstrikes on 15th November 1962 in the Saudi towns of Najran and Jizan located along the Yemeni border, [145] forcing Saud to sever diplomatic ties with Egypt later that same month.[146]

As the individual ultimately responsible for Saudi foreign policy, on 27th November, Faisal rejected U.S. President Kennedy's proposal to cease all assistance to the royalist forces. According to sources close to the Prime Minister, the reasons for his rejection were; firstly, Saudi authorities considered the Imam and his government the legitimate rulers of Yemen; secondly, a majority of Yemeni citizens continued to support these legitimate rulers; and thirdly, it was believed the royalists would have defeated the republican forces by the end of 1962.[147] Following the UAR attack on the cities of Abha and Jizan in southern Saudi Arabia in the spring of 1963, it was acknowledged that Saudi Arabian forces did not have the strength necessary to defend the national territory at that time. [148] By the beginning of 1963, there were approximately 15,000 Egyptian troops stationed in Northern Yemen, but this number gradually increased to over 80,000 as Nasser began to attack the Saudi bases used to supply financial aid and military support to the royalists. During this period, however, Saudi Arabia refrained from direct military involvement as a counter to Nasser's actions.[149] On 29 March 1964, a council of princes and the leading "Ulama" [al-'Ulāmā'] transferred the throne and all its powers to Faisal, chastising Saud for his incompetence and extravagance, and blaming him for the economic and political crisis that ultimately resulted in his forced abdication[150] After Egypt withdrew from Northern Yemen, al-Sallal was overthrown on 5th November 1967 and replaced by a more moderate government under the leadership of President Abd al-Ralunan al-Iryani, [151] Saudi Arabia quickly lost interest in the royalists and their cause. Its support, it can be argued, was conditional upon the Egyptian presence in the country

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[145] Christopher J. HcHulen, *Resolution of the Yemeni Crisis, 1963: A Case Study in Mediation*, (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, 1980), pp.1-20.
[146] Marcel Gros, *Faisal of Arabia: The Ten Years of a Reign*, Translated from the French by Mary McCloughin, (London: Emgé-Sepix, 1976), p.79.
[147] Mosaed A. Nasser, Op.Cit., 1990, p. 575. See more in; Manfred W. Wenner, *Modern Yemen: 1918-1966*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 198-200.
[148] Robert Lacey, *The Kingdom: Arabia and the House of Sa'ud*, (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1981), p. 346.
[149] Naila al-Sowayel, Op.Cit., 1990, p60-62.
[150] George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, (New York, Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 597-598.
[151] Ibid, pp. 633-634.

and their committed opposition to the radicalism of the republican regime under al-Sallal.

As this series of events serves to demonstrate, Saudi foreign policy during the reign of King Saud was acutely inconsistent because the ideological variable did not play any determinant role in the decision-making process. For example, despite the pronounced ideological differences between the Saudi regime and the Arab nationalist movement spearheaded by Egypt, there was a significant rapprochement in relations between the two countries, which eventually led to numerous security agreements that would have a damaging effect on Saudi's pre-existent diplomatic and economic alliances. Saud's relation with Nasser was the catalyst for a number of decisions made during the initial stages of his tenure that had immediate negative effects on Saudi Arabia's economic interests and security strategy, such as the decision to stop exporting oil to Britain and France that led to the severance of diplomatic relations with both countries and the collapse of the relationship with its primary ally, the U.S. This suggests that neither economic nor security issues were considered appropriately significant during the initial stages of Saud's reign. However, in addition to the declining economic conditions, the emergence of radical political opposition demanding regime change meant an important domestic factor emerged that was not present during Abdul-Aziz's reign, that is, the influence of the royal family and the "Ulama" [*al-'Ulāmā'*]in determining foreign policy decisions, as confirmed in the interview with Princess Nora Zayed al-Habot. Due to the growing pressure to revert back to the policy favouring alliances with western nations, particularly the U.S., instead of continuing cooperation with the radical nationalist movements in the region, Saud relinquished complete authority to his brother Faisal from 1958-1960, but was appointed ruler again for a two year period immediately after this. However, his government was dismissed in 1962 due to the reappointment of Faisal as Prime Minister with complete authority regarding formulating and implementing both domestic and foreign policy decisions. He immediately assumed control in the Ministry of Finance and Foreign Affairs while a number of disagreements arose between him and Saud due to the internal and external factors discussed earlier. Consequently, Abdul-Aziz's eldest son Mohamed called the "Ulama" [*al-'Ulāmā'*], together and obtained a "fatwa" ordering that Saud could remain as king but only without executive power and must transfer all legislative authority to Faisal. This did not satisfy Saud, which led to further familial disagreements and the decision to

completely remove the incumbent king and appoint Faisal as his replacement, a decision that received the necessary religious approval to legitimise it.

Ultimately, Saudi foreign policy from 1953-1964 lacked clear objectives and is best described as being inconsistent. Because the security, economic and ideological variables were not given proper consideration by Saud when either formulating or implementing Saudi foreign policy, the domestic forces of the royal family and the "Ulama" [*al-'Ulāmā'*]intervened to gradually assume authority from Saud and ultimately change both the domestic and foreign policies of Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 3: Among Allies and Enemies (1964-1975)

Saudi Foreign Policy from 1964-1975, under the reign of King Faisal, is considered to have been instrumental in shaping Saudi foreign policy. This is due to his behaviour in regional issues, primarily his resilience when implementing an oil embargo on Western countries in 1973, and his provision of unlimited and unconditional support to the Palestinians. One particularly influential event was his facilitation of Egypt's recovery of its sovereign territory from Israel by making unlimited Saudi financial resources available. King Faisal gained important experience in the principles of foreign policy and effective international diplomacy at a young age due to the close relationship to his father and his brother King Saud during a period of a numerous significant events in Saudi history, primarily the war in Yemen, the disputes with Egypt and with Western nations, and the various changes in the relationship with the strategic ally the U.S. This chapter, therefore, will analyse Saudi foreign policy during the reign of King Faisal to identify the motivations behind the major decisions and to determine the pattern of behaviour being adhered to.

(3.1) Islamic Solidarity and Arab Nationalism

Although Faisal only came to power as Prime Minister in 1962, and eventually was made King in 1964, his experience in foreign affairs began considerably prior to this. As early as 1919 when he was just fourteen years old, the Prince was exposed to the intricacies of international politics during an official state visit to England. While the primary objective of the visit was to offer congratulations following the Allies' victory in WWI, the opportunity to discuss certain important foreign policy matters was utilised.[1] Following his role as the Viceroy of the Hijaz for four years from 1926, Prince Faisal was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1930, a position that allowed him to further pursue his keen interest and innate ability in foreign policy and international politics.[2] During 1964-1975, Saudi foreign policy was developing in

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[1] De Gaury Gerald, *Faisal: King of Saudi Arabia*, (London; Arthur Barker, 1966), pp. 22-28.
[2] Nizar O. Madni, "The Islamic content of the Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia: King Feisal's Call for Islamic Solidarity 1965-1975," PhD Theses, (Washington, D.C: The American University, 1977), p.52.

response to a number of crucial regional issues, such as the threat to national security posed by the Yemen crisis in 1962; the deterioration in relations with Egypt following the rise of Nasser and the further exposure of Arab radicalism; the lack of any consistent progress on the Palestinian question; and the continued distancing from the U.S. that was initiated by the Suez crisis. The decade preceding Faisal's ascension to the throne coincided with the unprecedented rise of Arab nationalism at the expense of existent monarchies characterised by a generally pro-Western sensibility, as demonstrated by the collapse of the Egyptian and the Iraqi monarchies in 1952 and 1958 respectively. Syrian politics had also shifted considerably to the left during this period due to the increased influence of communism in the region. Following the departure of British authorities from Aden in 1967, the vacuum was occupied by a group of Marxist nationalists. The King of Libya, Idris bin Abdullah al-Senussi, was also overthrown by the revolutionary republican Muammar al-Gaddafi in 1969. Consequently, Faisal was immediately faced with the task of securing the stability of Saudi Arabia and providing reliable leadership.[3] The increasing appeal of Nasser's radicalism presented a profound challenge to this pursuit of the status quo, with Saudi-Egypt interests radically diverging as demonstrated by the increased tensions and cross-border involvements in the peninsula.[4] Since Syria withdrew from the UAR in 1961, Nasser began searching for a means to regain his lost prestige in the Arab world, with the revolution in North Yemen in 1962 providing the perfect opportunity. Nasser shifted the emphasis of his Pan-Arab movement to a militant revolutionary ideology aimed at overthrowing the conservative Arab regimes.

The Egyptian intervention in North Yemen obviously posed a direct national security threat to Saudi Arabia but this scenario developed because of the dispute between the conservative Arab regimes led by Saudi Arabia and the radicals led by Egypt during the period from 1962 to 1964. While this on-going dispute was central to the increased hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, other factors also influenced the decision to intervene in Yemen. Firstly, Saudi-Yemen were largely characterised by amicability and mutual cooperation prior to the revolution following a period of hardships during the 1930s, a fact substantiated by the signing of the Jeddah Pact in 1956 which provided the legal basis for Saudi Arabia's response to the Yemeni Imam's appeal. In an interview in 1964, King Faisal argued that any support

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[3] Naila al-Sowayel, Op.Cit., 1990, pp. 58-62.
[4] Ibid, pp. 60-62.

given to Yemen at the request of the Imam "would not constitute interference on our part, as this assistance would be in accordance with an agreement existing between us and the Yemeni government."[5] Secondly, Saudi-Egyptian relations had deteriorated significantly prior to the revolution despite the period of reasonable cordiality that preceded it. The reason for this was Nasser's attempt to extend his leadership beyond Egypt into the Arab world and the increased cooperation between the Egyptian authorities and the Communist bloc. Furthermore, after the dissolution of the Syrian-Egyptian Union, Egypt emerged more firmly and publicly committed to a radical, pro-communist course. The result was that Egypt was viewed as a strategic tool for Soviet interests in the Arab world and Nasser's decision to intervene in Yemen meant this communist agenda now directly threatened the sovereign territory of the Arabian Peninsula. As a result, an immediate response to Egypt's increased agitations was almost inevitable. Because of this struggle between the two ideologically opposed countries, Saudi Arabia emerged as the leading contender for power in the Arab world as it underwent a dynamic shift in the distribution of authority, while Yemen assumed increased significance not only in geopolitical tensions but also inter-Arab rivalries in the region.[6]

During the fieldwork conducted for this project I interviewed Prince Saud al-Faisal, King Faisal's son and the Saudi Foreign Minister, he confirmed that Saudi foreign policy at the time was not motivated by an intention to interfere in the affairs of other countries, instead stressing the basis of the decision to prevent the complete collapse of its regional ally was provided by the formal request made by the Yemeni Imam.[7]. As discussed in the previous chapter, Faisal assumed control of Saudi foreign affairs during the reign of his brother King Saud due to the increased pressure from the royal family and the clergy, which led to the former's appointment as Prime Minister. During his tenure, Faisal stressed the need for cooperative, amicable relations with the Western world and implemented a strategy of measured, informed diplomacy as a keystone in Saudi foreign policy. He also committed Saudi Arabia to avoiding direct military intervention in regional issues despite provocations regarding his nation's interests and violations of its sovereignty, such as the Egyptian airstrikes on the towns of Najran and Jizan, preferring instead proxy, indirect confrontations.

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[5] Nizar O. Madni, Op.Cit., pp. 69-71.

[6] Ibid, p. 71.

[7] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

Henry Kissinger famously commented that "contemporary Saudi policy has been characterized by a caution that has elevated indirectness into a special art form."[8] In essence, Saudi Arabia preferred the quiet, indirect diplomatic approach, as opposed to public rhetoric, which possibly limited the number of options available.

After Faisal finally assumed power from his brother in November 1964, as mentioned in the preceding section, he developed a two-part strategy to deal with the Egyptian-Yemen issue. Firstly, he decided to avoid direct military intervention at all costs, choosing instead to fight the Egyptian and republican forces by proxy, providing all necessary support to the royalists and to any tribes willing to align with his objectives. Although Faisal acknowledged that the royalists could not defeat the Egyptian forces decisively and that his strategy would at best result in a prolonged conflict of attrition that would inevitably end in negotiations, he was equally aware that no other option was preferable.[9] Fortunately, following the Iraqi and Algerian Presidents' efforts to mediate between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, an important breakthrough occurred in Saudi-Egypt relations with the signing of an agreement in Jeddah on 24th August 1965,[10] which signalled an important step toward resolving the conflict in Yemen. One of the most important outcomes of this agreement was that both sides consented to organizing a transitional conference for 23rd November, consisting of fifty members, each one representing the national forces and the different figures of authority in Yemen. Despite this modest improvement in diplomatic relations, Nasser reiterated that he would personally commit Egyptian forces to Yemen for the next two decades if necessary to protect the republican regime, reiterating that any acts of foreign aggression would be immediately countered with reciprocal attacks. Such posturing provoked both the royalists in Yemen and their Saudi supporters but King Faisal refused to be antagonized by Nasser's provocations, preferring instead to avoid direct military confrontation but also assured of Saudi military superiority due to the recent receipt of aircraft and other sophisticated equipment from the U.S. and Britain.[11]

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[8] Henry A. Kissinger, *The Years of Upheaval*, (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1982), p. 658.
[9] Nadav Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security*, (London: Pelkanp Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 95-96.
[10] The full text of the Jeddah Agreement is to be found in; Dana Adams Schmidt, *Yemen: The Unknown War* ,(New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968), pp.15-35.
[11] Sāmī Sharaf, *Sānūwāt ayīām ma' Jamāl Abdīlnāṣīer*, (Cairo: Māktābh Madbūlī, 2006), pp. 143-157. See more in Edgar O'balance, Op.Cit., 1971, pp.140-160.

However, on 20th March 1965, the Saudi Minister of Defense, Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz, announced that 20,000 Egyptian soldiers were mobilising along Saudi Arabia's southern border. Faisal presumed these forces intended to invade the towns of Jizan and Najran to prevent Saudi military support from reaching the royalists in Yemen and ordered almost the entirety of his national army to protect the southern border.[12] The Saudi royal family suspected that Nasser's interests extended beyond protecting the Yemeni republicans and that his actual intention was to acquire the natural resources of Saudi Arabia in the southern region as a precursor to assuming complete control of the entire Arabian Peninsula.[13] On 30th March 1967, Nasser exploited the dispute between the brothers King Saud and Faisal to encourage the former to condemn the latter's intervention in Yemeni affairs via a media conference.[14] The purpose of the conference was to gain sympathy in Arab public opinion against King Faisal, and allow Nasser to continue his public support for the Republicans achieving absolute dominance in Yemen, whereas, on the Saudi side, support for the Royalists was a more secretive affair and intended only to help these forces avoid defeat.

Subsequently, on 6th June 1967 Egyptian forces were defeated by Israel,[15] which radically shifted the attention of Egyptian policy-makers away from Yemen. On the same year, the Arab League summit was held on 29th August in Khartoum; the Egypt indicated that it was willing to adhere to the Jeddah Agreement of 1965. In return, Saudi Arabia agreed to terminate its support for the royalists in Yemen once Egyptian forces were withdrawn. This settlement initially seemed to guarantee peace in the region but certain partisan factions insisted that republicans and royalists could not co-exist in Yemen. The royalists, fearing that their time was limited following Saudi Arabia's announcement at Khartoum and hoping that the republican forces would disintegrate following the withdrawal of Egypt, undertook an offensive to seize the capital Sana'a. While this offensive was not immediately successful, hostilities continued between the republicans and the royalists until an agreement was made in

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[12] Joseph Mann, "King Faisal and the Challenge of Nasser's Revolutionary Ideology", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 48, Issue. 5, (2012), p. 751.
[13] Ibid, p.750.
[14] Mosaed Nasser, Op.Cit. 1990, p.477.
[15] It is called The Six-Day War, between June 5 and 10, 1967 by Israel and Egypt, the former was mobilized its forces along the Israeli border in the Sinai Peninsula, Israel launched a series of proactive airstrikes against Egyptian airfields, and conquered the Sinai.

May 1970 acknowledging the formation of a republic in Yemen. [16] Saudi Arabia decided to withdraw its support to the royalists, who were close to victory against the republicans despite the continued diplomatic and political disagreements with Egypt. Although support of the royalists in Yemen would achieve strategic interests by creating a monarchy state next door, Saudi Arabia preferred to terminate its support for the royalists, thereby enabling the republicans to assume the position of authority in Yemen, which resulted in the presence of a republican state next to the Saudi monarchy. This indicates the lack of vision amongst Saudi foreign policy makers regarding their own nation's long-term strategic interests. Saudi Arabia halted its support for the royalists because Egypt had already begun to withdraw from Yemen, thus indicating that the pattern of Saudi foreign policy was based on reaction rather than assuming the initiative to exploit opportunities to further pursue its interests in Yemen. Saudi foreign policy of this period is perfectly illustrated by the decision to withdraw financial, military and political support despite its previous commitments.

The Yemeni crisis conveys the circumstances and the political atmosphere that preceded the Arab-Israeli War and in which the necessity for Islamic solidarity was first announced. By the middle of 1965, therefore, Saudi foreign policy was noticeably beginning to use a specifically Islamic agenda, especially given the failure of the Jeddah Treaty to restore peace in Yemen. This decision to utilize Islam in terms of foreign policy decisions was not unique to King Faisal since King Saud had previously resorted to such practices when he addressed an audience of pilgrims in Mecca in 1961, urging all Muslims to unite in Islamic Union "to defend Islamic interests and World peace." [17] A year later in May 1962, the Saudi government sponsored the International Islamic Conference in Mecca, which was attended by representatives from religious institutions and distinguished personalities from all over the Muslim world. As a rebuke to the Baath in Syria and to Nasser's radical Arab nationalism, the Conference declared that "those who disavow Islam and distort its call under the guise of nationalism are actually the most bitter of enemies of the Arabs, whose glories are entwined with the glories of Islam." [18] The Conference concluded with the founding of an international Islamic organization called World

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[16] Nizar O. Madni, Op.Cit, 1977, p. 77-78.

[17] Tareq Ismael, *Government and Politics of the Contemporary Middle East*, (Homewood, Illinois: The Dosse Press, 1970), pp. 376-377.

[18] Joseph A. Massad, *Islam in Liberalism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 82.

Muslim League (WML) with permanent headquarters in Mecca, signalling the first official manifestation of a decidedly Islamist agenda in Saudi foreign policy. The main objectives of the WML included "the countering of all alien ideologies and habits inconsistent with Islam, and to coordinate the efforts of Islamic organizations around the World."[19]

King Faisal's involvement in the formation of the WML meant he emerged as a viable contender in the renewed struggle for Arab leadership and a challenger to Nasser and the Ba'athists by advocating the call for Islamic solidarity. He pursued the idea of an Islamic conference amongst heads of state in the region but his opponents in Cairo, Damascus and elsewhere were quick to label this an "Islamic Pact," with Syria the first to condemn Faisal as a "reactionary" in January 1966. Egypt and Syria countered that they perceived the conference to be an emerging conservative alliance in the region.[20] Nevertheless, Faisal's pursuit of an Islamic initiative was considered by Egypt a direct threat to Arab nationalism and an attempt to reconstitute a regional defence strategy similar to the defunct Baghdad Pact, with Nasser insisting that the Saudi leader's actions were motivated by political rather than spiritual concerns and that his ultimate objective was to circumscribe the revolutionary regimes, especially Egypt, through a coalition of conservatives.[21]

In order to properly understand Faisal's particular approach to Saudi foreign policy, it is first necessary to appreciate his advocation of a moderate position and his commitment to specific principles. Until 1973, the monarch pursued a strongly pro-Western foreign policy for four primary reasons: to prevent any incursions into the Arabian Peninsula by radical nationalists, to prevent communism extending its influence into the region, to maintain cordial relations with the industrialized, non-communist World, and to support Islamic movements that promoted solidarity among Muslim countries.[22] These circumstances led to Saudi Arabia implementing tactics to oppose the further dissemination of radical ideologies in the Arab world and counteract the revolutionary movements in the region by forming a "pact" with other

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[19] Ahmed Khurshid, (ed.), "Mecca Conference of World Muslim Organizations: Seeking Unity at the Grassroots", *International Fortnightly*, Vol. 4, no. 9, (1974), p. 8.

[20] Robert R. Sullivan, "Saudi Arabia in International Politics," Cambridge University Press, *Review of Politics*, Vol. 32, no. 4, (October 1970), pp. 439-440.

[21] Malcolm H. Kerr. *The Arab Cold War 1958-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics* (London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1967), p.146.

[22] Daoudi, M.S. and Dajami M.S, *Economic Diplomacy: Embargo Leverage and World Politics*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985). p.117.

conservative governments. However, Faisal abandoned the inherently narrow scope of pan-Arabi ideology, preferring instead to appeal for Islamic unity in a wider, more inclusive sense, which meant his concerns extended far beyond the immediate regional environment and afforded him greater scope to obtain support for his policy decisions amongst other Muslim countries. While his aspirations might seem idealistic, his approach to how they might be realised through foreign policy decisions was markedly realistic, an attitude exemplified by his refusal to pursue direct military interventions as an option in international politics that was itself engendered by his extensive experience in foreign affairs and his living through numerous political events of continued international importance. His committed realism also influenced his informed and honest evaluation of his country's capabilities, as he acknowledged the inherent dangers involved in overestimations in this area and assuming a geopolitical role that exceeds one's capacities and competencies. This attitude represented one of the most significant disagreements between Faisal and King Saud, a divergence of opinion further heightened by his refusal to assume a proactive position in Saudi foreign policy. Instead, Faisal actively avoided assuming the initiative regarding foreign policy decisions throughout his life in any capacity, preferring quiet diplomacy and realistic, informed evaluations of the present facts rather than responding to immediate emotional impulses.[23]

As a result of this attitude, King Faisal can be considered to have inaugurated a particular pattern of behaviour in Saudi diplomatic relations and activities during this period. In this sense, he is correctly considered the architect of Saudi foreign policy.[24] Furthermore, as a keen student of history, in particular Islamic history, his conception of international relations and the international political system was hugely influenced by Islamic interpretations of these issues.[25] He ultimately realised that Islam provided Saudi Arabia with a powerful ideological instrument with which to respond to the various challenges engendered by its attempt to engage with the modern international community,[26] he believed, that centred around the ideological

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[23] See more about King Faisal in Ghazi, al-Qusaibi, "American-Saudi Relations," (A Talk to the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 7 April 1976.

[24] Kurt London. *The Making of Foreign Policy: East and West*. (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1965), p. 207.

[25] Vincent Sheean, "King Faisal's First Year," Council on Foreign Relation, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 44, Issue. 2, (January 1966), pp. 304-313.

[26] Robert R. Sullivan, Op.Cit.,1970, p. 439.

forces of Zionism, Communism and Arab nationalism.[27] Faisal identified Saudi Arabia's unique advantage within Arab politics and its distinguishing feature amongst its regional neighbours was that it contained two of the three Muslim holy cities within its borders, Mecca and Medina, two sites then being visited by thousands of pilgrims each year.[28] These factors combined to in stil a sense of exceptionalism in Saudi Arabia regarding its neighbours in the Arabian Peninsula, which significantly influenced the country's behaviour in diplomatic relations and determined its policies regarding how it interacted within the international political system. Under the leadership of King Faisal, Saudi Arabia sought closer relations with the Muslim world and endeavoured to rescue the Islamic faith from the state of crisis it had recently slipped into by reaffirming and repeating its past achievements.[29]

Obviously, therefore, one of the most dominant features motivating Faisal's foreign policy decision was his commitment to advancing the Muslim world, which manifested most explicitly in the establishment of numerous financial, economic and political institutions, such as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, designed to facilitate greater cooperation between Muslim countries. While his objective of complete Islamic solidarity might initially seem somewhat idealistic, he developed and implemented a practical strategy for how it might be achieved. His first action involved a series of state visits to Muslim countries between December 1965 and September 1966 where he publicly announced the necessity of increased Islamic solidarity. During his visit to Pakistan,[30] King Faisal spoke of Islam as a bond uniting all Muslims and called for cooperation among all Islamic countries to face the challenge posed by radical ideologies:

It is in these moments, when Islam is facing many undercurrents that are pulling Muslims left and right, East and West, that we need time for more cooperation

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[27] Edward R. Sheehan. *The Arabs, Israelis and Kissinger; A Secret History of American Diplomacy in the Middle East* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976), pp. 65-66.
[28] Vincent Sheean, Op.Cit., 1966, p. 309.
[29] Judge G. Sparrow, *Modern Saudi Arabia* (London: Knightly Vernon, Limited, 1970), p. 17.
[30] Melton J. Gordon, Martin Baumann, *Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*, ed. 2 Vol.6, (Santa Barbara: Gale virtual reference library, ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), p.2596.

and closer ties to enable us to face all the problems and difficulties that obstruct our way as an Islamic nation, believing in God, his Prophet, and His Laws. [31]

Importantly, Faisal's visits were not solely limited to Arab countries. They also included nine Muslim countries in Asia and Africa in which he similarly appealed for increased solidarity and cooperation according to the tenets of Islam.[32] However, his visits to Arab countries were of additional importance because those countries subscribing to the revolutionary ideals of Arab nationalism immediately declared their opposition to Saudi Arabia's recourse to an Islamist agenda as proof of its intention to create a coalition of conservative regimes to undermine the more progressive republican movements in the Arab world.[33] Faisal launched his appeal for Islamic solidarity in April 1965, calling for an Islamic Summit to be held in Mecca.[34]

This gesture also involved turning toward Iran as a potential ally against the perceived threats posed against Saudi Arabia by its neighbours Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. He proposed an Islamic Pact during a successful visit to Iran in December 1965, which was subsequently enlarged to include Jordan following his visit there in January 1966 to enlist the support of King Hussain.[35] In a speech delivered at the Iranian Majilis, or Parliament, Faisal forcefully denounced Arab nationalism, communism and any other ideology that was alien to or directly opposed the tenets of Islam in the Middle East.[36] Although Saudi Arabia had historically felt that the populace and predominantly Shi'ite Muslim country of Iran presented a genuine threat to the status-quo of the region, between 1965 and 1968, the authorities settled boundary disputes with its neighbours including Iran in an attempt to avoid any unnecessary confrontations and prevent further instability. Furthermore, when Saudi and Iranian geopolitical interests converged, the two countries often cooperated. For example, they formed a united front against Nasser, provided support to the legitimate Oman government during the Dhofar uprising in 1965, and agreed to the Continental

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[31] Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Information, Faisal Speaks. (Jeddah: Ministry of Information, N.D.), p.52. See more in Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations- A Biography of the Short-Lived Third World*, (New Delhi: LeftWord, 2007), p. 278.

[32] Ahmed Assah., *Miracle of the Desert Kingdom*, (London: Johnson, 1969), pp. 105-120.

[33] Nizar O. Madni.,Op.Cit, pp. 90-91.

[34] Ibid, p.89.

[35] Saeed M. Badeeb, *Saudi-Iranian Relations 1932-1982*. (London: Centre for Arab and Iranian Studies and Echoes, 1993), pp. 58-61. For further information; Tareq Ismael, Op.Cit., 1970, pp. 376-377.

[36] Ministry of Information, "Faisal speaks", King of Saudi Arabia. (Riyadh: Ministry of Information, Vol. 12, 1966), p. 40.

Shelf Agreement in 1968. [37] This attitude toward Iran is indicative of a more significant pattern of behaviour by King Faisal regarding Saudi foreign policy during this period. In order to further entrench the status quo and increase regional stability, many outstanding issues were resolved before they escalated into something more serious, particularly the numerous border disputes. In addition to those with Iran, border disputes with Jordan and Qatar were settled in 1965. [38] Such resolutions were absolutely vital given Saudi Arabia's pursuit of conservative foreign policies toward other Arab countries in particular and the Islamic world more generally, which meant careful diplomatic negotiations were preferred over reliance on military options. For this reason, Saudi foreign policy during the reign of King Faisal is best understood as being somewhat reactive and without having a clear strategy or set of defined objectives to determine the various decisions made.

(3.2) The Arab-Israeli Question and the Oil Embargo

On 7 April 1967 a military clash occurred on the Israeli-Syrian border that saw six Syrian planes shot down by the Israeli Air Force, an attack that Syria claimed was preceded by a significant buildup of Israel forces along this border. [39] According to Charles W. Yost, a former U.S. Ambassador to Syria, the incident "appear[ed] to have been the curtain raiser to the Six Day War."[40] Saudi Arabia supported Syria. On 18th May, Crown Prince Khalid issued a statement confirming Saudi support for Syria within the context of such Israeli aggression:

> Our attitude to this is consistent with our general policy in Arab affairs and
> our firm belief that any Israeli aggression against any other Arab country is
> an aggression against us...For our religion, our Arabism and the brotherly

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[37] Daoudi, M.S., and Dajami., Op.Cit., 1985.p 127.
[38] George Lenczowski., Op.Cit., 1980, p 604.
[39] Avi Shlaim and William R. Louis. *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). p.104.
[40] Charles W. Yost, The Arab-Israeli War: How it begin," Council on Foreign Relation, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 46. No. 2, (January 1968), p. 306.

links between our two countries make it inevitable that we should stand beside the Syrian people.[41]

On 23rd May, Nassir announced that Egypt was closing the Straits of Tiran, the Southern outlet from the Gulf of Aqaba.[42] When the war broke out on 5th June, Faisal sent a letter of support to the Egyptian leader, stating that:

> We stand beside you with all our strength and resources in this battle of destiny and offer you our full support in this decisive battle in the history of the Arab nation. Our forces have entered Jordan to stand beside the other Arab countries. We pray that God will support us all. [43]

Despite the previous confrontation between Nassir and Faisal on the Yemen issue, Saudi Arabia was the first to support Egypt in this war, choosing to ignore the smaller issue of national disputes to concentrate on the larger one of Arab and Islamic unity. The following day, Faisal addressed a public rally at Riyadh racecourse, announcing that "we consider any state or country, supporting or aiding Zionist-Israeli aggression against the Arabs in any way as committing an aggression against us" [44] and preparing his citizens for military conflict, "To *Jihad,* citizens, To *Jihad* citizens, To *Jihad,* nation of Muhammad and the Islamic peoples." [45] A single brigade of Saudi soldiers was sent to Jordan, with approximately 3,00-4,00 Arab troops remaining as a deterrent against recommencement of Israeli hostilities after the end of the war.[46]

On June 5, the oil ministers of Arab states convened in Baghdad and issued a statement pursuant to which they would, "stop all shipments of oil to any nation

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[41] Fuad A. Jabber (ed.), *International Documents on Palestine on 1967*, (Beirut: Institute on Palestine Studies, The University of Kuwait, 1972), p.533.

[42] For further informtion about the problem of straits of Tiran, see Robert McNamara, Britain, Nasser, and the Balance of Power in the Middle East, 1952-1967: From the Egyptian Revolution to the Six Day War. (London: Frank Cass, 2003), pp. 240-255.

[43] *al-Bīlād*, no. 6729, 6 June 1967.

[44] David Holden and Richard Johns, Op.Cit., 1981, p.252. (citing BBC Monitoring Report ME/2485/A/7, 1967).

[45] *al-Bīlād*, no. 6729, 6 June 1967.

[46] Adam M. Howard and Edward C. Keefer, "Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974-1976," in Bruce F. Duncombe, et al., *Foreign relations of the United States* 1969-1976. (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2001), p.147. See more in Abdalrahman al-Angari, Op.Cit.,1989, p. 279-282.

assisting Israel in its aggression against Arab countries."[47] The Saudi government prohibited the exportation of oil to Britain and the U.S. from 7th June onwards, the two countries most committed to supporting Israel:[48]

> The necessary measures are taken. These measures include the signing by the company, the purchaser and the captain of the tanker, of understandings that no Saudi oil shall reach the territory of such states, Britain and the U.S., as His Majesty's government has decided shall be denied it.[49]

In reality, Saudi Arabia suffered severe financial losses from this embargo, thus limiting its ability to exert influence on Western countries that were supporting Israel and encourage them to reconsider their position. In actual fact, Ahmad Zaki Yamani, the Saudi Oil Minister, considered the embargo to have "hurt the Arabs themselves more than anyone else," estimating the immediate losses during the last twenty-four days of June to amount to $30,264,900, with the annual loss approaching $122,600,000. [50]

On 15th August, the Arab oil-producing countries met in Baghdad with the aim of discussing Iraq's proposal that all Arab oil supplies be cut for three months to Western Europe to exhaust the stockpiles there,[51] a proposal opposed by Saudi authorities who even suggested the embargo imposed on Britain and the U.S. should also be reconsidered. It was believed that the embargo, in conjunction with the increased calls for the nationalization of oil resources in the region, "ran counter to Arab interests,"[52] because both threatened to make the Arab world over dependent on the Soviet Union. Removing the embargo, it was thought, would position Western countries as a counter to the increased threat of communist infiltration into and influence in the region, while also alleviating fears surrounding possible British intervention in Kuwait and other Arab oil-producing countries for its own strategic

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[47] John D. Ciorciari, "Saudi-U.S. Alignment After the Six-Day War", *Middle East Review of International Affairs* (MERIA), Vol. 09, no. 2, (Jun 2005), p. 3.
[48] Muḥammad J. Kishk, al-Saʿūdīyūn wa-al- Ḥall al-ʿīslāmī: Masḍar al-Sharʿīyah lil-niẓām al-saʿūdīSaudi (The Saudis and the Islamic Solution: Sources of Legitimacy of the Saudi Regime), ed. 2, (West Hanover: Halliday Lithography Cooperation, 1982), p. 83.
[49] *al-Bīlād*, No. 6737, June 14, 1967.
[50] The Final Report, "American Security and the International Energy Situation". HI-2239-RR., Volume. 2, *Hudson Institute, INC., World Energy and the Security of Supply*, 15 April 1975.
[51] M.S. Daoudi and M.S. Dajani, "The 1967 Oil Embargo Revisited," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, University of California Press, Vol. 13, No. 2, (Winter 1984), p. 75.
[52] *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 August 1967.

purposes.[53] On 2nd September 1967, Saudi Arabia announced its resumption of oil shipments "to all countries without exception,"[54] bringing to an end a foreign policy decision that ultimately failed because "the U.S., one of the main target of the embargo, was not hurt by it" as the "oil companies managed to redistribute oil from the non-embargoed countries to the embargoed ones." [55] In response to this failure and the differences between the Arab oil-producing countries and Saudi Arabia, the former, along with Kuwait and Libya, established the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) in January 1968, to ensure that future policy would be in the hands of the leading oil exporting countries, Saudi Arabia began work under the patronage of (OAPEC), [56] an absolutely vital move to ensure greater economic integration between the member states and allowing them to work collectively to use their resources to exert political pressure in the service of safeguarding Arab rights on an international basis.[57] In an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper *al-Siyasah* on 12th September 1968, Yamani stated that one of the primary catalysts for establishing OAPEC was the need:

> To keep oil activity within the organisation with a view to protecting the member states from precipitous decisions, and making oil a genuine weapon to serve the interests of the producing countries and the Arab countries in general.[58]

Nevertheless, even with all Arab states support, the Six-Day Arab-Israeli War had concluded with Israel successfully occupying the Sinai Peninsula right up to the Suez Canal in Egypt, the entire West Bank of the Jordan, and the Golan Heights in Syria. While losing such strategically important swathes of territory was a considerable blow to the pursuit of Arab unity, the West Bank contained the third holiest city in Islam, Jerusalem. Following further hostilities, the United Nations unanimously passed Resolution 242 on 22nd November 1967, a proposal sponsored by Britain that

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[53] M.S. Daoudi and M.S. Dajani, Op.Cit., 1984, p.76.
[54] Ibid, p.80.
[55] Abdalrahman al-Angari., Op. Cit.,1989, p. 284.
[56] M.S. Daoudi and M.S. Dajani, Op.Cit., 1984, p.66.
[57] Abdel Kader Maachou, *OAPEC and Arab Petroleum: An International Organisation for Economic Cooperation and an Instrument for Regional Integration*, (Paris: Berger- Levrault, 1982), p.39.
[58] Quoted in Mohammed E. Ahrari., *OPEC: The Failing Giant*, (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015), p.242.

recognised Israeli claims to national sovereignty and its right to peaceful coexistence with its Arab neighbours while also ordering the immediate retreat of Israeli occupational forces from Arab lands.[59] Even with this resolution, the defeat exposed two undeniable shortcomings to Arab unity: the extent to which the various military forces were ill-prepared for complete cooperation and lacked a coherent strategy. Furthermore, this conflict had three hugely important consequences. Firstly, the Palestine question emerged as the dominant concern for Arab states; secondly, the Palestinian Resistance Movement gained considerable influence to become a formidable political force in the region; [60] and thirdly, an unprecedented reconciliation occurred between Arab leaders, signalling the end of counter-productive conflicts in the region in favour of pursuing greater Islamic solidarity.[61] The Six-Day War proved a particularly contentious issue for the Saudi authorities, who refused to recognise both the initial ceasefire of 8th June 1967, which officially marked the cessation of hostilities, and Resolution 242, even though, it was sanctioned by the UN Security Council. Instead, officials vowed "unceasing war against Israel until the Palestinians recover their full rights and the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem are retrieved,"[62] while Jamil Baruody, the Saudi representative at the UN, stated at the General Assembly in November 1967 that "the creation of Israel was illegal and immoral, to say the least." [63]

On 21st January 1970, Israeli armoured forces attacked Saudi forces south of the Dead Sea, with the latter receiving support from both Jordanian and Fatah Commando units. The Israeli government described this action as "a sweep of the Safi and Feifa Valleys to mop up commando bases."[64] As confirmed by a Jordanian army spokesman, Saudi troops, which had been stationed in Ghor al-Safi in Jordan since 1967, participated in this encounter and suffered a number of casualties, one soldier was killed, 11 were injured, and nine were disappeared after the attack.[65]

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[59] Sydney N. Fisher, *The Middle East: A History*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997), pp. 697-705.

[60] Fuad Jabber, "The Palestinian Resistance and Inter-Arab Politics," in William B. Quandt, (et al.), *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism,* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1974). pp. 155-199.

[61] Malcolm H. Kerr, "Regional Arab Politics and the Conflict with Israel," in P.Y. Hammond and A.S. Alexander (eds.), *Political Dynamics in the Middle East*, (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., Inc., 1972), pp. 62-66.

[62] William B. Quandt, Op.Cit., 1974, p.184. See more in William B. Quandt, *Saudi Arabia in the 1980's: Foreign Policy, Security, and Oil*, (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1981), pp. 58-79.

[63] Quoted in Abdalrahman al-Angari., Op. Cit., 1989, p. 280.

[64] Arab Report and Record (ARR), Economic Features, Limited, 16-31 January 1970, pp.62-81

[65] Ibid. p.81.

In discussing how the oil embargo features prominently in the Palestinian issue, it is necessary to understand the key participants in this situation. With respect to Saudi Arabia's relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Palestinian leaders agreed on the establishment of the Arab Higher Committee in 1936,[66] which was immediately recognized by Saudi Arabia as consisting of the legitimate representatives of the Palestinians, with King Abdal-Aziz even supporting Hajj Amin al-Husayni,[67] both diplomatically and financially. Furthermore, when the Arab leaders agreed to establish the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in 1964, Saudi Arabia pledged £1 million in direct financial support. Prior to 1967, Saudi Arabia intended to withdraw its financial aid from all inter-Arab organizations and Saudi had been holding back on its contributions to the agreed anti-Israel programme to the PLO.[68] Piscatori argues that Faisal suspension of Saudi aid to the PLO was because it was "in league with the radical states and had even threatened the Saudi monarchy itself "[69] but the actual reason for the suspension was that King Hussein of Jordan, an important ally of Faisal in the conservative camp, had accused the PLO in 1966 of facilitating the spread of communism.[70] The defeat of the Arab armies in the June War and the discrediting of the PLO leadership, which was not sponsored by all Arab states, enabled the Fatah movement to assume control in 1969. [71] At the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Cairo from 1st-4th February 1968, al-Shugayri, the first head of the PLO, resigned and Yahiya Hammouda was elected as acting chairman. At the subsequent meeting in February 1969, Fatah assumed control of the PLO and Yasir Arafat became Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee.[72] Faisal's attitude towards the PLO changed markedly following the embarrassing defeat of Arab forces during the Six Day War. Saudi Arabia began to assume a more active role in Arab affairs following this conflict, with Faisal emerging as a recognized leading

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[66] Tareq Y. Ismael, Jacqueline S. Ismael, *Politics and Government in the Middle East and North Africa*, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1991), p. 298.

[67] A Mufti is a Muslim legal expert who is empowered to give rulings on religious matters of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni established the Islamic Supreme Council to oversee Muslim interests in Palestine interests. Following the death of Izz al-Din al-Qassam in 1935, al-Husayni was named head of the Arab Higher Committee, which was established that same year. He enjoyed a prominent role in the 1936 revolution by encouraging volunteers from various Arab countries to come to the defense of Palestine against Israeli threats.

[68] Robert R. Sullivan, Op.Cit.,1970. p. 450.

[69] James P. Piscatori, Op.Cit., 1983, p. 42.

[70] Ibid, pp.42-44.

[71] The Fatah movement was founded at the end of the fifties after the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1959, and Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip. It is a national, secular Palestinian movement.

[72] Arab Report and Record (ARR), Economic Features, Limited, 1969, pp. 65-98.

Arab statesman, capable of filling the vacuum created by Nassir's death in September 1970. Faisal's success can perhaps be credited to the fact that his views corresponded with popular opinion in the Arab world, chiefly that peace was impossible without the complete withdrawal of occupational Israeli forces from Arab territories, the official recognition of Palestinian rights and the return of the holy sites in Palestine to the Muslim population.[73]

After 1970, Saudi Arabia had significantly improved its relations with the radical regimes of Iraq, Syria, and Algeria, while also improving its political dealings with the PLO. Although relations with Egypt were functional, they were decidedly cautious until the death of Nasser. The new President, Anwar al-Sadat, adopted a more moderate approach to foreign affairs, which facilitated an immediate improvement in Saudi-Egypt relations as he distanced himself from the pan-Arab agenda and aligned himself with the pan-Islamic discourse endorsed by Faisal, who visited Cairo in June 1971. After in-depth discussions about a wide range of issues, a joint communiqué was issued, stating that:

> The two leaders again confirm their adherence to the Islamic sharia, that Islam is the religion of peace, freedom and social justice and its eternal teachings ensure a better life for all people.[74]

In the negotiations with Sadat, Faisal wanted to help reverse the trend in the region towards radicalism, communism, and Zionism. A key component of this strategy was generous diplomatic, financial and military support for those states at the frontlines of these issues. In an interview with *al-Joumhouria*, Faisal said:

> The combatant states must be given financial support to cover all their very numerous requirements; they must be given military support to strengthen their situation and to protect their operations; and the combatant states must be given

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[73] Henry Kissinger, Op.Cit., 1982. pp. 663-664.
[74] Quoted in Shafqat A. Shah, "The Political and Strategic Foundations of International Arms Transfers: A Case Study of American Arms Supplies to/and Purchases by Iran and Saudi Arabia, 1968-1976," Ph.D. Thesis, (Virginia: University of Virginia, 1977), p. 231.

political support to boost any step they take and to confirm their declarations and decisions, Saudi Arabia believes in all this and is acting on it. [75]

During Sadat's visit to Saudi Arabia on 23rd August 1973, Faisal had promised him whatever financial support was required to confront Israel. Furthermore, according to *The New York Times*, Faisal had promised Sadat that Saudi Arabia would not only support a forthcoming war, but would also cover any resulting debts that Egypt accrued, to the extent that this was considered by Western diplomats "to be crucial to President Sadat's decision to open the hostilities on 6th October." [76] The Saudi commitment to the war against Israel was also a factor in King Faisal's decision to use his country's oil supply as an economic weapon against the United States and other countries that support Israel. [77] In addition, Sadat made further requests, including "enough wheat to feed his people; a guarantee of spare parts for his industry and his military machine; and a guaranteed supply of oil," [78] while also seeking reassurance that Faisal was prepared to use oil as a strategic weapon against the U.S. and any other country that continued to support Israel. In an attempt to assure Sadat of Saudi support, Faisal offered him twenty light fighter-bombers that were recently acquired from Britain. [79] Furthermore, on 11th September 1973, the French weekly news magazine *Jeune Afrique* reported that Saudi Arabia had ordered thirty-three Mirage aircrafts from France, which were also to be made available to the Egyptian Air Force. [80] General Saad E1-Shazly confirms this, [81] when he explained how:

> Saudi Arabia signed a contract on our behalf for Sea King Helicopters and 32 Mirages. The sum allocated for machine gun ammunition for the aircraft was

[75] *al-Jūmhūrīh*, Cairo, 22 November 1973.

[76] Quoted in Russell A. Stone, *OPEC and the Middle East: the impact of oil on societal development*, (Santa Barbara: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 24.

[77] Don Peretz, "Foreign Policies of the Persian Gulf States", part. 3, *New Outlook*, Vol. 20, No. 3, (April-May 1974), p.50.

[78] Alan Hart, Arafat, *Terrorist or Peacemaker?*, (London: Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd.,1985), p. 370.

[79] Mohamed Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan*, (London: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd.,1975), pp.157-158.

[80] Record of the Arab World: "Yearbook of Arab and Israeli Politics", Vol. 1, *Research and Publishing House Journals* (IRPH), 1973, p. 53.

[81] General Saad El-Shazly served as Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces from 16th May 1971 until 13th December 1973. See also in David Binder, How be 2 Sides Meet War's Cost, The New York Times Archives, October 21,1973.

excessive of 35 million dollars. King Faisal had decided to give a helicopter as a present to Sadat.[82]

On 6th October 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a full-scale military attack against Israel, commonly referred to as the October War, (Yom Kippur War or Ramadan War). This conflict, as Sadat observed, had two precise objectives: the recapture of those territories occupied by Israel following the Six-Day War and the restoration of the Palestinians' rights.[83] In response to this recommencement of hostilities, Prince Sultan, the Saudi Minister of Defence, announced that:

> His Majesty [has] ordered…all Saudi Arabian forces be placed in a state of maximum preparedness in order to take part in the major battle of the Arab nation...In addition...the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia places all its capabilities and resources in the service of the battle.[84]

On 9th October, Prince Sultan confirmed that troops had begun to arrive in Syria for deployment along the Golan Heights front,[85] with a motorised infantry brigade equipped with armoured cars and artillery units prepared for immediate action. On 19th October, a Saudi military spokesman confirmed that elements of the national forces had participated in an operation in the northern sector of the Golan Heights against Israeli forces situated in Tal Faras, resulting in the destruction of five enemy tanks with three others rendered inoperable and a number of enemy fatalities.[86]

As a result of the hostilities, the U.N. Security Council drafted Resolution 338 on 22nd October, which ordered an immediate ceasefire and demanded that those

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[82] General Saad El-Shazly, *The Crossing of Suez: The October War 1973*, (London: Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, 1980), p. 102.

[83] Henry Cattan, *Palestine and International Law: The Legal Aspects of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (London: Longman Group Ltd., l976), p. 30.

[84] Nihād al-Ghadri, *al-Sīyāsah al-Khārijīyah al-Saʿūdīyah: al-ʿahdāf wa al-asālīb*, (The Saudi Foreign Policy: Objectives and Methods), (Italia: Poligrafici Editoriale Spa- Officine, Bologna, N.D.,1997), pp. 77-78.

[85] David E. Long, "Saudi Arabia", the Washington Paper. 39, Beverly Hills: Sage publication for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, (1976), pp. 12-19. See also in Nihād al-Ghadri, Op.Cit., p.77.

[86] Arab Report and Record (ARR), Economic Features, Limited, l6-3l October 1973, p.474.

nations responsible for the resumption of hostilities implement the original Resolution 242 of 1967, in order to renegotiate the various territory disputes and thus ensuring a period of more resilient, reliable peace in the Middle East.[87] While Saudi Arabia acquiesced to these U.N. recommendations, its overarching attitude toward Israel did not change, with the government releasing a statement insisting that:

> The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will maintain its armed forces on the Syrian front under orders of the Syrian command and will abide by the decision which it has to take or will be taking in support of the Arab cause.[88]

Faisal sent a strongly worded letter to U.S. President Richard Nixon on 16th October 1973 in response to the U.S. airlift to support Israel, requesting the immediate termination of U.S. arms shipments and insisting that Israel withdrew to the 1967 lines.[89] Nixon could not provide such assurances and his suggestion that he could not either coerce or encourage Israel to withdraw to the 1967 lines· resulted in a deterioration of Saudi-U.S. relations.[90]

Despite these complications in diplomatic relations with the U.S., Saudi Arabia refused to use oil as a strategic, political weapon, with King Faisal claiming in 1972 that "oil is not a military weapon; it is an economic force with which we can buy weapons which can be used in battle."[91] By 1973, this opinion shifted completely as Faisal began to recognize that the U.S. position in the Arab-Israeli conflict would not change without exerting some kind of economic pressure. In April 1973, therefore, Ahmad Zaki Yamani, the Saudi Minister of Petroleum, was sent to Washington to deliver a warning to American officials that "Saudi Arabia [would not be in the position] to expand production at the desired rate unless the U.S. changed its policy

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[87] UNSC Resolution. 338, (1973) (October 22, 1973) SCOR 28th Year 10. See in; Michael Lynk and Susan Akram, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict and International Law*, (Boston: Boston University School of Law Working Paper no. 13-11, 30 April 2013).

[88] Jorgen *S.* Neilson (ed.), "The International Documents on Palestine 1973," *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (1976), p. 496.

[89] William B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1976*, (Los Angeles and Berkely: University of California Press,1977), p. 188.

[90] Nadav Safran, Op.Cit., 1985, p.157.

[91] Andrew S. Cooper, *The Oil Kings: How the U.S., Iran, and Saudi Arabia Changed the Balance of Power in the Middle East*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), p. 80. See more in Mohamed Heikal, Op.Cit., 1975, p.268.

toward Israel."[92] However, this warning had no effective results, causing Frank Jungers, the chief of Saudi Aramco Company to claim in May 1973 that " time is running out" and that the Americans "will lose everything" if there were no proper changes in their position regarding the Middle East conflict. Furthermore, he explained that Saudi Arabia would no longer be "able to stand alone much longer" as an ally of the U.S. in the Middle East as it was becoming "more and more difficult to hold off the tide of opinion that was now running so heavily against America."[93] In an interview with the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Washington Post* in Taif on 6th July, Faisal said that the strength of future links would "depend on the United States having a more even-handed and just policy in the Middle East" and that Saudi Arabia would find it "difficult to continue co-operation with the United States in the petroleum field unless Washington moves towards a more balanced policy in the Middle East." [94] Despite these efforts, the Nixon administration ignored these warnings with, what W. Stookey, identifies as, a "complacency that seems feckless in retrospect" because the U.S. "ignored the fundamental shift in Saudi Arabian petroleum policy that occurred by the summer of l973."[95] As a result, the Saudi advised the Americans that by September 1973 they had to have had exerted their influence on Israel to make them completely accept Resolution 242 or otherwise face the consequences of a diminished supply of oil, from eight to seven million barrels a day.[96] When the Arab-Israeli War broke out on 6 October 1973, almost every Arabic newspaper reflected public opinion when they demanded the nationalisation of the American oil companies and an embargo on oil exports to the U.S. as a result of its apparently unconditional support for Israel. It was widely accepted that the Arab oil-producing states had to immediately implement a strategy. Accordingly, Faisal sent Umar al-Saqqaf, the Foreign Minister, to Washington to personally deliver a letter to Nixon warning that "if the United States becomes too obvious a resupply agent for Israel in the present war, it would be almost impossible for him to withstand pressure to halt oil shipments." [97] However, Nixon explained that he was committed to

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[92] "Saudis Tie Oil to U.S. Policy on Israel" ,*Washington Post*, 19 April 1973.

[93] Isaiah L. Kenen, " Aramco Oilmen Leap to Faisal,s Dictates", *Near East Report*, Volumes 18-20, Michigan: University of Michigan, (1974), pp.182-185.

[94] Richard B. Parker, *The October War: A Retrospective*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), pp.189-191. See also in Christian Science Monitor, July 6, 1973.

[95] Robert W. Stookey, *America and the Arab States: An Uneasy Encounter*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p.254.

[96] *Economist Weekly*, London: 22 September 1973.

[97] Joe Stork., *Middle East Oil and the Energy Crisis*, (London: Monthly Review Press, 1975), p. 224.

supporting Israel because the Senate had already voted to send reinforcements with a majority of two to one.[98] As a result, the oil ministers of the six Gulf countries met in Kuwait on 16th October, deciding to reduce production and to increase the oil prices from $3.01 to $5.11 per barrel.[99]

On 17th October, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed to cut production by five percent each month until Israel withdrew from Arab territories occupied during the 1967 war. To further emphasise this position, Saudi Arabia announced the following day that it would reduce oil production by ten per cent and end all shipments to the U.S. if it did not significantly alter its pro-Israel policy and, most importantly, immediately cease supplying arms to the OAPEC's regional opponent. However, the U.S. did just the opposite and on 19th October Nixon asked to approve an emergency military aid bill for Israel amounting to $2.2 billion.[100] In response, the Saudi government announced on 20th October that:

> In view of the increase in American military aid to Israel, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has decided to halt oil exports to the United States of America for taking this position.[101]

Saudi Arabia immediately reduced production by twenty-five per cent and completely ceased suppliers to the U.S., with the majority of other OAPEC states assuming the same position with their own policy cutbacks and embargos.[102] These embargos are thought to have collectively reduced supplies to the U.S. by approximately two million barrels a day, with the Federal Energy Administration reporting in 1974 that five month embargo resulted in half a million job-losses and a loss of between ten and twenty billion dollars to the Gross National Product.[103] They were also immensely

[98] Anthony Sampson, *The Seven Sisters: The Great Oil Companies and the World they Shaped*, (New York: Bantam Book, 1975), p.301.
[99] Ali D. Johany, *The Myth of the OPEC Cartel*, (London: John Wiley and Sons, 1980), pp. 12-20.
[100] Fouad K. Barradah., Op.Cit.,1989, p.139.
[101] Chookiat Panaspornprasit, *U.S.-Kuwaiti Relations, 1961-1992: An Uneasy Relationship*, (London: Routledge, 2004, p.59.
[102] Edward R.F. Sheehan, *The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger: A Secret History of American Diplomacy in the Middle Eas,* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976), pp.40-51.
[103] U.S. Federal Energy Administration (FEA), (Office of Economic Impact), "The Economic Impact of the Oil Embargo on the American Economy", Washington D.C.: Federal Energy Administration, (8 August 1974), p. 9.

successful since the U.S. began to take the Middle East problem serious for the first time, eventually committing itself to finding a permanent solution through Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy" and the Geneva Peace Conference of 1974.[104] *Newsweek* even observed that they "prodded the U.S. which in turn prodded Israel, and the result was the disengagement of Israeli and Egyptian forces along the Suez Canal."[105] Therefore, at the Arab oil Ministers Meeting in Vienna on 18th March 1974, the OPEC states agreed to end the embargo against the U.S. after noting a change in its "official policy as evidenced lately by the recent political events."[106]

By analysing Saudi foreign policy during the reign of King Faisal, it is apparent that the exposure he experienced to foreign affairs during King Saud's reign was an important influence on determining his approach to certain decisions. It also reveals that upon assuming power in 1964 he had to immediately confront a number of hugely complex issues, in particular the conflicts with radical Arab countries following the example of Egypt under Nasser and the Palestinian question created by Israel's expansionist agenda in the region. During this period, Faisal was committed to maintaining the status quo, which necessarily involved adopting the more conservative policy of supporting regimes that opposed the radical Arab nationalist movements. As demonstrated by its involvement in the Yemen crisis, Saudi Arabia was willing to abstain from pursuing solely military options, even exposing its own territories to potential violations in order to achieve diplomatic resolutions. Faisal's decision to avoid direct military confrontations also resulted in proxy conflicts. Despite the considerable improvements in Saudi's military capacity following its acquisition of modern weapons and aircraft, its foreign policy continued to avoid direct confrontation. This persistent attitude indicates a lack of initiative in this area and a tendency toward reaction, as demonstrated by its decision to cease supporting the royalists in Yemen after Egypt did the same with the republicans. Rather than using this event as an opportunity to assume the initiative in the region, Saudi foreign policy remained limited to being reactive. In addition, during Faisal's reign foreign policy was characterised by his own cautious but always informed and realistic

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[104] Edward R.F. Sheehan, Op.Cit.,1976, p.5.

[105] Sheikh R. Ali, *Saudi Arabia and Oil Diplomacy.* (New York: Praeger, 1976), p.115. See in *Newsweek*, Vol. 83, No. 9, March 17, 1974. p. 43.

[106] "Oil Embargo Ended", *American Institute for Economic Research.* Research Reports. 01230, Massachusetts, (1 April 1974), p.50. See in Juan De Onis, "Most Arab Lands End Ban on Oil Shipments For U.S.: Saudis Plan Output Rise", *The New York Times Archives*, 19 March 1974, p. 1.

approach to complex regional and international issues. His decision to avoid direct military confrontations in favour of diplomatic negotiations was undoubtedly influenced by his extensive experience in foreign affairs prior to his reign and his first-hand experience with events of domestic, regional and international importance. Perhaps more importantly, Faisal's approach to foreign policy reflected his accurate understanding of his country's capabilities. Moreover, the Saudis preferred to use the Diplomatic instrument to create an alternative ideology by promoting Islamic values and trying to create a conservative alliance to counter Egypt and radical Arab nationalism. At the time, Saudi Arabia was suffering internal instability following the removal of King Saud from power between 1962 -1964. This instability limited Saudi foreign policy to exercise a role without restrictions and with the greatest influence.

In this regard, his preference for diplomatic solutions and his willingness to employ economic measures as strategic tools are best understood as examples not of him assuming the initiative or pursuing a proactive foreign policy programme, quite the opposite in fact. Promoting Islamic solidarity, therefore, was a reactive political gesture in response to the trend of Arab nationalism. Moreover, Saudi foreign policy was also characterised by a particularly semi- pragmatic or restricted pragmatism approach to maintaining the status quo, as demonstrated by Faisal's willingness to establish an alliance with Iran despite the profound geopolitical, ideological and sectarian differences between the two nations. This decision was motivated by the requirement to create a coalition of conservative regimes to undermine the various nationalist movements in the region and ensure a more balanced distribution of authority between the monarchies and the emerging republics influenced by Arab nationalism. The Arab-Israeli conflict provided a further opportunity to prioritise the common interests between the two countries rather than focusing on the differences. For example, establishing a bloc to oppose Israel's expansionist policies and providing economic support to the Palestinian liberation movements, especially the Palestine Liberation Organisation, allowed Saudi Arabia and Iran to coordinate their efforts and resources. Although Saudi participation in the numerous occasions of Arab-Israel hostilities between 1967-1973 might suggest an aberration from its conventional strategy of avoiding military intervention, its involvement was first and foremost in a defensive rather than an offensive capacity, thereby further emphasising how Saudi foreign policy during the reign of King Faisal was consistently reactive rather than proactive and characterised by a lack of initiative when pursuing and

protecting national interests. However, as a reaction policy, Saudi Arabia got involved with its radical Arab enemies against Israel, despite the fact that the latter didn't pose any actual threat to Saudi interests. On the contrary, Israel was undermining Saudi Arabia's enemies, which illustrates that Saudi Arabia was not pragmatic or opportunistic insofar as the principles of its foreign policy were restricted to achieving its interests.

According to the various components of Saudi foreign policy during this period, such as the conflict in Yemen, the Palestinian question and the oil embargo as outlined and analysed in this chapter, major changes and radical developments were occurring in the Middle East. Saudi behavior in this regional context can be determined and the various policy tools employed by officials can be identified, both of which indicate that Saudi Arabia did not originally have a large impact, unlike Egypt for example. Its actions during this period also illustrate how Saudi foreign policy was not yet proactive in that policy-makers did not actively shape events and determine their outcomes but instead continued to assume a reactive stance. Rather than employing dynamic strategies capable of responding immediately to changes in the region, policy-makers maintained a somewhat risk-averse. For this reason, there was no coherent policy or comprehensive strategy that managed to clearly interrelate the economic, diplomatic, military and media communication tools that are essential to successfully realizing the objectives of a nation's foreign policy strategy.

This study is based on the assumption that Saudi foreign policy underwent a radical shift after 2011 from a reactive stance to a more proactive and initiating alternative, an argument that runs contrary to previous analysis of the historical pattern. Such a proposal is substantiated by Prince Saud al-Faisal, King Faisal's son and the Saudi Foreign Minister, who confirmed this interpretation during one of the interviews that form the field research component of this project.[107] During the period being surveyed by this chapter, Prince Saud functioned in a consultancy role to King Faisal and his comments support my hypothesis and analyses of the historical facts that demonstrate how Saudi foreign policy was reactive during his father's reign (1964-1973) in order to maintain the status quo and allow the country to play a strategic role in the region that was equivalent to its economic, geographical and religious significance amongst its neighbours. During this interview, I focused on the

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[107] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

Yemen conflict, in particular when Saudi Arabia withdrew its support for the Royalists in response to Egypt's decision to withdraw support for the Republicans following the outbreak of hostilities with Israel in 1967. This event provided an opportunity for Saudi Arabia to ensure a favourable ally in the region with a similar governmental structure by helping the Royalists realize their objectives as they were already on the verge of victory. Prince Saud explains how the decision to withdraw support was ultimately determined by the need to focus attention and resources on domestic development; the lack or capability to assume and maintain a position of geopolitical authority in the region; and to adhere to the principle prohibiting that one take advantage of a fellow-Arab country that was already experiencing significant military threats from another country. As Turki's explanation demonstrates, this period of Saudi foreign policy is characterised as being reactive and concerned with immediate circumstances, since withdrawing support for the Royalists in response to Egypt's actions prevented the realization of a major strategic interest in the region that would have had long-term benefits.

(3.3) The Lebanon Crisis and Civil War (1975-1982)

King Faisal was assassinated by his nephew, Prince Faisal Ibn Musaad, in April 1975. The assassination was motivated by revenge for the death of his brother, Khalid Ibn Musaid, who was killed by Saudi security forces in 1965 after entering into an armed confrontation with police. Musaid was a Muslim fanatic and tried to prevent the nation's first television station broadcasting for religious reasons.[108] A year that also saw the Lebanon Crisis and the consequent civil war, King Khalid assumed power and committed himself to following his brother's foreign policy strategy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and improving international relations through a programme of strengthened economic and cultural ties. During Faisal's funeral on 26th March 1975, Khalid was asked by US Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller what direction Saudi foreign policy would take, to which he replied that nothing would change as he intended to adhere to the path and political principles outlined by Faisal and, most importantly, to maintain excellent relations with the

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[108] Mark Weston, *Prophets and Princes: Saudi Arabia from Muhammad to the Present*. (Hoboken, N.J: Wiley, 2008), p. 228.

U.S.[109] Shortly after this exchange, Khalid experienced his "first major foreign policy challenge,"[110] when, on 13th April, 27 people were killed by members of the Christian Phalangists [al-Katā'ib al-Lubnānīya], while travelling on a bus carrying Palestinian Arab Liberation Front militants and Lebanese sympathisers to the Shabra refugee camp. These killings were seen as retaliation by the Phalange militia against Palestinians who had earlier fired on their leader and the founder of the al-Katā'ib Party, Pierre Gemayel. These acts of aggression between the Katā'ib and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) soon expanded to include all the various ethnic parties and militia groups, and civil war quickly erupted. [111]

Prior to this, Saudi foreign policy toward Lebanon was based on avoiding any form of interference in its domestic affairs. This position was due to two primary reasons. Firstly, unlike Yemen or the Gulf States, Lebanon was not of strategic importance because it did not share a border with Saudi Arabia. Secondly, during this period, Saudi policy was designed to maintain the status quo and policy-makers feared that intervention in Lebanon would radically alter the balance of power in the region between Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Israel. This decision to avoid assuming an active role in the Lebanese Crisis and continuing its policy of non-intervention was explained during my interview with Prince Saud al-Faisal the Saudi Foreign Minister, "since its inception, the Saudi kingdom's policy did not try to interfere in the affairs of other countries," [112] as illustrated by its position prior to the Civil War, and that the decision to become involved following the outbreak of domestic hostilities "was for the purpose of playing the mediator" to help solve this situation. When the Lebanon Crisis was at its height, Fahd bin Abdul-Aziz, the king from 1982-2005, stated that:

> The Lebanon issue can only be resolved from inside of Lebanon itself; the men of Lebanon realize that the unity among the people of Lebanon is the thing that must be maintained, I believe that no one wants to see Lebanon separated into two parties and we hope that leaders of the country will

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[109] al-Riyāḍ, no. 2986, 26 March 1975.
[110] Graeme, Bannerman, " Saudi Arabia‹" In Haley, P. Edward, Lewis W. Snider (eds.), *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues*, (New York, Syracuse University Press,.1979), p. 113.
[111] Michael D. Dawahare, *Civil Society and Lebanon: Toward a Hermeneutic Theory of the Public Sphere in Comparative Studies*, (Florida: Brown Walker Press, 2000), p. 9.
[112] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

continue to meet to achieve the desired result of reuniting all Lebanese people.[113]

King Khalid himself commented on these events, declaring that everyone is aware of Lebanon's circumstances and that it is the duty of the country's loyal sons to work together to avoid these circumstances leading to regrettable events that will forever define the country.[114]

Saudi Arabia tried to restrict its diplomatic dealings with Lebanon and distance itself from any resolution that would involve making a deal with one party rather than the other. This position was due to the country's desire to avoid employing any initiative in terms of foreign policy decisions relating to this issue, which might inadvertently increase its involvement in the domestic disputes of regional countries. Fahd bin Abdul-Aziz confirmed this stance in 1975, when he stated that Saudi Arabia will not deal with any particular sectarian party in Lebanon, but instead deal with the Lebanese government to help it find a solution for this issue with Arab support.[115] The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) similarly confirmed this stance, explaining how "Saudi authorities, who insist the country is still fully committed to a policy of non-interference in its brother's internal affairs."[116] At the beginning of the civil war, Saudi policy was aimed at trying to find a solution by working in the context of the Arab League. On 9th June 1976, the first emergency meeting of Arab foreign ministers was called to discuss the escalation of the civil war and the threat it posed to peace and security in the region. Ministers consequently decided to form an Arab Security Force under Resolution No. 3456.[117] However, significant obstacles to finding a solution were encountered due to the Egypt-Syria dispute, which further deteriorated after Egypt signed the "Sinai Interim Agreement" [118] with Israel in September 1975. While this agreement temporarily ended hostilities between the two countries, it served to further irritate Syrian authorities. Both Egypt and Syria were important players in the Lebanese Crisis, therefore no solution was possible without their presence at talks and their participation in any conciliation efforts. As a result, Saudi foreign policy was

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[113] *'Ukāz*, no. 3468, 21 November 1975.
[114] *'Ukāz*, no. 3427, 17 October 1975.
[115] *Al-Riyāḍ*, no. 3203, 29 November 1975.
[116] *Al-Riyāḍ*, no.3205, 1 December 1975.
[117] Arab League resolution, (D 3456/ D G A-1) 9 June 1976.
[118] The Sinai Interim Agreement was a diplomatic agreement signed by Israel and Egypt. The signing ceremony took place in Geneva on September 4, 1975. The Agreement impacted on Egyptian relationships with Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

reoriented toward resolving the dispute between these two countries and a meeting was arranged in June 1976 in Riyadh for the respective prime ministers to begin a process of reconciliation.[119] However, Syrian and Maronite forces were also working together during this period, and in July the Palestinian refugee camp Tel Zaatar fell after having been besieged and shelled by heavy artillery for two months. By the time the Phalangists [*al-Katā'ib*] forces entered the camp under air support by its Syrian ally, an estimated 3,000 Palestinians had been killed.[120] To further complicate issues, Syria launched an offensive on Mount Lebanon on 23rd September, which led to Saudi Arabia withdrawing its 5,000 troops from the Syrian-Israel border that had been stationed there since the October 1973 war.[121]

In October 1976, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait convened a summit in Riyadh to include Egyptian, Syrian and Lebanese representatives in an effort to finally resolve the crisis. It was decided to reinforce the Arab League Resolution No. 3456, which provided a mandate for establishing the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF), an international peacekeeping force designed to intervene in Lebanon's Civil War. Unlike its predecessor, the Arab Security Force, the ADF had troops numbering 30,000, with 22,000 coming from Syria but which had already been operating in Lebanon, 1,500 from Saudi Arabia and 6,500 from other Arab states.[122] This decision ultimately gave legitimacy to Syrian troops' presence in Lebanon and can be regarded as a significant strategic mistake since they remained beyond their mandate and helped Hezbollah later gain increased influence under the support of Syria and Iran to the detriment of Saudi interests in the country. Due to the ineffectiveness of the ADF and the growing differences between the conflicting factions in the civil war, Saudi Arabia withdrew its troops from Lebanon in early 1979,[123] thus resuming its policy of non-involvement and reassessing its position as mediator in the search for a national reconciliation.

By mid-April 1981, a new crisis emerged from the civil war in Lebanon that reinvigorated Arab-Israeli tensions, as Israel increased its air attacks on Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) bases in the south of the country. This escalation was intended to protect the Israeli population living in settlements in northern Palestine

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[119] Istvan S. Pogany, *The Arab League and peacekeeping in the Lebanon*, (Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1987), p. 90.
[120] Paul Doyle, *Lebanon*, (Chalfont St. Peter: Bradt Travel Guides, 2016). p. 23.
[121] Graeme Bannerman, Op.Cit., 1979. p. 131.
[122] Nadav Safran, Op.Cit., 1988, p. 251.
[123] Nawaf al-Madkhli, "Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy During King Khalid's Reign 1975-1982," PhD thesis, (U.S: University o f Arkansas, 2007), p.81.

and to prevent the PLO defeating its ally in Lebanon *al-Katā'ib*. At the end of the month, two Syrian helicopters were shot down by the Israeli Air Force, thus prompting Syria to deploy an air defense system consisting of Sam-2, Sam-3, Sam-6 and Sam-9 missiles in the Bekaa Valley. [124] Israel considered this deployment a threat to the sovereignty of Lebanese airspace and an oppositional move designed to impede its air campaign against PLO bases. Fearing that it might develop into a Syrian-Israeli conflict, U.S. President Ronald Reagan dispatched his special envoy Philip Habib to discuss a possible political solution to avoid any further conflicts in the region. Habib arrived in Riyadh on 5th May to discuss any potential contribution Saudi Arabia could make toward finding a solution to the deteriorating situation. When the meetings had concluded, the Saudi Foreign Ministry issued a statement explaining the country's position on these events and declaring its unconditional support for Syria. The statement declared that the recent "attacks on Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon clearly reveal Israel's expansionist intentions" and committed Saudi support for Syria in the face of any acts of aggression toward its sovereignty, independence or territory. Prince Fahd further confirmed this stance, stating that it reflects the national desire of Arab countries to prevent Israel dictating the situation in the absence of proper solidarity between these countries. [125] Therefore, while Saudi authorities publicly announced their support for Syria they were at the same time covertly trying to find a way of politically resolving the tensions between Syria and Israel so that they could escape any involvement in this potential crisis. This public announcement helped improve diplomatic relations between Damascus and Riyadh, as illustrated when Khalid received the Syrian president's brother Rifaat al-Assad in May 1981.[126]

While suggestive of an obvious rapprochement between the two countries, it also indicates the ambiguity in Saudi foreign policy due to the absence of a coherent and consistent strategy. In order to maintain cooperation between Saudi and Syrian forces as part of the ADF, the military agreement mandated by the Arab League Resolution No. 3456 on 9th June 1976, Saudi authorities had to overlook certain activities of the Syrian forces, a stance confirmed by my interview with F. S,[127] a retired Saudi general. He described the ADF as "suffering from the conflict of

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[124] Nadav Safran, Op.Cit., 1988, pp. 328-330.

[125] Ḥasan Abūtāīb, *al-māmlakāh al-Saʿūdīyah wa Zīlāl al-Qūds*, (Beirut: al-Māktabāh al-thaqāfīyah, 1992), pp.76-78, p. 87.

[126] Marius Deeb, "Saudi Arabian Policy toward Lebanon since 1975." in Halim L. Barakat, *Toward A Viable Lebanon*. (London: Croom Helm, 1988), pp. 165-170.

[127] Author's Interview, is referred to as "F.S." on his request to protect his identity, February 11, 2016.

powers, the lack of coordination between Lebanese and Syrian Forces." One particular instance highlighted this situation for F. S, when Syrian forces erected a checkpoint in front of his forces, which were under the command of Lebanese officers. Frustrated with this aggressive act and due to the failure of mediation to have this barrier removed, Lebanese units led by Captain Samir al-Ashqar began firing at the Syrian soldiers occupying the checkpoint, resulting in the death of 13 soldiers with another 36 wounded. Syrian forces retaliated by bombing the barracks. Due to the dominance of Syrian forces in Lebanon and their refusal to adhere to their designated role in the ADF, Saudi authorities decided to withdraw their troops and disassociate themselves from this mission in early 1979.

The situation in Lebanon worsened further when, on 17th July, Israel carried out air raids on Palestinian targets in Beirut, killing 300 and injuring a further 800, the majority of whom were civilians. [128] The UN Security Council condemned these attacks and called for an immediate ceasefire, with the U.S. directly pressuring Israel to cease all hostilities toward PLO forces. Israel could not reject such a demand since Habib, in conjunction with the Saudi authorities, had reached a commensurate agreement with the PLO. As a result, Israel announced the cessation of its airstrikes on 24th July. For Saudi Arabia, this outcome probably felt like a partial success as it suggested the possibility of finding a political solution to the Palestinian question. In August 1981, Crown Prince Fahd tried to initialize peace in the region by recognizing the existence of Israel according to UN Security Resolution 242 and promoting the establishment of a Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem. Israel, on the other hand, disagreed with these conditions due to the threat posed by the Palestinian presence in southern Lebanon, a threat that could only be removed by comprehensive defeat through ground operations. By the time Fahd assumed power following his brother's death on 13th June 1982, it was apparent from the severity of air raids carried out by Israeli forces on 5th June and from a number of Israeli troops amassing on the Lebanon border that any further hostilities would be markedly more severe than those witnessed in 1978. [129]

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[128] Maḥmūd Suwayd, *al-Janūb al-lubnānī fī Mūwājahat Isrāʾīl*, (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirāsāt al-Filasṭīnīyah, ed. 1, 1982), pp. 60-70.

[129] Ḥasan Abūtāīb, Op.Cit.,1992, p. 80 -90.

During the reign of King Khalid (1975-1982), Saudi foreign policy toward Lebanon was characterized by an insistence on avoiding intervention in regional conflicts and limiting its activities to diplomatic channels to keep the use of formal policy instruments to a minimum. As the above analysis of the Lebanese Civil War and the Israeli invasion helps illustrate, Saudi Arabia adhered to the principle first outlined by Fahd in 1975 when he was Crown Prince, that the country was "fully committed to non-interference in its brothers' internal affairs."[130] A number of academic studies have also identified this pattern, best expressed by Nawaf Al-Madkhli in *Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy during King Khalid's Reign 1975-1982*, when he argues that " the usual pattern of Saudi behavior in inter-Arab affairs has been to avoid clear-cut public alliances with any other country or camp and to work toward mediation and consensus-building."[131] In order to determine what motivated this behavior, I asked Prince Saud al-Faisal during our interview how the Kingdom planned to achieve its national interests and if it supported any particular group in Lebanon during this period, even if covertly. He insisted that:

> Saudi foreign policy in that period was conservative, it was always aimed at maintaining the status quo in the region, and that its role was limited to playing the mediator between conflicting factions; the *Taif Agreement* of 1989 is the best proof that Saudi Arabia always prioritized its brothers' interests over its own interests.[132]

According to the official positions and the supporting reasons provided during the interviews I conducted with government officials about the nature of Saudi foreign policy during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1982), it is apparent that the country avoided assuming an active role in favour of exhausting diplomatic channels. Saudi Arabia did not deviate from the policy position because both direct and indirect intervention were not in the country's best interests and Saudi officials had no desire to assume a leadership role in the Lebanon Crisis. During the reign of King Khalid, which coincided with the crisis, foreign policy was determined by the desire to maintain a certain distance from potential regional conflicts.

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[130] *al-Riyāḍ*, no. 3205, December 1, 1975.
[131] Nawaf al-Madkhli, Op.Cit., 2007, p. 189.
[132] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

However, additional reasons can be identified as primary determining factors on Saudi foreign policy, chiefly domestic stability and internal, infrastructural development. Firstly, following the assassination of King Faisal in 1975 and the Grand Mosque Seizure in 1979, [133] ensuring internal stability assumed greater importance than becoming involved in foreign affairs. Secondly, during the period 1975-1979, also known as the "boom years," the Saudi leadership was focused more on internal, infrastructural development than on foreign affairs. The second Five-Year Development Plan 1974-1978, which committed 500 billion Saudi Riyals to infrastructural and general services investment. This figure was a 9% increase on the first Five-Year Development Plan implemented during the reign of King Faisal, from 1970-1974. During Khalid's reign, a third Five-Year Plan 1978-1980 was initiated that saw a further increase in investment to 783 billion Saudi Riyals. During Khalid's reign, the average rate of GDP growth was 8.4%, while government spending from 1975-1982 tripled from 80 to 240 billion Riyals. [134] As Table 1.1 illustrates, by comparing government spending on Foreign Affairs during Faisal's reign (1970-1974) and Khalid's reign (1977-1981), focusing so intently on the domestic, economic affairs of the country is counterproductive to properly concentrating on foreign affairs. The immediate difference between the half-brothers' reigns is the importance given to foreign affairs. As the allocated budget makes apparent, foreign affairs occupied a more marginal position for Khalid's administration than it did for Faisal's, as expenditure decreased more than threefold and never exceeded 0.23%. When compared with Faisal's reign, during which expenditure often approached 1%, there was an obvious change in the priority given to foreign policy amongst Saudi leaders, the legislative power, and the decision-makers. The significant change in the variable (allocated budget as a percentage of public expenditure) indicates the collective decision to avoid adopting a proactive foreign policy strategy.

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[133] The Grand Mosque Seizure occurred from 20th November – 4th December 1979, when a group of extremist insurgents calling for the immediate overthrow of the House of Saud took over Al-Masjid al-Haram in Mecca. The insurgents claimed that the Mahdi had arrived in the form of one of their leaders, Mohammed al-Qahtani. During the two week seizure of Islam's holiest site, hundreds of militants and security forces were killed in armed confrontations and numerous hostages were caught in the crossfire before the mosque was finally cleared.

[134] Official Documents, Saudi Arabia budget 1970 to1982, Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, 1970 - 1985.

Table 1.1 (Saudi Riyals)

(Official Document Saudi Arabia Budget (1970-1982) Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency)

King Faisal	*1970*	*1971*	*1972*	*1973*	*1974*
Revenue	**5,966,000,000**	**6,380,000,000**	**10,782,000,000**	**13,200,000,000**	**22,810,000,000**
Financial allocations for Foreign Affairs	**56,000,000**	**57,000,000**	**70,000,000**	**80,000,000**	**94,000,000**
Percentage Foreign Affairs of overall revenues	**0.93%**	**0.89%**	**0.64%**	**0.60%**	**0.41%**
King Khalid	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*
Revenue	**110,935,000,000**	**146,493,000,000**	**130,000,000,000**	**160,000,000,000**	**261,516,000,000**
Financial allocations Foreign Affairs	**189,000,000**	**214,000,000**	**304,000,000**	**318,000,000**	**448,000,000**
Percentage Foreign Affairs of overall revenues	**0.17%**	**0.14%**	**0.23%**	**0.19%**	**0.17%**

By the time King Khalid died in June 1982, Saudi Arabia had undergone significant developments domestically, and the region was experiencing a number of major disputes, namely the Lebanese Civil War, the Iranian Revolution (1979) and the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War (1980). While these events preceded Fahd's reign, he played an integral role in the administration as Crown Prince during this period and was centrally involved in foreign policy decisions, a fact confirmed by Khalid in an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper *al-Siyāsah*, where he stated that the major authority regarding Saudi foreign policy was entrusted to Crown Prince Fahd.[135] For this reason, the policy strategy that defined Khalid's reign continued during Fahd's.

When multinational forces withdrew from Beirut on 10th-13th September 1982, militia forces associated with Phalangists *al-Katā'ib* committed massacres in the

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[135] Nawāl al-Khayyāt, al-Malīk Khālīd: Dīrāsāh Tārīkhīyah wa Ḥaḍārīyah, (Makkah: Jāmiʿat Umm al-Qūrā, 2003), p. 13.

Sabra and Shatila refugee camp from 16th-18th September, an area under Israel's protection.[136] On 17th May 1983, the "May 17 Agreement" was announced, promising the gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territories, with the stipulation that a security zone in southern Lebanon would be established, which included Mazarie Shebaa.[137] Following this agreement, sectarian division in the country became more pronounced, with major cities divided into Christian and Muslim areas, and the latter divided further between Sunni and Shiite. However, the "May 17 Agreement" was rejected by Syria and a number of pro-Syrian forces, for example Hezbollah [*Ḥīzb Allāh*],[138] who had begun a campaign of suicide attacks against Western targets in Lebanon. Some of the most notable attacks were the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut on 24th April 1983,[139] a day which also saw the French Marine headquarters attacked.[140] Since 1982, Iran has armed and financially supported Hezbollah to the estimated amount of $100 million annually, which new data suggests is closer to $200 million a year.[141] This policy "was part of Iran's regional strategy to break through the isolation generated by the Islamic Revolution."[142] Iran's support for Hezbollah began during its war with Iraq, which began in 1980. Although this eight-year conflict was exhausting Iranian resources, it continued to support Hezbollah as part of its regional strategy of forming a political bloc to serve its interests in Lebanon. By contrast, Saudi authorities, for whom preventing the increase of Iranian influence in Lebanon and the larger region was a major incentive, did not assume an explicit position, instead adopting an inactive

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[136] Amnon Kapeliouk and Khalil Jahshan, *Sabra and Shatila, Inquiry into A Massacre*. (Belmont, Mass: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1984). pp. 23-39. See more in Linda A. Malone, the Kahan Report, "Ariel Sharon and the Sabra- Shatilla Massacres in Lebanon: Responsibility Under International Law for Massacres of Civilian Populations", The William and Mary Law School Scholarship Repository, (1985), p. 374.

[137] Mattia Toaldo, *The Origins of the U.S. War on Terror: Lebanon, Libya and American intervention in the Middle East*. (London: Routledge, 2012). p. 89.

[138] Hezbollah or Hizbullah, meaning "Party Of God," is a Shia Muslim militia and political party funded by Iran after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. This movement separated from Amal militia, led by Sheikh Mohammed Fadlallah (1935), its leaders were followers of the Iranian Revolution led by Ruhollah Khomeini and its forces were trained by Iranian Revolutionary Guards with the help of the Syrian government. Hezbollah has strong support among Lebanon's Shi'a population.

[139] Robert Baer, *See No Evil: The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism*, (New York:: Crown Publishers, 2002), pp.66–104.

[140] Timothy J. Geraghty, *Peacekeepers at War Beirut 1983-the Marine Commander tells his Story*, (Washington, D.C: Potomac Books, 2009), p. 91.

[141] Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: Financing Terror Through Criminal Enterprise*, (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy May 25, 2005), pp.3-4.

[142] Nathan Gonzalez, *The Sunni-Shia Conflict Understanding Sectarian Violence in the Middle East*, (New York: Nortia Press, 2012). p.108.

policy. This gives the impression that Saudi Arabia had no strategic interests in Lebanon and was not willing to play a regional role. In December 1985, representatives of the Shiite Amal Movement, the Christian Lebanese Forces, and the predominantly Druze Progressive Socialist Party met in Damascus and reached a settlement, known as the "Tripartite Accord." [143] This agreement gave Syria significantly greater influence over Lebanese matters and increased legitimacy for its presence in Lebanon than what the Arab League initially granted under its 1976 mandate.

Prior to Saudi Arabia's important role in brokering the "Taif Agreement",[144] its policy was to simply minimize the threat posed by the Lebanese Civil War to escalate into a regional conflict rather than provide a counterbalance to the Syrian influence in Lebanon by supporting Sunni forces that opposed Syria and Hezbollah, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization, or aiding Christian forces in their resistance to the Syrian presence in Lebanon, such as those commanded by Michel Aoun[145] who began a self-declared war of liberation. From the beginning of the civil war up to and including the Israeli invasion, Saudi Arabia's involvement in the Lebanese Crisis was confined to officially condemning the actions of the parties involved but without assuming any initiative that might indicate that the country was aiming to achieve its strategic interests. With the "Taif Agreement," however, Saudi Arabia decided to become more involved by adopting a diplomatic approach as mediator. Thanks to their relationship, King Fahd was supported by Rafiq al-Hariri, who was one of the architects of the Taif Agreement working to reach a compromise acceptable to all the various factions. That eventual resolution was based on two principles. First, the strategic integration between Syria and Lebanon, which led Syria to continue its influence in Lebanese affairs; second, by altering the Lebanese political structure to move executive authority from the hands of the president to the prime minister, and to divide parliament equally between Muslims and Christians.

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[143] Mina Toksöz, *The Lebanese Conflict: Political Shifts, Regional Impact and Economic Outlook*, (London: The Economist Publications Ltd.1986). pp. 80-84.

[144] On 30th September 1989, the "*Taif Agreement*" ended the civil war in Lebanon. It was negotiated in *al-Ṭā'if* city of Saudi Arabia, and approved by the Lebanese parliament on 4th November 1989. This agreement was attended by sixty-two out of the seventy-three Lebanese deputies. For further details see Hassan Krayem. "The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Agreement,", *American University of Beirut*, (June 2012), http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/pspa/conflict-resolution.html

[145] Michel Aoun is a Lebanese politician and the former Lebanese Army commander who later founded the Free Patriotic Movement, over which he presided from 2005 to 2015.

As a result, Saudi Arabia believed that Egypt would no longer play a role in the regional crisis after its signing of the Camp David Treaty with Israel in 1978, which required Saudi Arabia to play a more active role in this issue. Moreover, the Lebanese crisis coincided with the first Gulf War between Iraq and Iran between 1980-1988, and Saudi Arabia feared that the situation in Lebanon might be a golden opportunity for Iran to promote its influence in Lebanese affairs. These reasons necessitated Saudi Arabia to adopt a diplomatic initiative to resolve the Lebanese civil war, to prevent any undesirable repercussions. Unfortunately, the agreement only offered a temporary solution because it lacked a solid foundation and its terms were informed by unstable logic, ultimately leading to further conflict.[146] The increased influence of Syria in this conflict meant that no date was decided for the official withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, meaning that the solution could end the war internally but only if limited sovereignty was accepted.

Saudi Arabia's interactions with Syria during the period of the Syrian Civil War demonstrate the absence of a clear foreign policy strategy at this time. For example, Saudi officials unintentionally permitted the presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon through the ADF and had extensive contact with the Syrian government. At the same time, Syria was actively supporting Iran logistically and economically in the Iran-Iraq War through the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).[147] While Saudi Arabia committed itself to Iraq, Syria actively supported the oppositional groups across its northern border with Iraq, in addition to transferring military equipment and weapons to Iranian forces and closing the Iraqi pipeline that crossed through its territory in 1983,[148] the only means Iraq had for exporting oil through the Mediterranean. This conflicted relationship with Syria was confirmed in my interview with Prince Saud al-Faisal the Saudi Foreign Minister,[149] who pointed that Saudi Arabia's whole policy was essentially aimed at preventing the fall of an Arab state, in this case Iraq, under Iranian authority and to curb Iran's hostility towards other allied countries. Under King Fahd, therefore, Saudi foreign policy was not designed to create further

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[146] Salameh Ghassan, "Beyond Lebanese political reform: A reconciliation with basic values", *A Journal on Lebanon and the Middle East*, Vol. 1, no. 2, (Fall, 1991), pp. 46-57. For Further information see in Richard Norton, "Lebanon after Taif: Is the Civil War Over?. *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, no.3. (Summer, 1991), pp. 457-473.

[147] Jubin M. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East*. (London: I.B. Tauris and Co, 2009). pp. 283-303.

[148] John Bulloch and Harvey Morris, *The Gulf War: Its Origins, History and Consequences*, (Methuen: London, Routledge, 1989). pp. 40-50, pp. 150- 160.

[149] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

animosity with Arab countries in the region, hence the continued decision to avoid direct involvement in the domestic conflict in Lebanon.

As Saudi engagement with the Lebanese Crisis indicates, foreign policy decisions were aimed at ensuring a distance from regional disputes between Arab countries was maintained, but it is important to consider the internal factors that also determined this particular strategy. For example, due to rising revenues from oil exports, increasing the economic capacity of the country proved most important, hence the decision to maintain the status quo so any changes that might negatively affect its economic relationships could be avoided. In addition, ensuring internal stability following the assassination of King Faisal played a major role as Saudi authorities concentrated on reinforcing domestic policies and avoiding any actions in its foreign policies that might change popular opinion. This situation was confirmed in my interview with Prince Saud al-Faisal,[150] when he explained that during Khalid's reign, diplomatic activities were preferred as they allowed Saudi authorities to mediate between conflicting parties and avoid direct intervention. He insisted that Saudi Arabia was always committed to a policy of non-interference regarding the internal affairs of other Arab nations, "foremost in the foundation of Arab relations intended to collectively confront regional challenges is the need for solidarity and to renounce the differences between Arab countries."

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[150] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

Chapter 4: A Conventional Stance During The Time of The Iranian Revolution and the Gulf Wars

(4.1) The Iranian Revolution and its Repercussions on the Region

Saudi-Iranian relations are generally characterized by the strategic connections that arise due to conditions of geography, history, religion and competing political and economic interests. During the period of the Pahlavi dynasty (1926-1979), the conflict between the two countries dominated relations, despite the repeated calls for the establishment of alliances, policies of cooperation and closer diplomatic relations. These calls failed to compensate for the contrasting visions of each country, and the minimal cooperation that briefly occurred regarding political and economic issues was overshadowed by the critical cultural and sectarian differences. Formal diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1925, when Saudi Arabia was known as the Sultanate of Najd and al-Hijaz, with Iran fulfilling the role of mediator between King Abdul-Aziz and Ali bin al-Hussein, King of the Hejaz, when Abdul-Aziz's forces besieged Jeddah city.[1] However, when Reza Shah (1925-1941) occupied Arabistan (Khuzestan) later that year, Abdul-Aziz became cautious of developing closer relations with the Persians, despite the Shah's eagerness for rapprochement.[2] The significant tension between the two countries persisted due to their respective positions regarding the Arab Emirates in the Gulf, in particular Bahrain. Iran claimed historical sovereignty over Bahrain and vehemently protested the Jeddah Treaty (1927), an agreement between Britain and Saudi Arabia that, under Article 6, prevented Ibn Saud from intervening in the affairs of any of the Gulf emirates. Britain considered these emirates under its protection in order to maintain special economic and political relationships with them, but Reza Shah considered this treaty a violation and demanded the return of Bahrain to Iranian sovereignty.[3] He even lodged a formal complaint to the League of Nations on 26th November 1927 regarding this issue.

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[1] Saeed M. Badeeb, Op.Cit., 1993, pp. 34-36.
[2] Mohammed al-Kawazi, *al-ʿalāqāt al-Saʿūdīyah al-Īrānīyah: Dirāsah Tārīkhīyah Siyāsiyah, 1979-2011*, (Ammaan: Dar ghyda' lial nashr wa ltawzīeʿ, 2014), p. 14.
[3] Saeed M. Badeeb, Op.Cit., 1993, .pp. 24-25.

Saudi-Iranian political relations were at their most productive during the '30s, a period instigated by the signing of a mutual cooperation treaty in Tehran in August 1929.[4] The first high-level Saudi delegation was sent to Iran during this period, when Prince Faisal visited Tehran in March 1932 to further strengthen existing relations and make efforts toward ensuring their continuity. Cordial relations continued between the two countries until 1943, when a criminal case brought by Saudi Arabia against an Iranian citizen escalated into a crisis, culminating in the severance of diplomatic relations from 1944-1946.[5] Formal relations resumed between the countries in 1947 and marked the beginning of a period when common interests were prioritized and cordial diplomatic ventures were frequent.[6] In the same year as the Mosaddegh coup, which saw the deposing of the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh on 19th August 1953,[7] King 'Abd al-'Aziz died and was succeeded by his son, Sa'ud. He sought to further improve diplomatic, political and economic relations between the two countries as developments in the Middle East engendered a period of unprecedented coordination, in particular regarding Britain's role in the Gulf region.[8] However, Iran's official recognition of Israel in 1950 as a state had a negative impact on its relations with Arab and Islamic countries in the region, in particular Saudi Arabia. Despite this, relations improved again following the fall of Yemen's monarchy in 1962, when the Shah of Iran supported the Saudi government in its opposition to Egypt's intervention in Yemen.[9] In an interview with *Foreign Reports*, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi addressed Iran's relationship with Saudi Arabia and expressed concern about the Egyptian intervention in Yemen, stating that "this intervention is targeted at Saudi Arabia and is intended to exert control over oil in the Arabian Peninsula."[10]

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[4] Saeed M. Badeeb, Op.Cit., 1993, .p.24-133.

[5] In 1943, an Iranian man was arrested in Mecca by Saudi police on charges of insulting the holy places and was sentenced to execution. This incident led to extreme tensions between the two governments, as the Iranian Embassy in Jeddah protested to the Saudi Foreign Ministry but its opposition to the sentence was rejected. Iran officially announced the severance of diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia in March 1944. For Further information see in Saeed M. Badeeb, Op.Cit., 1993, p.85.

[6] Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *Shibh al-Jazīrah al-'Arabīyah fī 'ahd al-Malīk Abd al-'Azīz al-Sa'ūd*, (Beirut: dar al'lm, Vol. 1, no. 2, 1982) , p.44.

[7] For more details about the coup in August 1953, See in Abrahamian Ervand ,"The 1953 Coup in Iran" 2009, *Science and Society journal*, Vol. 65, no. 2, (Summer, 2001), pp. 182-215.

[8] Miron Rezum, *The Soviet Union and Iran*, (Boulder, colo: West view press, 1987), p. 79.

[9] , Mordechai Abir, *Oil, Power and Politics: Conflict of Asian and African Studies*, (London: Routledge, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2005), p. 9.

[10] Saeed M. Badeeb, Op.Cit., 1993, p.56.

When Faisal assumed power in Saudi Arabia on 29th October 1964, he set about increasing coordination with Iran. During a visit to Tehran in 1965, he proposed a number of practical policy solutions relating to the situation in Yemen and addressed the issues of Arab Nationalism and Abdel Nasser's movement with the Iranian authorities. When Israel occupied Egyptian territories during the Six Day War in 1967 this was condemned by both Saudi Arabia and Iran, Faisal visited Tehran in December to consolidate relations between the two countries and to explain his project of unifying their positions against nationalist ideologies emerging in the Islamic world. In his address to the Iranian parliament, he stated that "Islam provides a point of convergence between the two nations...It is time now to establish absolute cooperation and coherence between our two countries."[11]

After Britain announced its withdrawal from the Arabian Gulf region by the end of 1971,[12] Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the ruler of Bahrain, visited Riyadh. As a result of this visit, Bahrain's Arab identity was confirmed by Saudi Arabia and an announcement was made of a new infrastructural project, a bridge across the Arabian Gulf that would connect the two countries. This action was taken to prevent any attempt by Iran to annex Bahrain and UAE islands, and authorities in Tehran considered the project a direct refutation of its interests in the region.[13] Due to increased tensions, Faisal proposed a security conference on the Gulf to be attended by all the relevant Gulf States. When he explained the idea in a letter to the Shah of Iran at the beginning of January 1971, he initially received a positive response. Unfortunately, however, by November of that year, Iran responded to the supposed threat posed by Saudi Arabia toward its regional interests by occupying the three Gulf islands of Abu Musa, and Greater, and Lesser Tunb, a decision which ultimately led to the proposed conference being cancelled.[14]

By 1978, Iran faced growing domestic problems regarding its power structures, with the Shah finally leaving his country for Egypt in January 1979 in the face of mass political unrest. This event, which signaled the beginning of the Iranian

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[11] Muḥammad al-kawaz, Op.Cit., 2014, p.19

[12] Husain M. Albaharna, *The Legal Status of the Arabian Gulf States: A Study of Their Treaty Relations and Their International Problems*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), p.7.

[13] Jamāl, Qāsim, "'alāqāt Īrān bī al-Sa'ūdīyah wa al-Kūwaiytīh alā 'ahd al-usrah al-Bahlawā , īn majmū'aht Būḥūth Tāḥta 'nwān *al-'Alāqāt al-'Arabīyah-al-Īrānīyah*, Ma'had al-Buḥūth wa-dirāsāt, Jāmi'at al-Duwal al-'Arabiyah, (1990), p. 152.

[14] Ibid, p.158 . See more in Muḥammad, al-'Aydarūs, *al-'alāqāt al-'Arabīyah-al-Īrānīyah 1921-1971*, (Kuwait: Dār al-Salāsil līl-Nāshr, No. 1, 1985), pp. 391-393.

Revolution, marked the watershed in Iran's international and regional relations. Saudi reactions toward this revolution were also inconsistent. For example, in August 1978, the Saudi Defense Minister, Prince Sultan, issued a statement expressing his Kingdom's support for the Shah, blaming Iran's current troubles on the activities of "International Communism."[15] Furthermore, on 20th November, Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, explained to a Medina newspaper that:

> Saudi Arabia supports the Shah staying in power... because he has achieved the status of role model….the internal stability of Iran is a concern for most countries in the region and the world, because instability will create severe problems…the solution of this issue is an internal matter.[16]

On 24th November, the former Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources, Ahmed Zaki Yamani, met a delegation of Iranian politicians in Paris and guaranteed that Saudi Arabia had no interest in changing the current situation by toppling the Shah. Quite to the contrary, King Khalid canvassed other Arab countries to provide the necessary support for Iran to solve its domestic dispute itself.[17] In the same context, Crown Prince Fahd stated in December 1978 that "Saudi Arabia is concerned about the expected effects any change in political government in Iran might have."[18] In the case of a military coup, the two potential outcomes were equally troubling. Firstly, a left-wing authority could instigate an encroachment of socialist politics into other Gulf communities, while secondly, the emergence of a dictator would facilitate increased Iranian expansion. In this sense, the collapse of the Shah's government posed concern for both Gulf emirates and Saudi Arabia.[19]

The toppling of the Shah's government by the Islamic Revolution in February 1979 signaled the end of Iran's military, political and economic subordination to the US but it also represented a significant threat to Riyadh for both internal and external reasons. For instance, Shiites living in the eastern regions of Saudi Arabia were influenced by the propaganda of Khomeini, the leader of the Iranian Revolution. This situation deteriorated further when unrest broke out between young Shiite men and

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[15] "alʾazmah al-ʾĪrānīyah wa Inʿikāsātūhaa al-Dawlīyah", *Majallaht al-Siyāsah al-Dawlīyah*, aʿdād Markaz al-Dirāsāt *al-Siyāsiyyah* wa al-Istrātījīyah, no. 55, (January 1979), pp. 22-23.

[16] *al-Madīnah*, no. 2086, 20 November 1978.

[17] Muḥammad al-kawaz, Op.Cit., 2014, p.15.

[18] "Alʿazmah alʾĪrānīyah wa Inʿikāsātūhā al-Dawlīyah", Op.Cit., 1979, p 22-23.

[19] Ibid, p.23.

troops from the National Guard in al-Qatif in November 1979, with protesters brandishing slogans such as "We Are Shiite."[20] It is now an axiomatic assumption that Saudi Arabia opposed the Iranian Revolution since its inception due to its association with US interests, a fact confirmed by the media's portrayal of the revolution as a communist conspiracy and its accusations that the Iranian rebels were Marxist sympathizers, a stance corroborated by Crown Prince Fahd:

> What is happening in Iran is a threat to Islam and Muslims...it's a chauvinistic revolution that threatens the region ... these events have confirmed our government's expectations that the latest riots taking place in Iran are not indicative of an Islamic Revolution but covert attempts to establish Marxist rule in Iran...We support only the Shah, who represents the legitimate government in Iran.[21]

Fahd's disparaging opinion of the revolution due to the potential repercussions it could have on the internal affairs of Saudi Arabia is unquestionable, as he declared that what happens in any other state in the region will inevitably have either a direct or indirect impact on other states in the same region.[22] In an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper *al-Siyāsah*, the Minister of Defense, Sultan bin Adbul-Aziz, declared Saudi Arabia's anti-revolutionary stance, claiming the event was part of the "Communist International" strategic activities:

> The Shah of Iran has done a lot for his nation; he has built advanced facilities that are extremely important to Iranian citizens. However, the Communist International does not want the world to live peacefully, especially the Gulf region, and it believes that what happened in Afghanistan can be extended and expanded geographically…This situation is dangerous not just for Iran but for the region as a whole if the Army or the majority of the population support it. But since the participants represent only a minority of the

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[20] Michel G. Nehme, "Saudi Arabia 1950–80: between nationalism and religion," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 30, no. 4, (October 1994), pp. 941-943.
[21] *al-Sīyāsah*, Kuwait, March 16, 1979.
[22] *al-Ḥawādith*, Beirut, 11 March 1980.

population, I see it as only a momentary crisis the Shah will be able to manage. [23]

However, when the Islamic Revolution finally succeeded in deposing the Shah and the new government began to receive immediate international recognition, it was necessary for the Saudi authorities to practically address this situation and to publicly respond to the radical change in circumstances. In an interview with the Lebanese paper *al-Safīr* on 25th February 1980, Crown Prince Fahd directly addressed relations between Saudi Arabia and the new government in Iran, stating that:

> we do not have any problems with Iran at the present time, we are quite comfortable in this respect. This might seem quite the opposite of our official position during the final stages of the Shah's reign…[but] our real concern was the instability of the situation in Iran…Saudi Arabia welcomes the return of Ruhollah Khomeini from exile in France after the fall of the Shah and we also welcome the formation of a new Iranian government under Mehdi Bazargan.[24]

Saudi Arabian authorities decided to display this public support for the revolution in Iran because, firstly, it was a popular event amongst the citizens of the entire Arab world and, secondly, as political analysts have described it, the actual motivations informing Saudi foreign policy decisions were kept hidden. In contrast to its public approval of the revolution, Saudi Arabia tried to limit its success within Iran itself. As reported in *The Economist*, "Saudi Arabia provided logistical support to the U.S. during the hostage siege at the US Embassy in Tehran by making its airport facilities available to U.S. Air Force personnel and providing a group of military experts and consultants."[25] In terms of its diplomatic and economic strategy, Saudi officials continued to indirectly oppose the revolution at regional and international conferences. Most significantly, at the OPEC conference in Kuwait (1979), the Saudi Oil Minister, Zaki Yamani opposed any of the affiliated countries providing support to Iran in its struggle against US imperial expansion, eventually withdrawing from the

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[23] *al-Sīyāsah*, Kuwait, 31 July 1979.
[24] *al-Sāfīr,* Beirut, 25 February 1980.
[25] *The Economist Limited*, 3 February 1979.

conference entirely. When Iranian officials proposed raising the price of oil, Saudi Arabia proved a major obstacle, eventually reducing the price by increasing production levels to compensate for any decline that might result from the Islamic Revolution. [26] In addition, when the Council of the Islamic Revolution sent a delegation to the Arab League Summit being held in Tunisia from 20th-22nd November 1979, Crown Prince Fahd was at the forefront of objections against Iran's continued presence at the conference.

In response to these activities, Iran launched a series of hostile statements toward the Saudi Kingdom that gradually grew in severity, especially after the Grand Mosque Seizure, when, on 20th November 1979, 200 extremists under the command of Juhayman al-Otaibi occupied Al-Haram al-Sharif in Mecca, claiming they were awaiting the appearance of Imam Mahdi. [27] This event, which occurred during Khalid's reign, shook the entire Islamic world due to the bloodshed in the courtyard of the Grand Mosque and was generally denounced by all Muslims. The fact that it occurred after the Islamic Revolution in Iran led to speculations that it was inspired by this event, with the intention of repeating what Khomeini had achieved in Iran, that is, to overthrow the Saudi monarchy to eliminate corruption and the militant application of Islamic legal provisions, while also severing all ties with Christians.[28] On 4th December, two weeks after the siege had begun, Saudi forces managed to recapture the Grand Mosque and liberate the hostages. While Juhayman al-Otaibi was captured and later sentenced to death, the military confrontation left 28 militants and approximately 17 worshipers and security forces dead.[29] During this event, media sources in Iran aired a series of propaganda programmes that accused Saudi Arabia of atheism and being anti-Islamic, while the Iranian authorities supported opposition

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[26] *al-Hādaf'h*, Kuwait, 4 December 1979.

[27] The Mahdi is the prophesied redeemer of Islam who will rule between seven to nineteen years before the Day of Judgment will rid the world of evil. There is no explicit reference to the Mahdi in the Qu'ran, but references to him are found in hadithʾ (the reports and traditions of Muhammad's teachings collected after his death). According to Islamic tradition, the Mahdi's tenure will coincide with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Isa), who is to assist the Mahdi against the Masih ad-Dajjal (literally, the "false Messiah" or Antichrist). For Further information see in Moojan Momen, *An introduction to Shiʿi Islam: the history and doctrines of Twelver Shiʿism*. (Oxford: G. Ronald, 1985), pp. 75-168.

[28] Muḥammad Abūʿāmūd, *Jamāʿāt al-Islām al-Siyāsī wa-alʿūnf fī al-Wāṭan al-ʿarabī*, (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1992), p40-42.

[29] Aḥmad Sayyid, *Rasāʾil Juhaymān alʿutaybī, qāʾid al-mūqtahimīn līl-Masjīd al-Ḥarām bī Makkāh: wathāʾiq lām tūnsharu*, (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 2004), pp. 18-40.

movements in the country,[30] primarily, The Organization for the Islamic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula (OIR).[31] Iranian newspapers also began to exaggerate the claims of civil unrest in Saudi Arabia, focusing on how strife in al-Qatif and al-Hasa in late November 1979 could develop into a more widespread revolution.[32]

Immediately after the overthrow of the Shah, Khomeini established the foundations of a new political system by finalizing the constitution, which was officially approved by referendum in December 1979. Contrary to the ideas founded in the constitution, especially Article 154, which directly prohibited any form of intervention in the internal affairs of other countries,[33] Khomeini spoke avidly about Iran's religious responsibility toward all Muslims and its unconditional support for all oppressed groups in the world:

> We should try hard to export our revolution to the world. We should set aside the thought that we do not export our revolution, because Islam does not regard various Islamic countries differently and is the supporter of all the oppressed people of the world. On the other hand, all the superpowers and all the powers have risen to destroy us. If we remain in an enclosed environment we shall definitely face defeat".[34]

Despite Article 154 of Iran's constitution rejecting intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. Khomeini's ideal of exporting the principles of the revolution to other Islamic countries coincided with Iran's own attempts to exert its authority in the Gulf region. The new leader also refused to recognize any agreements with other nations signed by the Shah, especially with Arab Gulf States.[35] From Saudi Arabia's perspective, Iran's policies were intended to fundamentally change the geopolitical

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[30] Fereydoun Hoveyda, *The Broken Crescent: The "threat" of Militant Islamic Fundamentalism*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998). p. 140-151.

[31] The OIR was an underground political organization led by Hassan al-Saffar, whose goal was the organizing of a Shiite Islamic revolution in the Arabian Peninsula and which received support from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

[32] Jāsim, Muḥammad, "Wāq'a al-'alāqāt al-'Arabīyah-al-Īrānīyah fī al-Khalīj al-'Arābī," *Majāllaht al-Khalīj al-'Arabī*, Vol. 13, no. 4, (1981), p. 63.

[33] Saleh al-Manī, "The Ideological Dimension in Saudi-Iranian Relation" in Jamal S. Suwaidi, *Iran and the Gulf: A Search for Stability*, (Abu Dhabi, UAE: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, I.B.Tauris, 1996), pp. 158-1667.

[34] Khomeini: "We Shall Confront the World with Our Ideology." MERIP Reports, no. 88, *Middle East Research and Information Project*, Inc., Iran's Revolution: The First Year, (Jun 1980), p. 22.

[35] Sabri' Maqlad, *'Amn al-Khalīj wa Taḥāddiyāt al-Sīrā' al-Dūwlī*, (Kuwait: Sharīkāt al-Rrabīe'ān lilnnāshr walttawzie, 1984), p.25.

stability and the existing power balances in the Gulf region, an opinion confirmed by Iran's decade-long occupation of the UAE islands and its attempts to export the revolution to the region. As a result of Iran's behavior, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States considered it necessary to form a conglomerate designed to directly to confront the Iranian threat. On 25th May 1981, the countries established the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)[36] in Riyadh with the intention of ensuring a practical strategy of cooperation and to provide a counterbalance to Iran in the region.

Saudi-Iranian relations were becoming increasingly hostile as Saudi Arabia accused Iran of trying to export its revolutionary ideology throughout the region, while Iran accused Saudi Arabia of conspiring with the US to sabotage the revolution by supporting Iraq in its conflict with Iran. The desperate state of Saudi-Iranian relations is important but the Islamic Revolution also had significant influence on Iran's relations with both its regional neighbours and other international parties. The revolution instigated a radical change in the structure of government in Iran, from a secularized state monarchy that resembled Western models of government to one more informed by religious ideals and doctrine. Popular discourses were often vehemently anti-Western and until the death of Khomeini in 1989, Iranian authorities refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the existing governments of the Gulf States, even going so far as demanding the annexation of Bahrain. The Iranian Revolution occurred during King Khalid's reign, and while Saudi authorities attempted to undermine the Islamic Republic when it was established, they did not adopt a proactive stance in the period that immediately preceded this event. This is because the nature of Saudi foreign policy at that time was to avoid becoming involved in the internal affairs of other states, and was not characterized by a policy of interventionism. Saudi officials refrained from making their views on the revolution explicit during a period of heightened tension, and sometimes even conflict, between liberals and fundamentalists. Saudi Arabia did not exploit the potential advantage of aborting the revolution due to its incompatibility with the conservative monarchy of Saudi Arabia that existed due to the pronounced differences in Iranian society, in particular between the revolutionary leaders and a large number of non-theocratic

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[36] The Gulf Cooperation Council is a regional intergovernmental political and economic union consisting of all Arab states of the Arab Gulf, except for Iraq. Its member states are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. All current member states are monarchies. In 2011, a proposal to transform the GCC into a "Gulf Union" with tighter economic, political and military coordination was advanced by Saudi Arabia, a move meant to counterbalance Shi'ite Muslim influence in the region from Iran and other Arab Spring countries.

intellectuals, who advocated for a new national constitution styled on secular politics modeled on Western democracies.[37] Saudi Arabia also did not employ its foreign policy instruments to work with counter-revolutionaries, such as the National Democratic Front, which were organizing mass protests against Khomeini and claiming that the Islamic Revolution opposed the principles of freedom and democracy.[38] At that time, when Iranian authorities ordered the use of force against protesters and the forced closure of any oppositional media, most notably the *Ayandegan* newspaper,[39] Saudi Arabia remained committed to a policy of non-intervention regarding Iran's internal affairs. The result was the defeat of liberal politics and its replacement with a more fundamentalist version that quickly assumed power. The new Iranian authorities soon began trying to export its revolutionary politics and founded the Arabian Peninsula's Liberation Office, an organization designed to spread the principles of revolution in neighboring countries.[40]

Not only did Saudi Arabia not exploit the opportunity to support liberals against more fundamentalist factions in Iran because they were considered less damaging than the fundamentalists, it also did not assume the initiative by imposing obstacles to the success of the revolution by supporting dissident Arabs in Ahwaz or Sunni allies in Baluchistan, in other words, by covertly creating more internal unrest in Iran and preventing national stability, thus forcing Iranian authorities to concentrate on its domestic affairs and preserving the revolution rather than focusing on exporting its radical politics to neighboring countries. In my interview with Ali Hassan Jaafar,[41] the Deputy Vice Foreign Minister and expert Advisor in Iranian Affairs in the Saudi Foreign Ministry, I asked him why Saudi Arabia did not assume the initiative on this occasion to obstruct the Islamic Revolution when it was happening and instead assumed a "wait and see" approach. He explained that, at the time, Saudi Arabia did not expect the revolution to succeed, an opinion shared with the U.S., since its ally did not evacuate its diplomatic delegation, which was held hostage by a contingent of

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[37] Said A. Arjomand. *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). pp. 137-140.

[38] Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*. (London, New York: I.B. Tauris Distributed in the United States by Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). pp. 218-229.

[39] Abdolrahim Javadzadeh, *Iranian Irony: Marxists Becoming Muslims*. (Pennsylvania: Rose Dog Books, 2011), p.173. See more in Baqer Moin., Op.Cit., 2009, pp. 219-220.

[40] Christopher C. Joyner, *The Persian Gulf War: Lessons for Strategy, Law, and Diplomacy*, (New York: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1990), pp. 31-33.

[41] Author's Interview, with the former Saudi Ambassador in Russia, and Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Ali Hassan Jaafar, Riyadh, February 9, 2016.

Iranian students for 444 days when the U.S Embassy in Tehran was taken over from 4th November 1979 – 20th January 1981.[42] He also suggested that the hostage situation in the Grand Mosque in November 1979 forced Saudi Arabia to concentrate on its own domestic affairs rather than the internal affairs of other countries. While Saudi Arabia's policy of using economic measures, such as reducing the oil price, can be seen as a relatively modest attempt at negatively impacting the Islamic Revolution, its diplomatic efforts, chiefly the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), was more effective in limiting the expansion of Iran's revolutionary ideology and as a means of increasing Saudi influence amongst the smaller states in the region.

In 1986, Saudi-Iranian relations deteriorated further, when Saudi authorities arrested 100 Iranian pilgrims at King Abdul-Aziz International Airport in Jeddah who were found carrying explosive materials in their luggage.[43] After questioning, the pilgrims confessed that they were planning to carry out a bombing attack in Mecca under the duress of the Iranian government and these confessions were broadcast by official Saudi television.[44] More generally, the number of Iranian pilgrims permitted to visit Mecca is a contentious issue due to disagreements with Saudi Arabia regarding the purpose of the pilgrimage itself. In addition to the religious dimension, Iran believes the pilgrimage is an opportunity for Muslims to express their economic and political misgivings and to publicly oppose the policies of global superpowers, in particular the US, whereas for Saudi Arabia, a more conservative nation, insists that the purpose of the pilgrimage is solely religious and authorities have accordingly prohibited displaying any political slogans or organizing protests. In direct violation of this, Iranian pilgrims staged a series of rallies in Mecca on 31st July 1987 condemning the U.S.' crimes against Muslim countries, calling for Islamic unity, displaying effigies of Khomeini and chanting slogans associated with the Islamic Revolution. These demonstrations resulted in roads being blocked and when Saudi forces prevented the protesters from accessing the Grand Mosque, violent confrontations broke out and an estimated 402 people died, including 275 Iranians, 85 Saudis and 45 from other countries, and approximately 649 were injured.[45] This

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[42] See in David Farber, *Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter With Radical Islam. Princeton*, (New Jersey: University of Princeton Press, 2005), p. 409.

[43] Martin S. Kramer, *Arab Awakening and Islamic Revival the politics of ideas in the Middle East*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996). p. 171.

[44] Saudi Official Television, 8 August 1986. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miU-2WSTypo

[45] Emmanuel Sivan and Menachem Friedman. *Religious Radicalism and Politics in the Middle East*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990). p. 190.

incident led to protesters in Tehran ransacking the Saudi Embassy on 1st August and physically assaulting a number of Saudi diplomats.[46]

After this event, the war of words between Saudi and Iranian authorities escalated further, with Khomeini claiming that Mecca was now in the hands of " a band of heretics," [47] and later encouraging Saudi citizens to topple the House of al-Saud because its members were against Islam, as demonstrated by their involvement in the pilgrims' deaths.[48] In response, Prince Nayif, the Saudi Interior Minister, claimed that the real objective of the Iranian pilgrims was "to spoil the pilgrimage,"[49] while Prince Bandar Sultan, the Saudi ambassador to the US, repeated his government's rejection of Iran's accusations that security forces had fired on crowds of demonstrators, stating that what "had been aired in full on Saudi television and made available to other governments, shows that not one bullet was fired by Saudi security forces." [50] Disagreements regarding this issue continued and in March 1988, Saudi Arabia officially reduced Iran's allocated number of pilgrims to 105,000, a figure based on the quota of 1,000 pilgrims per million inhabitants, but Iran rejected this, demanding the reinstatement of its previous allocation of 150,000 in addition to being granted permission to organize political demonstrations in Mecca. In the same month, Hezbollah al-Hijaz claimed responsibility for an explosion at the Sadaf petrochemical plant in Jubail, [51] a city in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia.[52] Hezbollah al-Hijaz claimed that four of its members were involved in this operation and Iran became the primary suspect as the Saudi Hezbollah identified with the principles of the Islamic Revolution and many of its members had trained in Iran and Syria. This attack made the Saudi authorities realize that quiet diplomacy was no

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[46] Hiro Dilip. *The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict*. (New York: Routledge, 1991). p. 241.
[47] Haim Shaked and Itamar Rabinovich, *Middle East Contemporary Survey*. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1987). p. 174.
[48] Helen C. Metz, *Saudi Arabia: A Country Study*. (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), pp. 270-271.
[49] Haim Shaked and Itamar Rabinovich, Op.Cit.,1987. p.174.
[50] Gillette Robert, "Saudis Report Broad Support for Mecca Policy: Envoy Says Heads of 40 Nations Hail Tough Stand Against Iranian Rioters," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 August 1987.
[51] Hezbollah al-Hejaz, or the Saudi Hezbollah, is a militant organization operating as an arm of Organization for the Islamic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula. It is a Shi'i organization founded in May 1987 in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province and is pro-Khomeini. The main objective of this organization is the realization of a Shiite Islamic revolution in the Arabian Peninsula based on the Iranian revolutionary model. For further information, Toby Matthiesen, "Hizbullah al-Hijaz: A History of The Most Radical Saudi Shi'a Opposition Group," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 64, no. 2, (Spring 2010). pp. 179-197.
[52] Matthew Levitt, "Hezbollah's Growing Threat against U.S. National Security Interests in the Middle East," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, (22 March, 2016). p. 3.

longer a practical option for dealing with the Iranian regime and this change in attitude toward Iran's policies is conveyed in the official statements released by Saud al-Faisal, the Foreign Minister, insisting that "the Saudi kingdom will no longer sit with its arms folded toward Iran; the policy of prolonged patience is over."[53] al-Faisal's statement confirms that Saudi Arabia did not assume the initiative in its policies regarding Iran and the preservation of its interests, as his figure of speech indicates that officials preferred waiting for Iran to act before making a decision and did not use all options available to those who determine Saudi foreign policy. Such a stance also implies that the Saudi ability to act was limited, which explains why its behaviour was not equal to Iran. Saudi Arabia finally severed its relations with Iran on 26th April 1988,[54] and this, in conjunction with the earlier decrease in allocated pilgrim numbers, led to an Iranian boycott of the pilgrimage from 1988-1990.[55]

Saudi-Iranian relations did not, however, remain in this state of stalemate for too long, as a number of important international geopolitical changes took place, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War; regional issues, such as Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990; and internal events in Iran, chiefly the death of Khomeini and the election of Hashemi Rafsanjani as President in 1989, the latter initiating a programme of reform and moderation in Iran's foreign policy.[56] This combination of events resulted in a remarkable transformation of Saudi-Iranian relations from irresolvable tension to a state of relative appeasement. Within only a decade of the Islamic Revolution, Iranian officials had become more pragmatic in their foreign-policy decisions, implementing a strategy that changed the country's direction from aggression toward its neighbors to eventually achieving cooperation in the region. Most importantly perhaps, the Gulf War (1990-1991) helped to unify Saudi and Iranian perspectives, especially since both countries believed that Iraq posed a considerable threat to their security interests in the region. This situation, in addition to changes in Iran's foreign policy and the political circumstances of the region, necessitated rapprochement between them. This signaled the beginning of a new course in Saudi-Iranian relations as a range of mutually beneficial policies were

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[53] *al-Rīyād*, no. 28844, 30 July 1987.

[54] Reza K. Amiri, et al, "The Hajj and Iran's Foreign Policy towards Saudi Arabia". *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Sage Publications Ltd, Vol. 46, Issue. 6, (2011). pp. 678-690. For Further information sees in: Martin S. Kramer, Op.Cit., 1996. p. 175-177.

[55] Martin S. Kramer, Op.Cit., 1996. p. 176.

[56] Elaine Sciolino., "Rafsanjani Sketches Vision of a Moderate, Modern Iran". *New York Times*, 19 April 1992.

proposed. A further indication of this improvement was Saudi Arabia's cessation of its media campaign against Iran and its discouragement of the "Ulama" criticizing Iranian authorities, while Iran ordered its pilgrims to follow the rules of the pilgrimage. As a result of these changes, diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored on 26th March 1991.[57] Despite this situation, it can be argued that the improvement benefitted Iran's rather than Saudi Arabia's interests in the region. For example, although Saudi Arabia supported Iraq during its eight year conflict with Iran because it was the initial barrier against the Islamic Revolution spreading further, it indirectly contributed or " Saudi policy sit with its arms folded", to the collapse of the Iraqi government in 2003, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapters.[58] Saudi Arabia's policy toward Iraq helped Iran achieve its interests to the detriment of its own, as demonstrated by the importance Iraq later assumes in determining Saudi foreign policy decisions.

Under the leadership of Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iranian authorities sought to end the country's political isolation. To this end, he personally contacted King Fahd in September 1993, requesting a state of appeasement between the two countries and urging the Saudi leader to increase the production levels of OPEC, a request Saudi Arabia permitted by allowing Iran to increase production to 260 thousand barrels per day.[59] When he was replaced as president by Mohammad Khatami in 1997, Iran's foreign policy-makers introduced new principles of détente to instigate a process of normalizing diplomatic relations with other nations. This suggests that Iran was, on the external level at least, ignoring or at least downplaying the ideological dimension of its national politics.[60] Saudi Arabia responded positively to this change in behavior and with Iran's continued avoidance of using revolutionary rhetoric, this facilitated a period of rapprochement and ensured that a high-level Saudi delegation could attend the Eighth Organization of Islamic Cooperation conference held in Tehran in December 1997, a delegation led by Crown Prince Abdullah.[61] When the Saudi Interior Minister, Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz visited Iran in 2001 to negotiate a

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[57] Geoffrey Kemp, *Forever Enemies: American Policy and the Islamic Republic of Iran*, (Washington, D.C: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994), p. 47.

[58] Chapter Five will addresses the Iraq Case Study, 2003.

[59] Jamal S. al-Suwaidi, et al, *Iran and the Gulf: a search for stability*, (Abu Dhabi, UAE: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1996). p.171.

[60] Kayhan Barzegar, "Détente in Khatami's Foreign Policy and Its Impact on Improvement of Iran-Saudi Relations," *Discourse: An Iranian Quarterly*, Vol. 2, no. 2, (Fall 2000). pp. 161-164.

[61] Anthony H. Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century: the political Foreign Policy, Econmic, and Energy Dimensions*, (London: Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003, p.46.

security agreement, a new beginning for Saudi-Iranian was achieved, as Nayef claims that "our motivation to rapprochement with Iran is our sense of the need for stability in the region and I have noticed during my visit that our brothers in Iran share this sense."[62] The security agreement included measures to combat crime, terrorism, and money laundering, in addition to the standard strategies of increased cooperation in military activities and policies for exchanging intelligence information.

An obvious change in Iran's foreign policy and diplomatic language occurred under both Rafsanjani's and Khatami's presidencies, especially since neither insisted on internationally exporting the ideology of the Islamic Revolution as Khomeini previously had. Nevertheless, despite this period of rapprochement, Iran had a clear strategy and there were certain redlines that could not be crossed under any circumstances. For example, while Iran had occupied Abu Musa Island since November 1971 and authority was divided according to a Memorandum of Understanding in 1971 between Iran and the emirate of Sharjah,[63] during Rafsanjani's reign, Iran assumed complete control of the island in 1992. This territorial dispute is an outstanding issue between Iran and all of the Gulf States. In addition, the Bahrain government accused Iran of promoting civil unrest in the country in 1994,[64] an act that clearly challenged the Saudi Kingdom's commitment to maintaining the stability of the Gulf States. Saudi authorities condemned this but did not act accordingly, proving that its policy had already changed to be more dependent on a strategic dimension and careful calculus to make evaluations and attendant decisions. Rather than sitting idly, decisions were being made based on politically expedient considerations designed to achieve Saudi interests, however this foreign policy pattern suffered following the collapse of Iraq in 2003, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

Moreover, during Khatami's reign, a period generally characterized by high-level cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Iran, but Iran's strategy allowed for increased military leverage and intelligence in Iraq, which would later impact on Saudi Arabia. On closer inspection, the period of rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran served the interests of the latter more than it did the former. Iran used

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[62] *Al-jazīraḥ* , no. 10427, 16 April 2001, p.1.

[63] Hough, Harold, "Iranian Intentions-The Strait of Hormuz or Beyond?" *Jane's Intelligence Review (HIS)*, Vol. 7, no. 10, 1 October 1995, p. 454

[64] Tareq Y. Ismael et al., *Government and Politics of The Contemporary Middle East: continuity and change*. (London, New York: Routledge, 2015). pp. 551-559.

Saudi Arabia's desire for improved cooperation between their respective authorities to remove itself from political isolation and counteract the "dual containment"[65] policy imposed on it by the US. This situation was also utilized by Iranian officials to represent the country positively so as to revive its economy through foreign corporate investment and acquire the resources required to increase its influence in Iraq and Lebanon. It is immediately apparent from this analysis that Saudi Arabia did not have a coherent policy regarding the pursuit and achievements of its regional interests, and that its foreign policy decisions were determined by the actions of other countries. As its relationship with Iran illustrates, Saudi authorities were reactive rather than proactive. While it was possible for Saudi authorities to develop a foreign policy strategy that was predetermined by its own principles and interests and provided a means of employing its potential to realize its objectives, it instead reacted to the behavior of another state. This interpretation was confirmed in my interview with Prince Saud al-Faisal the Saudi Foreign Minister,[66] during which I questioned the reasons motivating the Kingdom's desire for rapprochement with Iran from 1990-2002, especially since it appears to have benefitted Iran by allowing her to rebuild its economic and military strength and end its political isolation, which ultimately enabled Iran to play a significant role in the Iraq Crisis (2003). This, as he explains, outlines the reasons why the Iraq invasion of Kuwait so radically altered the balance of power in the Gulf and how it necessitated Saudi authorities accepting the presence of foreign forces in the region. Due to the lack of manpower and military capabilities to maintain the status quo and defend all members of the GCC that did not have military strength comparable to that of Iraq and Iran, Saudi Arabia asked for support from the US. He also explained that Saudi foreign policy decisions were always motivated by the need for both domestic and regional stability, that policy in his opinion is not appropriate in the past, hence the willingness of officials to pursue a settlement with Iran, which would avoid creating any additional threats to that already posed by Iraq, a stance Prince Saud thought was unsuccessful policy at the time.

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[65] Dual Containment refers to the U.S.' policy for dealing with the threats posed to its interests by Iraq and Iran. It involved isolating both countries by excluding them from international economic and trading system. It was also designed to prevent Iran accessing to international capital and arms markets, and to continue American military commitments to Saudi Arabia and the smaller monarchies belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

[66] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

(4.2) Saudi Arabia's Position on the Iran–Iraq War (1980-1988)

In terms of providing a more comprehensive account of foreign-policy behaviour I will address the following propositions. Firstly, officials were either no longer committed to continuing according to the previous pattern of behaviour of an inactive foreign policy where they based their stance on reacting to events by pursuing a more 'reactive foreign policy'. Or, alternatively, the changes in behaviour were based more upon effective calculations by acting pre-emptively in this changing environment and, as a result, altering Saudi foreign policy accordingly to a more 'proactive foreign policy'. Issues surrounding access to the Shatt al-Arab waterway in the Arab Gulf played a significant role in the conflict between Iran and Iraq. This conflict extended from the sixteenth century, a period of hostilities between the Persian and Ottoman Empires, [67] until a treaty was signed "Boundary Treaty" between The Kingdom of Iraq and Iran at Tehran on 4 July 1937,[68] and participated in two non-aggression and security pacts. After the fall of the Hashemites in 1958 and the arrival of Gen. ʿAbd al-Karim Qasim, Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact on 18th December 1959. Qasim's administration advocated and agitated for Arab nationalism, which would later play a significant role in this conflict.

In direct relation to the conflict, Iran was growing increasingly aware of its improved military capabilities in comparison to other countries in the region. This led to Iran ignoring the Shatt al-Arab Treaty (1937), which settled the issue regarding access to this canal by obliging Iran to pay charges to Iraq whenever its ships used it.[69] In April 1969, Iran ceased making these payments,[70] a decision which led to further tensions with Iraq and to Iraq reclaiming its sovereign right to possess the territory of al-Ahwaz. At the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, the Iraqi government had initially welcomed the change in governance as Saddam considered the Shah an enemy. However, when Khomeini the revolutionary leader called for Iraqi citizens to topple the Baʿthist regime in June 1979, Hussein soon decided to take advantage of the anarchy following the revolution by invading the al-Ahwaz province, an area with rich oil reserves and whose population consisted of an Arab

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[67] Efraim Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War 1980–1988*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2002), p.7.
[68] Kaiyan H. Kaikobad, *The Shatt-al-Arab Boundary Question: a Legal Reappraisal*. (Oxford England New York: Clarendon Press Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 63.
[69] Efraim Karsh, Op.Cit., 2012, p.7.
[70] Ibid 7-8.

majority.[71] While the enmity between these two countries was clear, Iran did not limit its expansion of revolutionary ideology to Iraq, extending its call for populist regime changes similar to Iran's in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and encouraging a collective movement towards Islamic unity.[72] Nevertheless, relations between Iran and Iraq were particularly fractured, so when skirmishes and military raids by Iraq began on the border in 1980, these quickly escalated until war was declared in September of that year, in particular in response to Iraqi aircraft bombing military airbases inside Iranian territory and the civil airport in Tehran.[73]

At the outset of the Iran–Iraq War, Saudi Arabia's stance was highly ambiguous. It attempted to function as a mediator between these neighbouring Muslim states and to broker some form of reconciliation between the different parties so further loss of life could be avoided.[74] At an emergency meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, in New York in September 1980, the Saudi representative, Saud al-Faisal, explained that his country "was optimistic that the Iran-Iraq War can be ended" Quoting an official Saudi source, a news agency reported that "Saudi Arabia is concerned about the Iran-Iraq conflict and that the Kingdom has made all efforts to resolve the Iran-Iraq dispute during the meetings of the Islamic conference in 1980."[75] al-Faisal confirmed the Saudi policy of functioning as mediator in this conflict at the diplomatic level, explaining the extent to which Saudi Arabia was upset by what was happening between the two Muslim countries due to the devastating war, but expressing at the same time its "hope to end the war and reach a peaceful settlement that will end the bloodshed between Iran and Iraq." Later in this speech, delivered to the General Assembly of the United Nations in October 1980, he stated that:

> We in Saudi Arabia deeply feel the pain and grief of what has recently happened
> in our region between Iraq and Iran, and we call upon God to coordinate the

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[71] Patrick Brogan, *World Conflicts: Why and Where They Are Happening*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1989), p.261.

[72] Imam Khomeini (Author), Hamid Algar (Translator), *Islam and revolution: writings and declarations of Imam Khomeini 1941-1980*, (Berkeley Calif, North Haledon, NJ: Mizan Press, 1981), p.122.

[73] ʿAbdu al-Ḥakīm al-Ṭaḥāwī, *alʿlāqāt al-ʿSūdīyah al-ʾĪrānīyāh wa ʿAthāruhuā ʿlai Dūwal al-Khalīj*, (Riyadh: Makābaht al-ʿAbīkān, 2004), p.162.

[74] Abdullah Alkabbʿ, al-Siyāsah al-Saʿūdīyah al-Khārijīyah, (Riyadh: Matạbiʿ al-Farazdaq al-Tijārīyah, 1986), pp. 272–273.

[75] - *al-sharq al-Awsat* , no.687, 29 September 1980, p.1.

efforts of the OIC and the United Nations to end the causes of this dispute and and to restore security and peace to these two countries…We welcome the Iraqi government's response to the proposed cease-fire resolution and the declared unilateral commitment, and we consider this a positive step toward helping to improve the atmosphere. We hope that the Iran government responds to this initiative as well and while it is important to continue attempting to end the hostilities, Saudi Arabia does not condone the interference of any other country in this conflict.[76]

When asked about Saudi Arabia's position regarding this conflict in an interview with CBS, he stated that:

Iraq is an Arab country and is a member of the Arab League, and as everyone knows, Saudi Arabia extends its support to any Arab country...But the issue is not to support one side so it defeats the other side, this is a problem between two Muslim nations, it's brothers at war and not enemies at war…the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is doing everything in its power to end this war…but Iran is not an enemy of the Arab nation, it has not been in the past and is not in the present, and we are working to end that war.[77]

Eventually, however, Saudi authorities began to favour the Iraqi position, as illustrated when Crown Prince Fahd stated on December 1980 that, "in my personal opinion, the President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, has shown sufficient flexibility, in fact he wanted to put everything in its proper place and have each state claim their legitimate rights."[78] While Saudi authorities implicitly gave priority to Iraq's demands for its sovereign rights, they continued to create an appropriate diplomatic climate for establishing a dialogue between the two states through the framework of the OIC. This position became apparent during the Third Islamic Summit Conference in January 1981, held in Mecca, when Fahd gave a concluding speech that directly addressed a number of Arab and Islamic issues, including the war between Iraq and Iran:

[76] *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, no.693, 5 October 1980, p.1.
[77] *al-Bilād*, no.6555, 5 October 1980, p.5.
[78] *al-Yamāmah*, no.682, Riyadh, 4 December 1980, p.7.

> Our duty as Muslims requires us to look for peaceful solutions to our differences within this organization, in its framework and its doctrines of tolerance. We call on these countries to realize the necessity of stopping the fighting and to resolve the conflict by peaceful means by responding to the Organization of the Islamic Conference's initiative. We wish Iran to attend our meetings because its participation means a solution to this conflict can be found.[79]

At the beginning of the Iran–Iraq War, Saudi Arabia was ambiguous in its foreign-policy posture due to the mismatch between rhetoric based upon speeches and diplomatic overtures and its foreign-policy practices. The statements previously cited were an attempt by the Saudis to achieve a diplomatic end to the conflict. However, as will be shown, there were contradictions and ambiguities. At this point in time, it can be concluded, the Iran–Iraq conflict was seen as a threat to the stability of the region, and Saudi foreign policy was exercising its diplomatic levers to attempt a resolution, without explicitly taking sides. Although authorities claimed they would resolve this issue by remaining impartial and maintaining an objective distance between both countries, as outlined in the official statements above, this was contradicted by its tendency to extend favourable diplomatic support to Iraq. This perceived preferential treatment of Iraq resulted in Iran not attending the conference in Mecca and caused further speculation that Iraq was receiving military support and financial aid from Saudi Arabia to maintain its war efforts. On 4th February 1981, *The New York Times* claimed that "diplomatic sources here report that about 100 Soviet-made T-54 and T-55 tanks, shipped from East European countries, have been unloaded at Saudi ports on the Red Sea to be trucked 900 miles to the Iraqi border." [80] Saudi policy maintained this inconsistent position, as indicated by the incongruence between the claims of the Foreign Minister confirmed the Saudi policy of functioning as mediator in this conflict and the opinions of other officials, such as the Interior Minister Prince Nayef. In December 1981, he stated that:

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[79] *Umm al-Qirā*, no. 2956, January 30, 1981, p.1.
[80] "Iraqis Reported to Get about 100 Soviet made Tanks," *The New York Times*, 4 February 1981. Quoted in Joseph J. Collins, "The Soviet-Afghan War: The First Four Years, Parameters," *Journal of the U.S Army War College*, Vol.XIV, no.2, (1984), pp. 49-59.

It should be known that as Arabs we couldn't remain neutral and leave Iraq alone in the arena. It was Iran that transgressed, and Iraq has acted to defend itself. Therefore, our stand must be an Arab stands in support of Iraq; at the same time we must work to bring about an end to the war.[81]

Saudi Arabia attempted to continue publicly declaring its neutrality, emphasising that it was not supporting Iraq and denying any accusations regarding the provision of military support. In April 1982, the Minister of Defense, Prince Sultan, in response to a question about his visit to Baghdad, denied all Iranian speculation that Iraq had requested military aid from Saudi Arabia or that his country was providing equipment and forces.

The indecisiveness of Saudi foreign policy was a salient feature that can be explained by the absence of a long-term strategy. As explained in the previous chapter, although Iran was threatening Saudi interests, both domestically and within the region by exporting its revolutionary ideology and calling for radical regime changes through the Gulf States, Riyadh remained reluctant to actively support Iraq during the early stages of its conflict with Iran. Since Iraq threatened a quick victory at this time, this was a missed opportunity by Saudi Arabia to defeat the revolution in its infancy and contain its ideology in Iran. As demonstrated by the conflicting statements, there was a complete absence of a coherent and consistent foreign-policy strategy. In addition, two further factors helped to shape Saudi behaviour at that time; first, being, as it was was, reactive rather than proactive, Saudi policy at the time was not characterised by an initiative to achieve its objectives. Second, the Saudi government had little faith in the Iraqi government led by Saddam Hussein because of his different ideology and leanings compared to those of Saudi Arabia.

After this initial period, the terms of engagement had completely changed; with Iraq assuming a more defensive position, the situation was the opposite of what was happening at the outset of the conflict. In April 1982, the Saudi Interior Minister, Prince Nayef, revealed this change in circumstances and implicitly alluded to his government's new tendency towards aligning with Iraq against Iran, telling *The New York Times* that:

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[81] *BBC: Summary of World Broadcasts*: The Middle East, 16912/I, 22 December 1981.

Iran's ultimate goal is to control the Arab countries of the region by using Shiite minorities as "revolutionary spearheads." The oil-rich Arab countries worry that the recent success in the Iranian offensive will soon threaten their ability to maintain hold of their respective countries.[82]

Khomeini and the commanders of the revolution endeavoured to carry this effort through their speeches and statements. They claimed that the revolution began in order to defend vulnerable people. Khomeini said, "Islam stands on the side of the weak",[83] without specifying a particular denomination or sect. He also called for Islamic unity under the revolution. However, prior to the revolution, Khomeini's books adopted extreme opinions and sectarian ideas. In his two books, *Kashf al-'Asrār* and *Taḥrīr al-Wasīlah*, Khomeini claimed that the Sunnis are not Muslim, and forbade the Shīʿah to pray with the Sunni. In another book, *al-Makāsib al-Muḥarram-āh*, he claimed that the Sunnis are not the brethren of the Shīʿah.[84] Khomeini used non-sectarian language to achieve a political objective in order to spread the principles of revolution, claiming that these principles represented sublime ambitions for the entire Muslim world without exception, to gain a larger number of supporters in Sunni communities in the region. The author's survey of the literature of Saudi foreign policy, and its statements, has not found an official statement or speech from Saudi Arabia that has used sectarian language since the beginning of the revolution until 1982, but when Saudi Arabia decided to become secretly involved and participate in the conflict between Iraq and Iran, the statement above illustrates how Saudi use of sectarian language was in order to achieve two goals. First, to impede the Iranian ideological revolution from expanding into Sunni societies within the Gulf and Arab world, by accusing the revolution of having 'sectarian goals', and being concerned only with Shīʿah minority interests. Second, to give its policy legitimacy

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[82] Collection of Iraqi documents translated and made available by the Conflict Records Research Center about the 1980 to 1988 conflict also known as the First Persian Gulf War, and from U.S. media accounts as well as from declassified documents in the origins conduct and Impact of the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C. 19 July 2004. Accessed May, 14, 2015 https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-origins-conduct-and-impact-the-iran-iraq-war-1980-1988

[83] Ruhollah Khomeini, and Hamid Algar. Islam and Revolution: [the writings and declarations of Imam Khomeini]. (London New York: Kegan Paul, 2002), p. 244.

[84] Fahmī Huwaydī, *Īrān min al-Dākhil*, (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1987), pp. 230-234. The Author Fahmī Huwaydī cited in his study by Khomeini's Original books photo, which written in Persian, as *Kashf al-'Asrār*, p. 159, *Taḥrīr al-Wasīlah*, p. unknown, and *al-Makāsib al-Muḥarramh*, p.251.

and gain the support of the public and Sunnis when it lately decided to support Iraq in its war with Iran.

At the beginning of 1982, Saudi Arabia pursued a more diplomatic avenue, encouraging the US to help achieve an immediate cessation of hostilities through the UN, a venture that succeeded with the passing of Resolution 522.[85] This is further evidence that Saudi Arabia lacked the initiative in its foreign-policy strategy regarding Iraq, especially since it only pursued this course of action when it became apparent that Iraq was no longer capable of maintaining an offensive campaign against Iran and defeat appeared likely. In addition, Saudi officials were making diplomatic overtures to the U.S. to encourage its support for Iraq, a decision that ultimately proved unsuccessful, as U.S. policy was more concerned with keeping multiple options available in its relations with Iran than with the security of the Gulf States. The U.S. intentionally supported both opposing parties in order to realise a stalemate of sorts that would prevent either side from achieving victory.[86] This conflict implicitly benefitted the U.S. because it involved two countries that posed a significant threat to its interests in the region, it justified intervention as a means of preventing the Soviet Union becoming involved in the region, and the increase in arms sales benefitted its economy. Such a strategic decision is clearly outlined by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor (1977–1981), in his official memorandum to the President on 3rd October 1980, where he explained that "the threat to the security of the Gulf gives us also a unique opportunity to consolidate our security position in a manner which even a few weeks ago would have been not possible."[87]

There is also considerable disagreement regarding the exact date Saudi support of Iraq actually began, with certain specialists claiming the conflict officially commenced following the Gulf States' and Saudi Arabia's declared support for Iraq and Iran's rejection of the international community's attempt at mediation, while others, such as Mustafa Alani, the Director of Security and Defense Studies at the Gulf Research Centre in the Arab Emirates, claim that Gulf support only materialised

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[85] United Nations Security Council resolution 522, S / RES / 522, 4 October 1982.
[86] Irwin Abrams, Gungwu Wang, *The Iraq War and Its Consequences: Thoughts of Nobel Peace Laureates and Eminent Scholars*, (London: World Scientific, 2003). p. 344.
[87] Top Secret Code Word Official Memorandum, The White House, *NSC Weekly Report 156*, 3 October 1981.

following Iran's hostile occupation of Iraqi territory.[88] My interview with the media consultant Maysar al-Shammari,[89] who covered the various stages in the conflict and was a correspondent in Baghdad for a period, confirmed that Saudi Arabia officially began supporting Iraq diplomatically and economically in 1982. However, military hardware procurement and assistance by Saudi Arabia was not provided until 1984, when Iranian forces reached the mountains northeast of Baghdad and Iran claimed a "spectacular victory", on 22nd October 1984,[90] that it started providing proper military, in addition to the existing economic and political, support. This shows that the Saudi regime noticed a shift in the balance of power towards Iran following Iranian military victories and, in an effort to create a more favourable geostrategic landscape, provided military assistance to Iraq to forestall any further Iranian military advances which would challenge Saudi interests. However, there is consensus amongst observers that Saudi Arabia provided various forms of financial, logistical, military and political support after Iraq assumed a more defensive position towards Iran. This support assumed numerous forms, chiefly, government grants that were not intended to be recovered, concessional loans that were taken by other Gulf States to purchase Iraqi oil, and the use of Gulf ports to encourage and facilitate increased imports and exports of Iraqi goods in the region. This support, it is argued, was designed to strengthen the Iraqi government's ability to ward off what other Gulf States saw as Iran's attempt to extend its influence in the region by overthrowing existing conservative regimes. As a result of Iran's refusal to adhere to a proposed ceasefire, Saudi Arabia provided financial assistance to Iraq estimated at approximately $25 billion over the course of the eight years of the conflict, to help resist Iranian aggression.[91]

In mid-1982, Saudi Arabia began utilising the economic instrument of its foreign-policy strategy by giving Iraq support worth $1 billion per month. In fact, Saudi intervention in the Iran–Iraq conflict was incremental based upon shifts in the balance of power in the region, which started in the form of the political and diplomatic support mentioned above, and then by using its economic leverage by

[88] "al-Tamwīl al-Khalījī lilʿIraq bayn al-Ḥaqāīqh al-Amnīyāt," *BBC*, 23 September, 2010. Accessed Jun, 7, 2015 http://www.bbc.. com/arabic/middleeast/2010/09/100922_gulfstatesandiraq_tc2.
[89] Phone Interview by Author with Maysar al-Shammari, Norwich, September 11, 2015.
[90] Bryan R. Gibson, *Covert relationship: American foreign policy, intelligence, and the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988*, (Santa Barbara, Calif: Praeger, 2010), p. 139.
[91] *Middle East Economic Digest*, 16 December 1983, p. 15.

providing financial and logistical support for Iraq. For instance, when Syria closed its oil pipeline, which was the only means Iraq had to export its oil from the Mediterranean during the war,[92] it was reported that, in November 1983, Saudi Arabia and Iraq agreed to the construction of a 500,000 b/d pipeline carrying Iraq's oil from Southern Iraq to Yanbu city in Saudi Arabia on the Red Sea.[93] Saudi support increased due to the increased possibility of Iraq being defeated, a scenario that could easily have been avoided as the initial situation favoured Iraq and was an opportunity for Saudi officials to seize the initiative by implementing a proactive foreign-policy strategy. As it stood, Saudi policy was simply reacting to events and changes in the conflict as they occurred. As Patrick Brogan argues:

> The other Arab states came to the rescue. Iraq has one of the most unpleasant governments in the region and had shown constant hostility to the monarchies in Jordan, the Gulf and Saudi Arabia. However, the threat of Persian fundamentalism was far more to be feared, and thus the conservative Arab states could not afford to let Iraq be defeated.[94]

In determining the prevailing pattern of Saudi foreign policy, it is abundantly clear that a reactive position is favoured, as the country normally assumes a defensive stance in the international arena rather than a proactive, offensive one. This is confirmed by Safran Nadav's survey, where he argues that:

> Saudi policy, even in the best of circumstances, is essentially defensive, stemming from recognition of the Kingdom's limitation. Saudi leaders made it very clear on all occasions that the building of Saudi armed forces is to defend the territorial integrity and the people of Saudi Arabia.[95]

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[92] John Bulloch and Harvey Morris, *The Gulf War: Its Origins, History and Consequences*, (London: Methuen 1989), p.160.
[93] *OPEC News Bulletin*, 29 November 1983, p.8. See more in *Middle East Economic Digest*, vol. 27 no.18, 27 June 1984, p. 30.
[94] Patrick Brogan, 1989, Op.Cit, p. 263.
[95] Nadav Safran, Op.Cit., 1985, pp. 362-370.

Moreover, the new Iranian regime still harboured deep hostilities towards the conservative regimes that allied with the U.S., as was discussed earlier in terms of Khomeini's call to overthrow existing conservative governments, chief among them being Saudi Arabia, hence the commitment of Saudi officials to ensuring Iraq did not fall. The British journalists John Bulloch and Harvey Morris directly address this particular issue, explaining how:

> The virulent Iranian campaign, which at its peak seemed to be making the overthrow of the Saudi regime a war aim on a par with the defeat of Iraq, did have an effect on the Kingdom, but not the one the Iranians wanted: instead of becoming more conciliatory, the Saudis became tougher, more self-confident, and less prone to seek compromise.[96]

During fieldwork conducted in person in Saudi Arabia as part of this research project, I interviewed Ali Hassan Jaafar,[97] the Deputy Vice Foreign Minister, who was the Director of the Foreign Minister's office in 1984. I proposed the hypothesis that despite the various forms of support provided by Saudi authorities to Iraq, it was too late; officials failed to fully exploit the radical tensions and enmities within Iran immediately following the revolution or to ensure Iraq had the resources necessary to defeat Iran during the initial stages of the conflict. Instead of making the most of this significant opportunity, Saudi Arabia did not assume the initiative and instead resorted to a reactive strategy where foreign-policy decisions were determined by other events, for example, the change in circumstances in the Iran–Iraq War discussed above. He replied that Saudi Arabia's foreign-policy decisions were reactive for two separate reasons. Firstly, the conservative nature of Saudi foreign policy meant officials were more concerned with maintaining the status quo. Secondly, there was an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion regarding Iraq's political system, especially since the principles of the Ba'ath party, captured in the popular slogan "one Arab nation with an eternal message," diverged greatly from Saudi Arabia's more conservative system. Furthermore, he explained that, according to information

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[96] John Bulloch and Harvey Morris, Op.Cit., 1989, p.163.
[97] Author's Interview, with the former Saudi Ambassador in Russia, and Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Ali Hassan Jaafar, Riyadh, February 9, 2016.

provided by intelligence agencies prior to the conflict, Saddam Hussein was committed to extending his leadership throughout the Gulf region under the cover of nationalist ambitions, which posed a serious threat to Saudi Arabia. In addition, as Ali Hassan Jaafar mentioned in a brief summary, he observed the Iraqi official regime acting in a superior manner, determined in part by its ideology and principles of Ba'athism based upon 'Pan-Arabism'. This means that Iraq felt it was speaking on behalf of other Arab nations and during the delegations, Iraq's behaviour to other Arab nations was felt to be hierarchical and assuming a higher authority. As Charles Tripp and Sharam Chubin observed of the Ba'athist leader:

> As his own hold on Iraq tightened, so his ambitions to extend his influence in the region increased. Boosted by the apparent success of the Baghdad conferences of 1978 and 1979, the 'Ba'athist leader' told his troops, "We cannot maintain the nation's honor by defending Iraqi territory only; our duty extends to every part of the Arab homeland and to everywhere our hand reaches to maintain the Arab nation's honor".[98]

At the time, Saudi Arabia did not possess the resources necessary for assuming a more influential role in the region through a proactive foreign-policy strategy. In order to assume the initiative regarding regional events such as the Iran–Iraq war, Saudi Arabia required greater military capabilities in addition to having economic, labour and technological capabilities all working together within the framework of a coherent and predetermined foreign-policy strategy.

In terms of generalisability of findings, empirical evidence has shown that Saudi foreign policy can be seen to act in accordance with the logic of defensive realism, otherwise known as the Neo-Realism of Kenneth Waltz. He argues that the international system is anarchic and that therefore, states seek to survive: "the first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their position in the

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[98] Sharam Chubin and Charles Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War*, (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1988), p.25.

system", [99] by undertaking defensive and moderate policies to survive in the international system, he assumed that security goals are achieved when a balance of power is achieved, and the status quo in the region is maintained.[100] In this sense, Saudi foreign policy, rather than acting from a stance of pre-emption and proactive foreign policy, is instead acting in a defensive manner, achieving a balance of power and maintenance of the status quo to achieve its diplomatic and security objectives. As it has been shown, after 1984, Saudi foreign policy, through its pursuit to exercise its economic and political leverage through military assistance to Iraq, confirms the assumptions laid out in the defensive realism as proposed by Kenneth Waltz (1982), which it refers to as the anarchic nature of international systems, thus the survival of nations becomes of paramount importance. In order to achieve that, the states might adopt multiple strategies, such as accession or formation of a coalition against another; or through recourse to diplomatic means, including negotiations and concessions; or by going to war to prevent the aggressive behaviour of any enemy which it perceives to be making attempts against its security. However, a central axiom is the function of the balance of power determining states' actions. In this sense, the Iran–Iraq War has demonstrated that Saudi Arabia perceived Iran's strategic gains as a sign of its ambitions to maximise its geopolitical gains and increase its influence in the Middle East. For Saudi Arabia, this posed a potential threat to its security interests, and therefore, according to the logic of Neo-Realism, the changing international structure of the region necessitated a more reactive foreign policy to supplement Iraq's power base both economically and militarily, through indirect actions, to establish a more favourable balance of power. In other words, increased military and economic capabilities alone are not sufficient for an effective foreign policy, and any foreign policy making must take into account how those resources are to be used. Decisions upon how these resources are to be used will determine whether a state acts pre-emptively or reactively according to the situation and the decisions on which it is to be undertaken. As Nadav Safran note, "in situations involving a choice between incurring short-term danger to advance long-term interests, or seeking to avoid the former at a risk to the latter, the Saudis invariably

[99] Waltz N. Kenneth, *Theory of international politics*. (Boston: Addison- Wesley, 1979), p. 126. See in Jack Donnelly, "The discourse of anarchy in IR" in *International Theory*, *Cambridge University Press*, Vol.7, Issue. 3, November 2015, pp. 393-425.
[100] Ibid.

opt for the second course."[101] Due to the defensive disposition and the tendencies towards a policy of appeasement, the diplomatic style pursued by Saudi Arabia was characterised by a preference for caution over maximization of potential gains through a policy of discretion.

Regional security concerns have always been a major determining factor in the decision-making process of Saudi officials involved in determining the nation's foreign-policy strategy. While Saudi Arabia preferred to employ diplomatic and economic measures more than other alternatives, the immediate repercussions of the Iran–Iraq War meant officials had to reconsider this approach and re-evaluate the benefits of developing its military capabilities to achieve its security. Saudi Arabia might not have directly intervened in the conflict militarily, that is, by deploying its own forces, but it did provide considerable support in the form of military equipment, increasing Iraq's purchasing powers and improving its logistical infrastructures. Despite its economic capabilities, and unlike Iran and Iraq, Saudi Arabia did not have the same military capabilities, due to its population size, the fact it was a relatively new nation state, and because it was dependent on the U.S. for its security. However, Congress prohibited the direct provision of modern weapons to Saudi Arabia such as, 48 Of F-15 Aircraft, 1600 Maveric Missiles.[102] This insistent refusal to provide military equipment led to Saudi Arabia officials being forced to source alternative suppliers. As a result, in 1984, positive Saudi-British relations recommenced, and on 26th September 1985, the "Al Yamamah" project was agreed upon, which guaranteed Saudi Arabia 48 Tornado aircrafts and 88 Westland helicopters with armaments, in addition to other necessary military equipment from British suppliers.[103] John Bulloch and Harvey Morris suggest that the "reason for turning to Britain was annoyance at the actions of the American Congress in banning or holding up certain arms sales because it was claimed they might be used against Israel."[104] However, another variable must also be explained, which was, during the Iran–Iraq War, the so called 'Second Cold War' being pursued by both the Soviet Union and the United States globally, which had an impact on relations in the region, with Iraq being an ally of the Soviet Union. Although this interface between global and regional politics is

[101] Nadav Safran, 1985, Op.Cit, p 455.
[102] Mark Phythian, *The politics of British arms sales since 1964*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 222. For further information see in *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 2 July 1988.
[103] Mark Phythian, 2000, Op.Cit., pp. 218–222.
[104] John Bulloch, Harvey Morris, Op.Cit.,1989, p.164.

important, this thesis must focus on its significance in relation to its impact on Saudi foreign-policy behaviour. As such, the Reagan administration in the United States during the early 1980s was concerned about growing Soviet influence in the Middle East and had a more cautious approach to military assistance. Because of this, the Saudi regime attempted to pursue military contacts with the Thatcher government of the United Kingdom, which proved fruitful in the procurement of high-tech military hardware.

While Saudi Arabia was already providing support for Iraq, the extent of this support changed both quantitatively and qualitatively following the so-called "Tanker War"[105] in 1984, when Iranian forces attacked Saudi-Kuwaiti oil tankers from 13–16 May. Although these tankers contained Iraqi oil, this gesture of hostility towards Saudi Arabia inaugurated a dramatic change in Saudi–Iranian relations, as Iran's government began threatening further acts against ports, pipeline facilities and desalination stations in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi response was again reactive, with officials announcing the creation of the "Fahd Line,"[106] an air interception zone that prohibited any further violations of Saudi sovereign territory. Despite this defensive strategy, Iran continued to threaten Saudi airspace, and on 5th June, two Iranian Phantom F-4 aircraft violated the interception zone, with one being shot down, an act which served to further escalations between the two nations.[107] As a result of Iranian hostilities, Saudi Arabia increased its financial support to Iraq and began to improve its own defensive capabilities. This new orientation put pressure on the U.S. to provide more modern weapons to Saudi Arabia. This meant the Reagan administration was in contention with Congress, which refused to approve any deal that allowed for improved military capabilities. However, as the "al-Yamamah Project" with Britain demonstrated, Riyadh had leverage, as they could find alternative suppliers should the U.S. fail to satisfy its new demands. Accordingly, President Reagan authorised the sale of five E-3A AWACS surveillance planes to Saudi Arabia, at a total cost of $5.8 billion, which were to be delivered in 1985, a move that faced fierce opposition from the Israel lobby group in Washington and was

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[105] Efraim Karsh, Op.Cit., 2002, pp. 1–19. For further information see in; Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R.Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War*. (Boulder, Colo. London: Westview Press Mansell Pub, 1990).

[106] Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, Op.Cit., 1990, p. 195.

[107] Ibid, p.195-200.

itself the end result of a process first started in 1981 that had involved serious deliberations.[108]

Despite Saudi Arabia's continued support of Iraq, officials began to fear further escalation of the conflict, especially following the so-called "war of cities" that began on 7th February when Hussein ordered the bombing of Iranian cities.[109] This signalled the beginning of retaliatory bombing campaigns of the vital cities of both countries and meant that hostilities were no longer confined to the Iran–Iraq border. Such a change of circumstances caused fear in Saudi Arabia that its own cities might become targets, which in turn led officials to devise a way of acquiring more defensive deterrents. As a result, the Saudi government requested strategic missiles from the U.S., but this request was ultimately rejected due to the pressure of pro-Israel lobby groups, who argued that such provisions would radically alter the balance of power between Saudi Arabia and Israel.[110] Consequently, Saudi officials approached China to obtain such equipment despite the lack of pre-existing diplomatic relations between the two countries. Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador in Washington, met the Chinese ambassador Han Xu in Washington to convey his country's requirements for ballistic missile equipment and technology.[111] Due to the positive response from the Chinese authorities, Bandar Bin Sultan visited Beijing on a number of different occasions in 1985–1986. However, due to fears that these visits would cause suspicion in the U.S. about Saudi Arabia's intentions, Saudi officials explained that, as an act of further support of Iraq, it was negotiating a deal to buy the entirety of China's ballistic missiles to ensure they could not be sold to Iran.[112] Following careful and prolonged deliberations, the two countries brokered a deal in 1987 and China dispatched the first shipment of DF-3 CSS-2 missiles to Saudi Arabia, concealed within shipments of equipment purchased for Iraq so as to avoid them being discovered by satellite agencies of the U.S., and which were then hidden in As-

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[108] Nicholas Laham, *Selling AWACS to Saudi Arabia: the Reagan administration and the balancing of America's competing interests in the Middle East*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), pp. 90–120. For Further Information see in 'Senate Supports Reagan on AWACS Sale.' In CQ Almanac 1981, 37th ed. 129-40.*Congressional Quarterly*, (1982). Accessed 7 April 2015. http://library,./cqalmanac/cqal81-cqp ress.com 1171966.

[109] Efraim Karsh, 2002, Op.Cit., pp. 8-19.

[110] Ala Alrababah and Jeffrey Lewis, "Saudi Rattles Its Saber", NTI by *the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies*, (2014). Accessed January 11, 2015, http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/saudi-rattles-its-saber/.

[111] David B. Ottaway, *The King's Messenger: Prince Bandar bin Sultan and America's Tangled Relationship with Saudi Arabia*, (New York: Walker and Company, 2008), p. 69.

[112] "Mūqābalahat tīylfizyūnīyahah maʿa al-ʾAmīr Bandar bin Sultan", Barnāmaj Idāʾāt, (9 June 2004). Accessed March 22, 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmRWOouQDwc

Sulayyil, a region in southern Riyadh.[113] These attempts to conceal the weapons ultimately proved futile as the CIA identified the presence of fifty ballistic missiles in the Saudi desert on 6th March 1988 from satellite reconnaissance.[114] The findings of the CIA's investigation claimed that Saudi Arabia was amassing a "huge ammunition depot" and when they were leaked by *The Washington Post* on 8th March, Israel exerted increased pressure on the Reagan administration to address the issue immediately, with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir declaring that, "Israel would strike those missiles sites if the United States failed to deal with the problem".[115] U.S. authorities were angered by the Saudi–China deal and provided three options to help annul it: returning the shipment to China, dismantling the negotiated terms of the contract, or to pass control of the launch sites to the U.S. military. King Fahd rejected all three options and his insistence on the sovereignty of Saudi authorities regarding decisions concerning its national security led to a significant change in Saudi–U.S relations.[116]

Relations between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia subsequently entered a period of heightened tension, a situation that was further exacerbated by Israel undertaking a series of air manoeuvres on the Saudi border. In response, Saudi authorities mobilised its Air Force along the northern border in preparation for any possible threat and asked the U.S. to obtain a guarantee from Israel that no reckless actions would be committed, a guarantee that U.S. officials were ultimately unable to obtain. Saudi officials also continued to insist that its ballistic missiles were not equipped with nuclear warheads and that they were deployed for defensive measures rather than for use in any attack against Israel or other regional countries. Saudi–U.S. relations deteriorated further when the U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Hume Horan,[117] was expelled on 1st April 1988 following his condemnation of the arms deal with China during a formal meeting with Fahd, who told Horan in no uncertain terms to "keep your nose out of it."[118] However, relations did improve slightly over time, as an

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[113] Anthony H. Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century: The Military and International Security Dimensions* , (Westport: Praeger 2003), pp. 313–325.
[114] David B. Ottaway, 2008, Op.Cit., p.71.
[115] David B. Ottaway, "Saudi Hide Acquisition of Missiles", *Washington post*, 29 March 1988.
[116] David B. Ottaway, 2008, Op.Cit., p.72.
[117] Elaine Sclolino, "U.S. Replacing Its Envoy to Saudis," *The New York Times*, 2 April 1988.
[118] Robert Lacey, *Inside the Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists, and the Struggle for Saudi Arabia*, (New York: Penguin Random House, 2011), pp.113–114.

understanding was reached after repeated Saudi assurances that the ballistic missiles would not be used.[119]

According to a 1992 *Los Angeles Times* and *The New Yorker Magazine* report, a State Department cable reports that the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Bandar bin Sultan had recently openly admitted that in August 1986, Saudi Arabia had transferred weapons obtained from the U.S., such as MK-84 bombs, to Iraq, due to its concern that Iraq would imminently fall into Iranian hands and thereby radically alter the security of the region.[120] This signals a qualitative change in Saudi support for Iraq, as it illustrates the realisation that financial and diplomatic instrument were no longer sufficient, in addition to demonstrating the willingness of Saudi officials to potentially irritate their ally, since the provision of such weapons was not permissible according to its pledge with the U.S. There is considerable data provided by classified documents and interviews that indicate numerous violations, suggesting even a systematic procedure of unauthorized transfers of military equipment from Saudi Arabia to Iraq. [121] As the conflict continued to intensify and civilians were increasingly becoming the targets of military activities, calls for a ceasefire rose correspondingly until Iran accepted Resolution 598 on 20th July 1988, thereby ending hostilities with Iraq. [122] The following section will address the second Gulf War, which began in 1990 with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and provides the basis for analysis of my case study of the 2003 war in Iraq, and investigation of Saudi foreign policy towards Iraq in general.

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[119] Ibid, pp. 114-116.

[120] Murray S. Waas and Craig Unger: "In the Loop: Bush's Secret Mission", Annals of Government [How the U.S. armed Iraq], *The New Yorker Magazine*, 2 November 1992. See in Devin Kennington, et.al, "Iran-Iraq War Timeline", *Digital Archive International History Declassified*. Accessed 13 March 2015, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Iran-IraqWar_Part1_0.pdf

[121] Murray S. Waas and Douglas Frantz, "Saudi Arms Link to Iraq Allowed: Mideast: Under Reagan and Bush, U.S. weapons were secretly provided to Baghdad, classified documents show. The White House kept Congress in the dark", *Los Angeles Times*, 18 April 1992.

[122] Efraim Karsh, 2002, Op.Cit., p.82.

(4.3) Gulf War II (1990)

After the end of the first Gulf War in 1988, disagreements between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti governments resurfaced. These disagreements derived from historical territorial disputes, but these now had economic implications, due to the presence of oil wells in the border areas, and would prove to be significant determinants in the second Gulf crisis.[123] As a result of the war with Iran, Iraq was economically exhausted, with foreign debts amounting to $70 billion, half of which was owed to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.[124] On 3rd May 1990, Iraq 'revived its complaint that Kuwait was surpassing its production quota outlined by the OPEC agreement. Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, protested against the high rate of oil production by the OPEC countries, particularly the Kuwaiti act of flooding the world market with oil, which he blamed for the increased deterioration of his country's economic affairs since early 1990. Saddam Hussein confirmed Iraq's economic crisis at the Arab League Summit Conference in Baghdad on 28th May, when he launched a vehement critique of the Gulf countries, especially Kuwait, stating that "according to OPEC agreements, Kuwait should not produce more than its quota of 1.5 million barrels, but it has already exceeded its quota to reached 2.1 million which is against our interest."[125] Because the Gulf States failed to properly respond to Iraq's complaints, Sa'dun Hammadi, the Iraqi Prime Minister, met King Fahd in Saudi Arabia on 25th June to encourage him to convince Kuwait to adhere to the quotas previously agreed upon by OPEC countries. However, Fahd asked Hammadi to wait until the next regular OPEC meeting to discuss the issue properly, and the latter then went to Kuwait to raise the issue but received a similarly disappointing response to his country's demands.[126] Although Saudi officials did not make any serious attempt to resolve the issue between Iraq and Kuwait, such as its diplomatic initiative to hold the Jeddah Conference on 31st July, no solution could be agreed upon.[127] It can be argued that Saudi Arabia did not properly fulfill its role of mediator in this situation, and simply

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[123] Walid Khalidi, "The Gulf Crisis: Origins and Consequences", regular paper, *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (1991), p.Vii.

[124] Tom Kono, 'Road To Invasion', *American-Arab Affairs*, no. 34, (Fall 1990), pp.30–34.

[125] Pierre Salinger and Éric Laurent, *Secret Dossier: The Hidden Agenda Behind the Gulf War,* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 30–35. see in Shak B. Hanish, "The 1990 Gulf Crisis: Political Realism Applied," *Journal of International Relations and Foreign Policy*, (June 2013), pp. 1-16.

[126] Salinger and Éric, 1991, Op.Cit., pp. 36–37.

[127] Abdulrhman A. Hussein, *So History Doesn't Forget: Alliances Behavior in Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1979-1990*, (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012), p. 261.

met its obligations as host of the conference, as it was reported that, "after Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz greeted both delegations, all Saudi officials promptly left the meeting".[128] By not having any representatives present at the negotiations, Saudi officials indicated their lack of concern towards solving this matter or to playing the role of mediator in this dispute more effectively.

As the leader of OPEC and the largest state in the region, Saudi Arabia had the opportunity to play a more substantial role in this emerging crisis and to defuse it before it escalated any further. It also had the means of making Kuwait adhere to the allocated quota, thus appeasing Iraq and containing the crisis as a solely economic issue. However, the indifference shown by Saudi Arabia towards the increased tensions between Iraq and Kuwait indicates that the country's foreign policy was still neither proactive nor pre-emptive. Although several studies, such as Abdurrahman A. Hussein's, even observed that Iraq had always intended to invade Kuwait and that the issues of oil production and national debt were only ever distractions from, or justifications for, this course of action:

> Even if the GCC states agreed to cut oil production, canceled Iraq's debt, and compensated Iraq for oil taken from its claimed territories, Saddam would still have found a pretext to invade Kuwait.[129]

Although understanding the reasons behind Iraq's aggression towards Kuwait is important, the remit of this research project is to determine why Saudi Arabia behaved the way it did during the period immediately preceding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, to question to what extent it fulfilled its conventional role in the region through its foreign-policy strategy.

In the early hours of 2nd August 1990, the Iraqi Republican Guard invaded Kuwait, quickly seizing major centres throughout the country, including the capital city, and taking control of national Kuwaiti radio and television facilities. These latter acquisitions were crucial to the propaganda campaign undertaken by the Iraqi authorities, who established a new government led by Alaa Hussein on 4th August and

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[128] Ibid, p.262.
[129] Abdulrhman A. Hussein, 2012, Op.Cit, p.264. See in Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-199: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order*, (N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994).

consequently claimed Kuwait as one of Iraq's nineteen provinces. Hours after the invasion, Kuwait and the U.S. held an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council, which resulted in Resolution 660, an official condemnation of the invasion and a corresponding demand for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory.[130] Saudi Arabia's position during the initial stages of this Iraqi invasion was one of hesitation because they had not anticipated this action on the part of Iraq. Moreover, due to its relatively limited military capabilities, officials refrained from issuing any formal statement for fear of further provoking Iraq. After an emergency meeting of the Arab League on 3rd August, where Iraq's actions were condemned by a majority of fourteen to seven, 'Izzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī, the Vice-President of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council, met King Fahd in Saudi Arabia. Fahd implored him, unsuccessfully, to immediately withdraw from Kuwait so that a satisfactory solution to Iraq's demands could be realised.[131] As a result of Iraq's continued occupation of Kuwait, Fahd made a public announcement to Saudi citizens on 9th August, asking for foreign military support to help his own forces defend the sovereign territories of Saudi Arabia:

> In the aftermath of this regrettable event, Iraq massed huge forces on the borders of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In the view of these bitter realities and out of the eagerness of the Kingdom to safeguard its territory, to protect its vital economic potentials, and its wish to bolster its defensive capabilities by raising the level of training of its armed forces, in addition to the keenness of the government of the Kingdom to resort to peace and non-recourse to force to solve disputes, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia expressed its wish for the participation of fraternal Arab forces and other friendly forces.[132]

In a final attempt to avoid any further escalation or entering into a direct conflict with Iraq, Fahd appealed directly to Saddam Hussein:

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[130] Finlan, Alastair, *The Gulf War of 1991*. (New York: Rosen Pub, 2009), pp. 23–30.
[131] Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, Op.Cit., 1994), p.72.
[132] Quote from King Fahd's Speech to the Saudi people on the Gulf Crisis, *The Middle East Congressional Quarterly*, 1991, p.371.

I renew and confirm our just demand that you take the bold decision and prove to the whole world that you are up to the level of responsibility you shoulder in governing Iraq. By doing so you will have made an eternal stand which history will record for you.[133]

Unfortunately, this appeal, in addition to similar calls from other national leaders, was ignored. As a result, the U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 678, giving Iraq a withdrawal deadline of 15 January 1991,[134] to withdraw its forces from Kuwait. Iraq's ignoring of this final diplomatic intervention meant that a military alternative was needed and on 17th January 1991, coalition forces from 34 countries, led by the U.S., began "Operation Desert Storm", an air and bombing campaign against Iraq. In response, Iraq fired a number of Scud missiles into Saudi Arabia and Israel. The air campaign lasted 43 days, until coalition ground forces entered Kuwait and liberated it from Iraqi forces, who finally withdrew two days later.[135]

This short conflict caused significant damage to Iraq's infrastructure. It also served to isolate it, politically and economically, from the international community through a series of embargoes, such as U.N. Resolution 661 issued on 6th August 1990, which prohibited all member states from making any trade deals with Iraq excluding basic provisions such as food and medical supplies, a situation that continued for thirteen years.[136] In addition to the disastrous effects such economic sanctions had on Iraq, its armed forces were also incapacitated. Iraq's weakened position, however, did not benefit Saudi Arabia's national or security interests, as it shifted the balance of power in the region in Iran's favour. Although Iranian foreign policy became more moderate after Khomeini, as discussed in the previous chapter, Iraq's loss of influence in regional affairs following the destruction of its military capabilities, the collapse of its infrastructure, and the deterioration of its economy due

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[133] Quote form King Fahd's letter to Saddam Hussein, The Monthly Newsletter of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington DC, February 1991. For more information see Hussein, Op.Cit., 2012, p.365. See in "Confrontation in the Gulf; Excerpts From King Fahd's Speech to Saudis," *The New York Times*, 10 August 1990.

[134] United Nations Security Council resolution 678, adopted on 29 November 1990, adopted at the 2963rd meeting by 12 votes to 2 (Cuba and Yemen), with 1 abstention (China).

[135] William J. Perry, "Desert Storm And Deterrence", McGeorge Bundy, "Nuclear Weapons And The Gulf ", *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 70, no. 4, (October 1991), pp. 66-94. See more in Freedman, Lawrence, and Efraim Karsh, Op.Cit., 1994.

[136] Resolution. 661 (1990) Adopted by the Security Council at its 2933rd meeting on 6 August 1990. See in Lauterpacht, C. J. Greenwood, Marc Weller, *The Kuwait Crisis: Basic Documents*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press,1991), p. 197.

to various embargos from 1990–2003, meant it was easily subjected to Iranian authority after the fall of Saddam Hussein. As illustrated in the final part of this chapter, Iran deceived Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states through its foreign-policy strategy, particularly its apparent commitment to avoid intervening any longer in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries and ending the proliferation of revolutionary ideology. This stance by Iran even achieved a certain rapprochement with Saudi Arabia, as the country gained approval from OPEC to increase its oil production quota. As a result, Iranian oil production increased to 260,000 barrels per day, whilst its trade with Gulf countries steadily increased the nation's GDP.[137] From 1990–2003, this period of improved cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia ended the Iranian isolation that was a consequence of the Islamic Revolution and the first Gulf War. This new state of affairs benefitted from a change in discourse by Iranian officials, harnessed financial potential to achieve Iran's interests and expand its influence in Iraq following 2003, by way of the religious allegiances among Pro-Iranian Special Groups in Iraq, such as the Badr Organization and Asaib Ahl al-Haq. In contrast, Saudi Arabia did not have a coherent political strategy to address this new change in the balance of power in the region, either by improving its military capabilities to occupy the position Iraq previously had, or relying on a powerful political movement, similar to what had occurred in Iran, that was capable of changing the political reality of the situation. Instead, the Saudi authorities enhanced Saudi Arabia's defensive capabilities through the support of the U.S. and pursued its own security and interests.

Finally, this analysis of the central issues motivating Saudi foreign policy has identified a number of vital aspects that help in understanding its foreign behaviour and provide a context for comprehending the important changes that will be outlined in the subsequent case studies, The preceding chapters have addressed the central question, which is whether Saudi foreign policy is based on a more proactive stance, or, alternatively, is a function of a more reactive foreign-policy agenda based upon circumstances, and the events of the Iran–Iraq War. Empirically, there are two important caveats to consider; firstly, the geopolitics of the region, namely, in this instance, the Iranian Revolution and the subsequent Iran–Iraq War. The purpose of

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[137] Saleh Al Mani, "the Ideological Dimension in The Saudi-Iranian Relations" in Jamal S. Suwaidi, *Iran and the Gulf: A Search for Stability*, (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1996, p.171.

this empirical case study is not only based on a narrative account, but a deconstruction of the relative factors that led to a particular stance of Saudi foreign policy. These case studies provide the context in which key themes can be deconstructed and thus generalisations be made about Saudi international behaviour.

The purpose of the previous chapter is to understand the conventional patterns of behaviour of the Saudi government in relation to historical conflicts with other actors. This will involve case studies of the Iraq War, and the Syria and Bahrain crises, taking into account the possibility of Saudi Arabia becoming an aspiring dominant power in the Middle East during this time of political change during the early 21st century. This will make clear what variables and themes are most dominant, and its impact upon how Saudi Arabia attempts to navigate the changing politics of the Middle Eastern region. This is what will be addressed in the following chapters. To understand the changing nature of Saudi foreign policy, it is necessary to determine its patterns and changes, as it is known that Saudi international relations are a phenomenon that cannot be measured empirically but must be understood contextually by deconstructing its relative variables. However, in order to provide greater understanding, I have interpreted the contexts in which Saudi foreign policy is pursued in an effort to understand, explain and predict future trends. Therefore, I have employed qualitative case studies designed to make generalisations, thereby disseminating main themes and patterns of behaviour that can be utilised in understanding shifts in foreign policy from reactive to proactive stances.

As with any qualitative interpretivist research, Saudi foreign-policy patterns are a phenomenon that cannot be directly measured, but within the preceding chapters, I converted the Saudi pattern into an operational definition that interprets Saudi foreign policy based upon particular decision-making inputs and outcomes. As such, this approach will provide more of a functional explanation as to why a particular foreign-policy posture has been adopted within given circumstances, thus providing a fuller explanation as to the relative factors impacting decision making. This has been achieved by way of answering questions as to how or why certain decisions surrounding central issues have been made in the way they were. Questions include, what instruments or tools does Saudi foreign policy prefer or tend to use for the formulation and implementation of its foreign policy – military or economic, diplomacy, media or intelligence? In addition, how important are foreign affairs for

Saudi Arabia? Do they occupy a central or a marginal position? These questions are arrived at, not only via an examination of historical narrative, but also through the use of content analysis of speeches, official statements, and archival material. Most importantly, the interviews I have carried out with those involved in relevant decision-making processes, and which are shown in the previous chapters, seek to uncover the interviewees' various perspectives on what factors underpinned the decision-making process. All of which are particularly useful for heuristic purposes that contribute to originality. In addition, the methodology – particularly the qualitative methods of this study – used herein to arrive at or confirm the credibility of this research hypothesis and the generalizability of findings to determine conventional patterns in Saudi foreign policy, has assumed that Saudi foreign policy has consistently been more reactive than it has proactive. The observations and findings of previous chapters characterises Saudi policy based upon a complete absence of self-determining initiative in that it did not deviate from a policy of self-restraint and lack of initiative, and as a result distanced itself from regional conflicts. In terms of operationalising foreign-policy objectives, there is a preference for political, diplomatic, mediation and moderate pathways to maintain the status quo for Saudi Arabia to achieve its interests, all of which is determined by the dominant patterns, as previously shown.

Chapter 5: The Iraq War and its Consequences

The previous chapters outlined the history of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy from 1902 to 2003, describing and analyzing it to provide readers with the contextual knowledge required to identify recurrent issues, how decisions were made during some of the most important domestic and international events of the twentieth century, and, most importantly, to understand the persistent pattern and the causality of decisions that engendered it. This chapter utilises the methodology of the study, which focuses on particular case studies, in this case, the Iraq War (2003), to address the research questions and explore the hypotheses established in the introduction. The methodology combines analysis of secondary material with fieldwork recently undertaken in Saudi Arabia by the researcher in an effort to contextualize this significant event within dominant debates surrounding it, while always ensuring to foreground the perspectives of the government officials, diplomats, military figures and intelligence officers involved in determining and realizing Saudi foreign policy objectives during this period. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 had an immediate effect on the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. In particular, the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime resulted in an immediate shift in the balance of power in the region, which in turn had important implications for regional stability. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze Saudi foreign policy during the Iraq War (2003), in particular, how the country engaged with the primary players, chiefly Iran and the United States, and responded to the major developments in this conflict.

(5.1) The Domestic Situation in Saudi Arabia Before and After the Iraq War

Prior to 2003, Saudi Arabia was suffering from the repercussions of 9/11, ultimately being accused of sponsoring fundamentalist Islamic extremism. Certain officials, media organizations and political analysts in research and political study centres pursued a staunch anti-Saudi campaign, even accusing the country of being

responsible for the attack.[1] Papers such as *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* criticized Saudi authorities and encouraged Western countries to reconsider their relations with Saudi Arabia due to the accusation that it supported terrorism by funneling money to al-Qaeda and its network through charitable organizations,[2] such as the Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation (AHIF). The U.S. administration claimed that its investigation had found links between the founding branch in Saudi Arabia and Osama bin Laden.[3]

The United States' "War on Terror" officially began in Afghanistan in 2001 before expanding to include Iraq in 2003. This expansion quickly led to the deterioration of Saudi-U.S. relations, as the former categorically opposed the conflict with Iraq because of its fear that the balance of power in the region would change. Bilateral relations between the two countries became increasingly difficult to maintain due to a pronounced difference in attitude toward Saudi Arabia within the U.S. Congress. While a large proportion of congress members wanted to further continue the positive and mutually beneficial relations with Saudi Arabia, a significant number pronounced counter-claims. For example, a Congressional Report proposed two claims. Firstly, that Saudi Arabia had intimate connections with terrorist networks designed to disseminate its ideology of Wahhabism throughout the region, in particular Pakistan and Afghanistan. Secondly, that Saudi Arabia's history regarding human rights and women's rights was at odds with America's, and that Saudi Arabia provided financial support to terrorist groups and Islamic Palestinian movements. It can be argued that these trends in official opinion toward Saudi Arabia within the U.S. Congress are indicative of a desire to reduce U.S dependency on Saudi oil.[4] Despite these negative opinions, the common strategic framework and the shared economic interests of the countries remained determining factors in ensuring positive Saudi-U.S. relations.

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[1] Anthony Oberschall, "Explaining Terrorism: The Contribution of Collective Action Theory," *Sociological Theory American Sociological Association*, Vol 22, Issue 1, (March 2004), pp. 33-34. For further information see Eric Rouleau, "Trouble in the Kingdom", Foreign Affairs, *The Council on Foreign Relations*, Vol. 81, No. 4, (July–August 2002), pp. 75–89.

[2] "Reconsidering Saudi Arabia", *The New York Times*, 14 October 2001. http://www.nytimes.com /2001/10/14/opinion/reconsidering-saudi-arabia.html. Accessed March 16, 2016.

[3] John Sullivant, *Strategies for Protecting National Critical Infrastructure Assets: A Focus on Problem-Solving*. (Hoboken, N.J: Wiley-Interscience, 2007), pp. 480-482.

[4] See in Alfred B. Prados, "Saudi Arabia: Current Issues and U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, IB93113, (4 August 2003).

The U.S administration claimed that Iraq was in possession of weapons of mass destruction in order to justify its war against Iraq, in addition to the Iraqi government's alleged connections to international terrorist networks.[5] Prior to the commencement of hostilities, the official Saudi position was one of absolute opposition, rejecting both direct participation and indirect support, such as providing access to national territories for logistical reasons. In an interview with the BBC, Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, stated that "any unilateral military action by the US would appear as an act of aggression," adding that "regime change would lead to the destruction of Iraq, and would threaten to destabilise the entire Middle East region."[6] Saudi Arabia's position regarding the Iraq War was consistent both before and after 2003, claiming that the conflict was illegal and posed a tremendous threat to the region. King Abdullah insisted that the "Saudi Kingdom will not participate in any way in the war on Iraqi brothers and our forces would not enter into an inch of Iraqi territory under any circumstances."[7] Furthermore, Saudi officials believed that the destruction of Iraq would lead to a rise in fundamentalism not only in the Middle East but throughout the West. In an effort to prevent this, Saudi Arabia went beyond the Council of the Arab League in July 2002, pursuing a trilateral initiative with Egypt and Jordan. However, when the foreign ministers of the three countries visited Washington to convince U.S. officials to postpone the war for one year in order to convince the Iraq government to cooperate with the United Nations and permit weapons' inspectors reentry in return for the lifting of sanctions, their request was rejected by Bush.[8] On 1st March 2003, the Council of the Arab League officially denounced the potential conflict and refused to participate in any capacity or provide access to facilities, a position that Saudi Arabia wholly subscribed to.[9]

On 17th March 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush delivered a speech to the American public, during which he delivered an ultimatum to the Iraq President Saddam Hussein to step down and leave Iraq within a strictly limited timeframe of forty-eight hours. Following the expiration of the deadline at 02:30 GMT on 20th

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[5] President George W. Bush speech, "President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat", *The White House*, 7 October 2002. This speech is based on the CIA report "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs, October 2002, https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd/Iraq_Oct_2002.htm. Accessed December 7, 2015.

[6] Interview with the BBC World, "Saudis Warn U.S. Over Iraq War", 17 February 2003.

[7] *al-Yāwm*, "Kalimāt Khādim al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayin", no.10871, 21 March 2003.

[8] al-'Taqrīr al-'Strātījīy al-'Arabī, *Markazi al-Darāsāt al-Siyāsiyyah aw al-'Istrātījīyah*, al-'Hrām, 2003, p. 47.

[9] Council of Arab League Decision, D.D.No.243, R.S (15), March 1, 2003.

March, Bush announced in another speech that "on my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability."[10] Twenty days subsequently, on 8th April, U.S. forces surrounded Baghdad before tanks entered the center of the capital and proceeded to occupy it. On 13th December, based on information gathered by U.S. intelligence forces, Saddam was found in a small farming village outside Tikrit and captured by a contingent of six hundred U.S. troops.[11]

During the war, there were speculations that Saudi Arabia permitted the U.S. to use the Prince Sultan air base south of Riyadh as a control centre for military aircraft and provided access to some of its military facilities; also that Saudi Arabia had already facilitated the U.S. in this regard as it provided access to Saudi territories for its special forces, in particular providing staging grounds to launch assaults into western Iraq.[12] Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, denied accusations that U.S. air forces used Saudi air bases and further emphasized his country's refusal to participate in the conflict in any way.[13] During the fieldwork conducted for this project, I interviewed Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, and proposed that in the context of the Iraq War, Saudi Arabia once again failed to assume the initiative and instead reverted to more inactive means of opposing the conflict, similar to those identified in the previous chapters on the history of Saudi foreign policy. I also enquired about the validity of the accusations that Saudi Arabia granted the U.S access to its bases for logistical purposes immediately prior to the conflict. He explained that Saudi "foreign policy had already pursued every means to avoid the war and had conducted both public visits and private discussions with Arab leaders and U.S. diplomats at the highest levels." He also highlighted that there was "continued contact between the highest officials in the Saudi and the Iraq leadership, with the intention of convincing the Iraq leaders to vacate positions of national power so that the complete destruction of the country could be avoided." Prince Saud al-Saud confirmed that, the Iraq leadership did not believe the reasons for the conflict were either Saddam Hussein's position in the country or that Iraq possessed weapons

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[10] Office of the White House Press Secretary, President Bush Addresses the Nation, March 19, 2003.

[11] Antonio Cassese, *The Oxford Companion to International Criminal Justice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.387. See more in Williamson Murray and Robert H. Scales. *The Iraq War: A Military History*, (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

[12] Sharon Otterman, "Saudi Arabia: Withdrawal of U.S. Forces," *Council on Foreign Relation*, 2 May 2003.

[13] *Umm al-Qurā*, 2 April 2003, p. A1.

of mass destruction. Instead, Iraqi officials believed that, firstly, the U.S. was motivated by the desire to control the rich oil wells of the country, and gain a secure foothold in the market of one of the most important sources of energy in the world. Secondly, they believed that elements of the U.S. administration were closely associated with Israel and wanted to protect their ally in the region rather than prioritize the interests of Arab states. This is what the Iraq leadership believed and, as Prince Saud al-Faisal explains in the interview, is why Saudi efforts to prevent the conflict occurring were ultimately unsuccessful.[14]

In relation to the accusations of Saudi support for the U.S., Saud al-Faisal maintained that in early 2002, the Saudi government had requested that the U.S. administration withdraw its troops from Saudi territory. The planned schedule commenced in March of that year, when the U.S. began to gradually transfer its military personnel and resources from Saudi Arabia to the *al-Udeid* base in Qatar.[15] He added that Saudi Arabia received a request from the U.S. administration in early 2003 to use Saudi Air Force bases for the coordination of air campaigns against Iraq. This request was rejected by Saudi officials and immediately following the war, a meeting between the U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the Saudi defense Minister, Prince Sultan, was urgently scheduled for 29th April 2003 to discuss the complete removal of the U.S. military presence from Saudi Arabia.[16] This was confirmed by the U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in a joint press conference with Prince Sultan at the air base on 29th April, during which the former confirmed that "all but a handful of American troops will be pulled out of Saudi Arabia by summer's end," with the small number remaining for training purposes, the result of a "mutual agreement" between the countries driven by strategic military purposes.[17] The Saudi Defense Minister explained that this "does not mean we requested them to leave Saudi Arabia, but as long as their operation is over, they will leave."[18] In the interview, Prince Saud addressed this apparent contradiction in positions, explaining

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[14] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

[15] al-Udeid Air Force Base is located southwest of the capital Doha in Qatar. Currently there are 2,899 active duty personnel at Al Udeid. By late March 2002 the U.S. was moving equipment, aircraft and weapons from prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia to Al-Udeid. See Anthony H. Cordesman and Khalid R. Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars*. (Westport, Conn: Praeger Security International, 2007).

[16] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

[17] Barbara Starr, "U.S. to move operations from Saudi base", *CNN*, 29 April 2003. http://editio n.cnn.com /2003/WORLD/meast/04/29/sprj.irq.saudi.us/. Accessed September 27, 2015.

[18] Oliver Burkeman,"America signals withdrawal of troops from Saudi Arabia", *The Guardian*, 30 April 2003. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/apr/30/usa.iraq. Accessed October 11, 2016.

how "not everything that has happened behind the scenes must be said in public."[19] In another interview with the commander of the Prince Sultan Air Base, G. K. A, it was claimed that while U.S troops were stationed at the air base, there were often orders from the supreme military command to prevent U.S. combat aircraft from taking off on ground attacks and from refueling during the Iraq war.[20] This increasingly difficult situation was highlighted by Richard Murphy, the former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia 1981-1983, who claimed that "by transferring the command and control center from Saudi Arabia to the air base in Qatar, they will not face the same difficulties they have had in Saudi Arabia in recent years in getting approval for specific operations."[21]

A Saudi intelligence officer, referred to here as A.R. to protect his identity, explained how he had passed information to the Saudi leadership regarding unusual patterns in the fuel withdrawal index of U.S. aircraft stationed at Prince Sultan Base at the beginning of the war. Following the release of this information, the High Command ordered the continued monitoring of this occurrence. A.R. explained that "after a couple of days the index of fuel withdrawals returned to the previous index," adding that he "noticed a significant change in the number of arrivals and departures of military transport aircraft.[22] As these comments indicate, it can be argued that that there was an agreement between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. regarding the withdrawal of U.S. troops according to a schedule predetermined prior to the Iraq War. The White House Chief of Staff, Andrew Card, confirmed this, when he told CNN that Saudi officials had requested the U.S. to withdraw and reduce its military presence in the country. [23] Moreover, according to the understanding reached between the two countries, Saudi Arabia had not given permission to the U.S. to use its bases in its air campaign against Iraq. U.S. forces did not adhere to this agreement and when Saudi officials learned of such violations, they requested that the U.S. Secretary of Defense announced the accelerated withdrawal of U.S. troops from Saudi territories and the transfer to an alternative base of operations in Qatar once the war had commenced. Rebecca Grant, the president of the IRIS Independent Research, identifies this quick change in circumstances in her article "The Short, Strange Life of PSAB":

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[19] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.
[20] Author's Interview, this individual is referred to as "G. K. A." on his request to protect his identity, Riyadh, February 22, 2016.
[21] Barbara Starr, Op.Cit., 29 April 2003.
[22] Author's Interview, with former Saudi intelligence officer A.R, who prefers to remain anonymous, Riyadh, April 17, 2016.
[23] Barbara Starr, Op.Cit., 29 April 2003

Command and control operations remained at PSAB [24] as Operation Iraqi Freedom began but not for long. Airmen and other troops began removing equipment and relocating it to Qatar as quickly as possible. A handoff of C2 responsibilities occurred even before Iraqi Freedom's major combat operations phase ended.[25]

The theory of radical or extreme realism denies the presence of ethics in international relations and dismisses claims of morality such that the achievement of political ends justifies all means. [26] In relation to Saudi Arabia's decision not to participate in the conflict or support the U.S. in any capacity, this position contradicts the principles of extreme Realists; the Saudis preferred not to take any action against an Arab state as the moral option, rather than take the pragmatic approach, because if Saudi Arabia were to take a pragmatic approach, Saudi Arabia would have a chance to rebuild trust in its relations with the U.S. and to restore its tarnished national image. Saudi Arabia's national image, particularly within the decision-making bodies of the U.S. administration, was severely damaged following September 11, [27] as 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudis, and over 100 Saudi citizens were detained as prisoners at the U.S. Naval base in Guantanamo following the Afghanistan war.[28] Moreover, Saudi Arabia was not supportive of U.S. plans to attack Iraq. A Rand Corporation analyst even accused the Saudis of being "the kernel of evil, the prime mover, the most dangerous opponent" in the Middle East, an opinion further confirmed by Juan Zhang's and William L. Benoit's study "Message Strategies of Saudi Arabia's Image Restoration Campaign after 9/11," in which they claim "that Saudi Arabia's image suffered damage from two primary accusations. First, it failed to combat terrorism.

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[24] Prince Sultan Air Base.

[25] Rebecca Grant, "The Short, Strange Life of PSAB", *Journal of the Air Force Association*, (July 2012).

[26] Julian K. Karpowicz, "Political Realism in International Relations," *Center for the Study of Language and Information Stanford University*, (July 2010), pp.1-3. See Steven Forde, "Classical realism." In *Traditions of International Ethics,* edited by Terry Nardin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 62-84.

[27] For more information about the deterioration of U.S-Saudi relations See in Mark L. Haas, *The Clash of Ideologies: Middle Eastern politics and American security*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 245-250.

[28] "Most Guantanamo Bay detainees are Saudis", *U.S Today*, 28 January 2002, p.1.

Second, it did not support the U.S. plan to attack Iraq."[29] Saudi Arabia preferred to choose the moral side in this issue for a number of important reasons, chiefly that Saudi support for U.S. aggression in the region would cause increased domestic tensions and potentially cause internal instability, as Saudi citizens would not condone supporting a non-Muslim country in its campaign against a Muslim neighbour. Supporting the U.S. would ultimately discredit Saudi Arabia in both the regional Arab and religious Islamic contexts.

However, an analytical study of why Saudi Arabia insisted on not participating in the war or supporting the U.S. in its activities reveals a number of important internal and external factors that influenced this foreign policy decision. By employing David Easton's "General Systems" theory or "Input-Output" mechanism,[30] we can identify domestic pressure as a significant internal factor. Easton's theoretical framework can be used to reveal internal factors influencing decisions in the context of both national and international politics.[31] He argues that "inputs can be defined as constituted by the demands made upon the political system," and are essential to the input-output mechanism that constitutes a political system as it is subjected to environmental stresses.[32] These demands are generally of a public nature, or at least made on behalf of the general public, and normally come from lobbyists, social groups, political parties and other such organisations.[33] Unlike democratized Western nations, Saudi Arabia does not have the same civil institutions but rather has more

[29] Zhang Juyan and William L. Benoit, "Message Strategies of Saudi Arabia's Image Restoration Campaign After 9/11," *Global Journal of Research and Comment*, Public Relations Review, Elsevier Inc, Vol. 30, Issue. 2, (2004), pp. 161-167.

[30] Easton states that "systems analysis is a theoretical approach that in its general orientation tends to facilitate research about practical social issues. In effect, this mode of analysis interprets political systems as a major social arrangement for engaging in collective action." Furthermore, he claims that there shall be a "unified theory of politics" for all nation-states that will explain their political systems. Prior to Easton's theories, political scientists addressed the politics of each state separately, an approach, he argued that, created confusion in the minds of students as well as researchers. Easton conducted in-depth research into the existing state of political science, which led him to conclude that in all developed, developing and under-developed political systems, there are some common problems such as sharing of power among the elites, separation of power, state activities etc. He argues that "the main objective of the general theory is to establish criteria for identifying the important variables requiring investigation in all political systems". This particular approach to political studies has opened a whole range of possibilities in the field as it is no longer confined to the study of institutions, such as political parties, legislature, executive, judiciary, etc.

[31] Oliver Garceau, Review of The Political System: "An Inquiry Into the State of Political Science" by David Easton", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 68, no. 3, 1953. pp. 434-436. David Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis*, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 26-35. David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965).

[32] David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, Op.Cit, 1965.

[33] Ibid.

traditional institutions, such as the Ulama, the religious infrastructure, tribal dynasties, and a royal family, each of which exerts significant pressure on the decision-making process of the country. In other words, these are inputs that feature strongly in the decision to adopt a particular political policy over another. The political system has options for dealing with these environmental demands, including challenging, refuting and ignoring them. However, each political system recognizes that adopting such a negative policy will invariably aggravate the situation and threaten its stability. The best option available is responding positively to external pressures and undertaking a course of action that will improve the legitimacy of the political authorities and the stability of the political system. The actions and responses of a government are what constitute the outputs identified by Easton.

In Saudi Arabia, there are a number of religious trends that can be divided into two important categories, the official and unofficial. The official category comprises of the *Mājlis Hayʾat Kīubbār al-ʿUlamāʾ*, (Council of Senior Scholars).[34] This body does not issue joint statements in conjunction with the government but rather "*fatwās.*"[35] In the case of the Iraq conflict, the Council's position is readily apparent from a *"fatwā"* released by Abdullah bin Jibreen, an *ʿalim* (Religious scholar), on 14th March 2003, where he declared that it was "forbidden to support or otherwise give assistance to U.S. troops in their acts of aggression toward Iraq."[36] Because the majority of Saudi citizens would inherently agree with the scholars' opinions, any state action or political decision that contradicted the "fatwa" would be illegitimate because it countered the religious authority represented by the Council, thus threatening the stability of the political system. The unofficial category consists of senior Saudi clerics, whose followers are considered fundamentalists because they insist on a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and adhere to an extremist form of Islam. One of their statements regarding the Iraq conflict, which was signed by

[34] The Council of Senior Scholars is the highest religious organization in Saudi Arabia, the council consists of 21 members, the king appoints those members, and the duties of council advises the king on religious matters. For further information, see Stig Stenslie, *Regime Stability in Saudi Arabia: The Challenge of Succession*, (New York: Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics, 2012), pp. 45-46.

[35] Fatwa: in the Islamic faith is the term for the legal opinion or learned interpretation that the Sheikh al-Islam (Islamic scholar), a qualified jurist or mufti has of qualifications in the techniques of ijtihad (personal reasoning), the fourth source of Islamic law after the Qurʾan, the Prophet Muhammad's sunna, and ijma, or consensus. For further information, see Muhammad M. Khalid, Brinkley Messick and David S. Powers, (eds). *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and Their Fatwas*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). pp. 3-40.

[36] "An official document of Islamic scholar Abdullah Bin Jibreen Fatwa", Office of scholar, Fatwas No.10525. March 14, 2003.

twenty-six scholars, a professor of religion from a Saudi university and a number of judges, was entitled "An Open Declaration to the Iraqi fighting people."[37] In the face of U.S. arrogance and aggression in the region, they encouraged "jihad" against U.S. troops and its henchmen who engage in this "crime".[38] This statement was not just addressed to direct followers but was also meant to impact the general public and encourage them to align with the opinions of the senior clerics. For these reasons, the Saudi political system was greatly influenced by these demands, which naturally affected the nature of Saudi foreign policy and the decision making process at this time. This influence can be discerned in the Saudi foreign minister's, Saud al-Faisal, warning to the U.S. prior to the Iraq conflict, in which he maintained that the pursuit of any aggressive actions toward Iraq would lead to the rise of international fundamentalism, "the worry is rising fundamentalism in America and the West," adding that conflict "would encourage people to think...that what they're doing is a war of aggression rather than a war for the implementation of the United Nations' resolutions."[39]

Perhaps the variable that had the greatest impact on the nature of Saudi policy as the Iraq War was beginning to appear unavoidable was the stability of the national political system and how it affected the individual decision-maker. The stability of the political system was being threatened by three petitions to reform that will be discussed in this chapter, the first of which occurred prior to the Iraq war. On 30th January, a petition entitled "A Vision for the Nation and Its Future" was sent directly to the Saudi crown prince Abdullah, calling for political reform and staunchly opposing corruption,[40] with its demands for reform of the political system and the judiciary, increased decentralization and transparency, and a more equitable distribution of wealth.[41] This particular petition was signed by more than a hundred political figures including former ministers, clerics, university professors, writers and businessmen. The list also included a mixture of liberals and religious figures who justified their calls for reform with a concern regarding the dangers posed by exposure

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[37] "Khiṭāb Māftuḥ īlā al-Shʿb al-ʿrāqī al-mujahid," *al-Islām al-Yawm*, 5 November 2004, http://www. islam today.net/nawafeth/artshow-42-4436.htm . Accessed March 11, 2016.
[38] Ibid
[39] Interview with *BBC World*, "Saudis Warn U.S. Over Iraq War", February 17, 2003.
[40] Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Karīm, Sāḥwah al-Tawḥīd, al-Manhal, No.2, Beirut, 2013, p.173.
[41] Toby Jones, "Violence and the Illusion of Reform in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Research and Information Project* (MERIP), 13 November 2003. http://www.merip.org/mero/mero111303. Accessed May 9, 2016

to the repercussions of September 11, the regional threats of U.S. military mobilization against Iraq, and rumours in U.S. media concerning potential Saudi partition. While the signatories declared their solidarity with the Saudi government, their allegiance required the government to be seen to be taking their concerns seriously and implementing a suitable course of action. During an interview conducted as part of this project with the a member of the private security contingent for King Abdullah, he maintained that "crown prince Abdullah received that petition, then instructed the officials in the king's office to urgently correspond with the signatories and invite them to meet the prince the next day." [42] The meeting was attended by nearly thirty of the signatories, and the interviewee explained that Prince Abdullah listened attentively to those figures, while the king ensured them that "your demands are my demands, and I will seriously seek to achieve these reforms."[43]

As a result of this, it was difficult for Saudi officials to implement a foreign policy that involved participating with or otherwise supporting the U.S. in a war against Iraq because this would inevitably put the government in opposition to both the Islamic and liberal trends in public opinion. As this would result in a major threat to the political system, domestic stability played a significant role in Saudi Arabia's decision to pursue a policy of complete non-participation prior to the conflict. If Saudi officials wished to pursue a policy of active participation, this would require consistent internal stability.

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[42] Author's Interview, the private accompanying of King Abdullah, is referred to as "A.F." on his request to protect his identity A. F, London, June 13, 2016.
[43] Ibid.

(5.2) Saudi Foreign Policy Following the Iraq War

The previous section provided an insight into the internal environment surrounding the Saudi government leading up to and during the Iraq War (2003). This section will determine if the policy of non-participation outlined above is in accordance with the tradition of maintaining the status quo that historically characterizes Saudi foreign policy and consistently results in avoiding assuming the initiative through enterprising policy decisions. Any study intended to properly dissect foreign policy requires a comprehensive analysis of the different variables, especially the internal example discussed above. However, the variables associated with the external environment, such as international alliances and other incentives beyond Saudi Arabia's national authority that result from relations of cooperation and coercion with other countries also need to be taken into consideration. While their importance should be noted, the significance of external variables are sometimes exaggerated by political scientists. For example, Maurice East and Philip Gregg argue that the external variables are the main factor when analysing foreign policy.[44] In other words, external variables should not be foregrounded at the expense of other variables because foreign policy decisions are the result of complex, and often indeterminate interactions among multiple variables. Each variable has a relative weight within the decision-making process, which means that foreign policy is not determined or changed by chance or coincidence but is rather the product of a number of "explanatory factors"[45] that interact with each other.

The overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq by the U.S. resulted in a further change in the regional balance of power in favour of Iran, which led to a confrontation between Iran and Saudi Arabia.[46] The repercussions of the events of 9/11 and the domestic instability of Saudi Arabia played a significant role in internal affairs being prioritized by Saudi officials. Through its soft-power mechanism, such as state media, officials sought to improve the national image on an international level, a strategic act necessitated by the accusations leveled by U.S. pressure groups

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[44] Maurice East and Philip Gregg, "Factors Influencing Conflict and Co-operation in the International System," *International Studies Quarterly*, (1 September 1967), p.p. 258-261.

[45] Muḥammad S. al-Sayyid, *Taḥlil al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah*, (Cairo Maktabat alʿNahdạh al-Misṛīyah, 1998). pp.119-122.

[46] Ted G. Carpenter and Malou Innocent, "The Iraq War and Iranian Power," *International Institute for Strategic Studies* (IISS), (8 November 2007). p. 67.

and politicians regarding Saudi involvement in the terrorist attacks. Consequently, Saudi Arabia assumed a more distant position in regional affairs and avoided an active role. As Toby C. Jones argues, "in the fallout from the September 11th 2001 attacks, Riyadh faced a series of foreign and domestic challenges that worked against it becoming a regional power".[47] In addition, long-term misgivings and grievances stemming from the Iranian revolution (1979) and the attendant critique of Saudi Arabia's monarchical political structure resulted in pronounced ideological differences between the countries, while the dissimilarities in terms of military capabilities, manufacturing capacity and demographic components, not to mention Iran's nuclear aspirations and its growing influence following the collapse of Iraq, were seen by Saudi officials as reasons for the imbalance of power in the region.[48]

A tactic of "détente" was adopted by Iran as a primary component of Iranian foreign policy on the behest of President Khatami in 1997 and was designed to help establish positive relations with its Gulf neighbors and replace its isolationist stance with openness toward the international community, a stance forced upon the country since 1979. Furthermore, Iran was undertaking advanced planning regarding its foreign policy, while also placing increased priority on its nuclear program, rebuilding its military resources and expanding its industrial infrastructure.[49] Coterminous with the growing strength of Iran, Iraq's authority in the region had been gradually receding since 1991, only to completely collapse following 2003, while Saudi Arabia remained significantly dependent on the U.S. for its security. All of these factors would lead to a dramatic change in the balance of power in the region. As Carpenter T. Galen and Malou Innocent argue:

> Bush's administrative officials, and neo-conservative scholars outside the administration, were so focused on removing Saddam Hussein from power that they largely overlooked the wider geopolitical ruminations of his removal.[50]

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[47] Barkey J. Henri, Scott Lasensky, and Phebe Marr, *Iraq, its Neighbors, and the United States: Competition, Crisis, and the Reordering of Power*, (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace, 2011), p.102

[48] Chubin Shahram and Charles Tripp. *Iran-Saudi Arabia Relations and Regional Order: Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Balance of Power in the Gulf*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996), pp. 60-64. See also: F. Gregory Gause III, "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran and the Regional Power Balance and the Sectarian Question," Center for Contemporary Conflict, *Strategic Insights*, Vol. VI, Issue. 2, (March 2007).

[49] Ted G. Carpenter and Malou Innocent, Op.Cit., 2007, p.69.

[50] Ibid, p.70.

The deterioration of U.S. – Saudi relations and the simultaneous downgrading of the Iranian threat due to its pursuit of "détente" and its adaptation of an "accommodating policy",[51] Saudi Arabia began to engage with and accommodate Iran in regional affairs.[52] As a result of the perceived ambiguity in U.S. policy toward Iraq, Saudi foreign policy attempted to involve Iran in regional issues through increased cooperation and accommodation. This approach was strongly adhered to for two years following the collapse of Ba'ath regime, when previously Saudi Arabia had sought to increase the containment of Iran and remain passive in the new political landscape in Iraq. This strategy may be detected in the newspaper interview with Dr. Nasser al-Buraik, the Saudi ambassador in Iran, who claimed that "there is no doubt that the fall of the oppressive Iraqi oppressive regime impacted the whole region and in particular Iran," adding that "this change must be perceived as the beginning of a détente, a new era of our relations with Iran".[53]

Iran was undoubtedly the winner of the Iraq War (2003) since the shift in regional power served its strategic interests more than any other country's. In the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the context of Iraq, the foreign policy instruments wielded by both nations were asymmetrical. For example, Saudi Arabia was not proficient at controlling or coercing the movements of non-state militias, unlike Iran, since it preferred to utilize its financial resources and its access to pan-Arab media outlets to implement its foreign policy. However, the Saudi alliance with the U.S., which completely supported Israel against the Palestinians, was exploited by Iranian officials. Under the pretext of its opposition to the U.S. imperialism in the region, Iran sought to critique the Saudi government in popular Arab opinion for being allied with the U.S., especially given its increasingly supportive and accommodating gestures toward Israel. When Saudi Arabia offered the Arab Peace initiative to Israel in March 2002,[54] Iran achieved what could be described as the

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[51] Kayhan Barzegar, "Iran's Foreign Policy Strategy after Saddam," Center for Strategic and International Studies, *The Washington Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 33, Issue. 1, (January 2010), pp.173-189.

[52] Reza Ekhtiari Amiri, "Security Cooperation of Iran and Saudi Arabia," *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, Vol. 2, no.16, (September 2011). pp. 246-251.

[53] "Ḥiwār Ṣiḥafī maʿa al-Safīr al-Saʿūdī fī Īrān," *al-Yawm*, no.10953, 11 January 2003.

[54] Tim Niblock, *Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival*, The Contemporary Middle East, (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 169-170.

"Arab street strategy."[55] As a result, Iran became has an influence on the Arab street, which led to Saudi Arabia losing its important media influence in the Arab world. On the other hand, immediately following the fall of Saddam's regime and the swift victory of the U.S. against the strongest Arab army, George Bush famously declared "Mission Accomplished".

On May 1st 2003,[56] Iran prepared a proposal that outlined "a grand bargain"[57] with the U.S., which involved complete cooperation by Iran in efforts against all terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaeda, in order to resolve all outstanding problems between the two countries. This grand bargain was written by Sadegh Kharrazi, the nephew of the Iranian foreign minister. The proposal had a high degree of confidentiality; a closed circle of decision-makers in Iran knew of and were involved in preparing the proposal. The proposal was eventually delivered to Washington by the Swiss ambassador to Iran Tim Guldimann. Iran offered to end its support to Islamic Jihad and Hamas, and stop its ideological hostility against the Jewish State, moreover the full cooperation against all terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaeda. On Iraq, Iran pledged to support political stabilization, and to cooperate with future governments even if they were nonreligious. Iran's objectives from that proposal were the U.S. respecting Iranian interests in Iraq, and Iran's right to fully obtain nuclear technology, ending the U.S. sanctions; and finally, the U.S. recognizing Iran's legitimate security interests in Middle East.[58] In relation to Iraq more particularly, Iran proposed to actively support the political stabilization of the country through democratic change and the formation of a secular government.[59] Although this grand bargain was approved by the highest levels of authority in Iran,[60] the offer was rejected by the Bush administration because the U.S. was at the height of its power and did not require any formal support to defeat Saddam's regime.[61]

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[55] Frederic M. Wehrey, *Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. policy*, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2009), p.21.

[56] President Bush Announces Major Combat Operations in Iraq Have Ended Remarks by the President from the USS Abraham Lincoln At Sea Off the Coast of San Diego, California, *The White House Office of the Press Secretary*, May 1, 2003.

[57] Trita Parsi. *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 243-249.

[58] Ibid, pp. 243-249.

[59] Ibid. p. 244.

[60] Gregory Beals, "A Missed Opportunity with Iran", *Newsday*, 19 February 2006. http://hanan-revue.blogspot.co.uk/2006/02/missed-opportunity-with-iran.html. Accessed September 16, 2015.

[61] Trita Parsi, Op.Cit, 2007, pp. 249-250.

Prior to its downfall, Saddam's regime functioned as a buffer in the Arab world that prevented the expansion of Iranian ideology in the region, which was incompatible with, even antagonistic toward, monarchies and governments in the Gulf. Furthermore, the ineffectuality of U.S. policies and activities in Iraq further encouraged Iran's ambitions for regional domination. Iran's growing influence in Iraq was realized through its support of Shia militias, political organizations and parties in Iraq, such as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), which was the main Shiite opposition party in Iraq, with its headquarters in Tehran, and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's Dawa Party. Saudi Arabia considered both of them as serving the Iranian agenda, and the Iranians perceived Saudi Arabia as a sectarian state. In addition to the Shiite opposition, there were the Badr Brigade, the cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and his thousands of Mahdi Army loyalists. This was not enough though, as proven by "Tehran's 'hearts and minds"[62] campaign. Iran provided military supplies and training to Shia militias in Iraq, while also providing assistance by transferring the Iraqi wounded to Iranian hospitals and securing 2 million liters of kerosene a day, 20% of Iraq's cooking gas supplies.[63] According to U.S. intelligence officials, Iraqi Shia militias were provided with multiple rocket-propelled grenades, rocket launchers, and shoulder-held missiles.[64]

The U.S. faced tactical difficulties due to Iran's support of hostile Shia militias in Iraq and the consequent disruption of the pre-existing balance of power in the Gulf region.[65] Seymour Hersh explains how "the crux of the Bush administration's strategic dilemma is that its decision to back a Shiite-led government after the fall of Saddam has empowered Iran and made it impossible to exclude Iran from the Iraqi political scene."[66] From the Iranian perspective, a large number of U.S. troops in Iraq, its hostile rhetoric and its arming of proximate Gulf States, legitimized Iranian claims of a perceived threat to national security and the decision of officials to

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[62] Ted G. Carpenter and Malou Innocent, Op.Cit, 2007, p.70.
[63] Joshua Partlow, 'Tehran's Influence Grows as Iraqis See Advantages', *Washington Post*, 26 January 2007.http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/25/AR2007012502087.html. Accessed August 9, 2015.
[64] Ted G. Carpenter and Malou Innocent, Op.Cit, 2007, p.71.
[65] Christopher Forrest, "Coercive Engagement. Security Analysis of Iranian Support to Iraqi Shia Militias," *Strategic Studies Quarterly (SSQ)*, (summer 2009), p. 100.
[66] Seymour M. Hersh, "Annals of National Security: Shifting Targets, The Administration's Plan for Iran", *The NewYorker*, 8 October 2007. http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/10/08/shifting-targets. Accessed May 23, 2015.

support Iraqi Shia militias. Robert Jervis identifies a "security dilemma",[67] which can be seen operating in how Iran attempted to increase its security through the Iraq issue to avoid the status of vulnerability, as a consequence of the U.S. presence within Iraq, which had already affected its security. This resulted in increased Saudi vulnerability, "many of the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security of others...however one state's gain in security often threatens another's." [68]

The "security dilemma" concept refers to a situation in which the actions of one country intended to maximize its security, such as increasing sovereign military power, establishing strategic alliances with other nations or supporting particular movements in a neighboring country, might be seen by another nation as hostile acts, who in turn decides to respond by decreasing its potential vulnerability by strengthening its own security. Although Saudi Arabia often supported maintaining the status quo, Iran's actions in Iraq made it difficult for Saudi officials to remain content with this policy position. Saudi Arabia had numerous options available in this situation, such as, primarily, increasing its own security in the hope that this would decrease its vulnerability and becoming involved in the Iraq issue to protect its regional interests, which might serve to deter Iran. Saudi officials feared that an undesirable precedent would be set if they decided to distance themselves from the Iraq issue, which would only further increase its vulnerability. The viability of this option depended on whether the key decision makers in Saudi Arabia were committed to maintaining the status quo or wanted to convince both former leaders and new leaders who wanted to change the pattern of Saudi behavior that their strategy was worth continuing given the new political landscape.

After the U.S. occupation of Iraq, a number of international terrorist organisations and other extremist movements were present in the country, not to mention elements of the security and intelligence agencies still loyal to the regime, movements such as the Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance; the Twenty Revolution Brigades, which was closely aligned to the Association of Muslim Scholars headed by Sheikh Harith al-Dari; and the National Front for the Liberation of Iraq; and Iraqi Shiite groups, such as the Imam Ali Bin Abi-Talib's Jihadi Brigades.[69] All of these

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[67] Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, no. 2, (Jan 1978), pp.169-170.
[68] Robert Jervis, 1978, Op.Cit. pp.169-170.
[69] Ramesh Thakur. *Waheguru Pal and Singh Sidhu, The Iraq Crisis and World Order*, (India: Pearson Education, 2007), pp. 350-351.

groups shared the common objective of resisting U.S. occupation, which created further difficulties for the U.S. and its allies within Iraq, as troops were confronted with increased violence in an environment of growing instability and hostility. From 2004 onwards, the expanding violence toward and increased vulnerability of U.S. troops in Iraq,[70] research and study centres and other non-governmental organizations that were closely associated with the decision-making circles, officials began disseminating the idea that a number of different choices were available to the U.S. administration regarding the Iraq issue.[71] For example, they advocated that it was in the national interest to properly engage with Iran so that it could play a more active role in improving regional stability and combating the spread of terrorism in Iraq and elsewhere. In September 2004,[72] the U.S. sought to encourage Iraqi officials to resume their relationship with Iran. A series of high-level visits to Iran were arranged for Nouri al-Maliki, Jalal Talabani, and former Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari,[73] who requested Iranian officials to help stabilize the new Iraqi government. The U.S. and Iran had a common regional interest; in addition to challenging al-Qaeda and limiting the influence of Sunni movements in Iraq, moreover, they had shared interests in events in Afghanistan, opposing the Taliban and controlling the drug trade in the region.[74]

In contrast to the stance adopted by Saudi Arabia, Iran decided to take advantage of the Iraq issue to protect its interests, subsequently its offer of "a grand bargain", which was rejected by the U.S. administration. The nature of Saudi foreign policy was to avoid making definitive decisions and instead retain a range of potential options, to, as Frederic M. Wehrey identified, "hedge its bets."[75] Moreover, certain studies, such as Joseph Kostiner's "Coping with Regional Challenges", argue that the

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[70] Mark T. Berger and Borer A. Douglas, *The Long War-Insurgency, Counterinsurgency and Collapsing States*. (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), p. 74.
[71] Such as: Report of an Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Robert M. Gates, and Suzanne Maloney, et al, "Iran: Time for a New Approach", *New York Council on Foreign Relations*, (July 2004).
[72] Special Report, *United States institute of Peace*, "Iran and Iraq: The Shia Connection, Soft Power, and the Nuclear Factor," Special Report, no.156, (November 2005), p. 9.
[73] Kenneth Katzman, "Iran's Influence in Iraq, CRS Report for Congress," *Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress*, Order Code RS22323, (November 2005), CRS-1.
[74] Paul Aarts and Joris van Duijne, "Saudi Arabia after U.S.-Iranian détente: left in the lurch?," *Middle East Policy Journal*, Vol. XVi, no.3, (Fall 2009), p.67.
[75] Frederic M. Wehrey, 2009, Op.Cit., p.100.

Saudis lacked important military and nationalist credentials as a regional actor.[76] In addition, there is a lack of foresight regarding regional and international events and an inability to properly determine the dimensions of such events. For example, this inability is illustrated in how it failed to address issues in Iraq due to its preoccupation with its aforementioned domestic affairs and its confidence in its U.S. ally that it would not permit Iran to become an influential actor in Iraqi affairs. This expectation was completely misplaced, as the U.S. had given permission to the interim Iraqi government under Prime Minister Iyad Allawi to develop its relationship with Iran. A government was established by the U.S. and replaced the Iraqi Governing Council on 1st June 2004, only to be replaced by the Iraqi Transitional Government on 3rd May 2005. This meant the U.S. retained important de facto power in the country, particularly in terms of its external affairs and international relations,[77] based on the Law of Administration for the Transitional Period (TAL) adopted by the Governing Council following negotiations with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the UN.[78] This example of rapprochement has many complex dimensions but symbolized Saudi inability to assume leadership regarding Arab issues in the region, with the result that the balance of power shifted to non-Arab states[79]. Not just in Iraq but in all current examples of issues affecting Arab countries, such as Palestine and Lebanon, "they [were] being stolen from Arab hands ... and turned over to Iranian hands gradually".[80] Numerous studies, such as Frederic M. Wehrey, et al's *Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the Fall of Saddam* (RAND Corporation, 2009), claim that Saudi Arabia and Iran perceive Iraq as a "Zero-Sum Game." Therefore, Iranian gains in terms of influence in and penetration into Iraq, in addition to the ineffectiveness of U.S. policy and increased ambiguity concerning its strategic interests, deprived Saudi Arabia of a central role in the new regional order. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia was concerned with the instability of Iraq for its own security reasons, since due to the large border between the two countries and the shared tribal traditions, the movement

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[76] Kostiner Joseph, "Coping with Regional Challenges: A Case Study of Crown Prince Abdullah's Peace Initiative," in Paul Aarts and Gerd Nonneman, eds., *Saudi Arabia in the Balance: Political Economy, Society, Foreign A airs*, (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), pp. 352-371.

[77] Phil Shiner and Andrew Williams. *The Iraq War and international law*, (Oxford: Hart Pub, 2008), p.176.

[78] See in the Law of Administration for the Transitional Period (TAL), section 2.

[79] Frederic M. Wehrey, et al. *The Iraq effect: the Middle East after the Iraq War*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), p. 21. See also in Hassan M. Fattah, "Bickering Saudis Struggle or an Answer to Iran's Rising In influence in the Middle East," *New York Times*, 22 December 2006.

[80] Mshari al-Dhaydi, " Uḥadhir an Taqdhi Alīhī al'Ama'im", *al-Sharq al-ʾAwsat*, 19 July 2007.

of terrorists and transfer of old Iraqi military equipment into Saudi Arabia across the border could be easily facilitated. As Prince Nayef, the former Interior Minister, stated, "we expect the worst from those who went to Iraq," predicting that they would be even more dangerous than those who had fought in Afghanistan, although he asserted that "our forces were prepared to meet that danger".[81]

The above security concern was in conjunction with a significant diplomatic reaction, as Saudi officials began to explicitly indicate their position regarding the changes occurring in Iraq from September 2005 onwards. In addition, they identified how the U.S. was intentionally overlooking the influence and interests of Iran in Iraq, and how it underestimated the situation from the Saudi perspective; a zero-sum game since Iran's gains would be the equivalent to Saudi losses. In a statement by Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, on 20th September 2005, he insisted that:

> The Iranians now go in this pacified area that the Americans have pacified, and they go into every government of Iraq, pay money, install their own people…. even establish police forces for them…and they are being protected in doing this by the British and the American forces in the area…. To us it seems out of this world that you do this. We fought a war together to keep Iran from occupying Iraq after Iraq was driven out of Kuwait. Now we are handing the whole country over to Iran without reason.[82]

Prior to al-Faisal's speech, the conventional pattern of remaining passive and refusing to assume the initiative could be easily discerned in Saudi foreign policy. This view is supported by a large number of studies by specialist political scientists and historians in Saudi affairs, such as F. Greg Gause III, who observed:

> How passive Saudi Arabia has been on the Iraqi front since the war…. the government has been pretty passive… They undoubtedly have contacts with

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[81] Dominic Evans, "Saudi Arabia Says Ready to Beat Militants from Iraq," *Reuters*, July 10, 2005.
[82] Prince Saud al-Faisal Speech, "The Fight Against Extremism and the Search for Peace", address to the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, September 20, 2005.

tribal figures, Sunni and Shiite probably, but definitely Sunni. But it doesn't seem like they've exercised this kind of influence.[83]

Sultan al-Qassemi, the Emirati political analyst, described the Gulf States' policies, including Saudi Arabia's, as indecisive and lacking the initiative to demonstrate their ability to make the necessary decisions regarding important issues of the time, "the Gulf states may continue to lament the fact that Iran is interfering in the internal issues of Iraq as they persist with their policy of two steps forward, two steps back."[84] The majority of these studies agree that Saudi foreign policy is characterised by caution and inaction. The purpose of this research project is to determine why it is characterised as such and to identify the internal and external factors that engendered this official stance.

A number of conclusions can be arrived at regarding the reasoning behind Saudi foreign policy during this period. Firstly, Saudi officials wanted to restore a level of trust to their country's relationship with the U.S. in order to reverse the tarnished image of Saudi Arabia amongst so many state bodies and organisations involved in American foreign policy and repair its damaged reputation following September 11th. Secondly, in an attempt to retain as many viable options as possible, Saudi officials avoided assuming absolute positions and making definitive decisions regarding issues in both the regional and international context. Instead, they preferred to maintain a certain distance from regional conflicts. However, this stance could also be argued as deriving from the absence of authority in terms of the country's military strength, industrial capacity and the demographic. Thirdly, and finally, there was a lack of autonomy in Saudi Arabia in determining national objectives and ambitions due to its reliance on the U.S. during a period when it did not enjoy complete confidence in its ally's interests, in particular its apparent indifference concerning Iran becoming an influential actor in the region through its involvement in Iraq's internal affairs.

While these conclusions are generally valid, this study has aimed to propose a more nuanced conclusion based on the analysis of both primary and secondary material that would allow for more reliable interpretations of the above questions. The instability of the Saudi political system was the primary variable in the formation of

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[83] Interviewer: Bernard Gwertzman, "Gause: Saudis Aim to Roll Back Iranian Influence in Region", The Council on Foreign Relations, New York, March 17, 2007.
[84] Sultan al-Qassemi, " Gulf States May Continue to Ignore Iraq at their Own Peril," *The National,* 21 June 2008.

Saudi foreign policy during the period in question, that is, it is the factor that exerted the most influence on the decision-making process and those officials associated with and involved in it. Until late 2005, it was the most significant factor, which means it influenced all foreign policy decisions in the period prior and subsequent to the Iraq War (2003). This instability was the direct result of the numerous petitions to reform the political system in Saudi Arabia, chief among these being the two discussed earlier in the chapter, "A Vision for the Nation and Its Future", issued in January 2003, and "Constitutional Reform First," which was signed by over one hundred Saudis and demanded the conversion of the political system into a constitutional monarchy.[85] These petitions also coincided with the sudden illness of King Fahd, who was no longer in the position to fulfill his official duties, which were passed to Crown Prince Abdullah, the future king. The demands for change worked to restrict Saudi Arabia's ability to act effectively in the external environment because they revealed an impasse in the political system. While the pressure to change the political system was increasing and, therefore, needed to be promptly addressed, there was a lack of consensus in the royal family regarding how this should be done. Minor reforms could have possibly acquiesced the demands of the more radical reformers but even these were not possible, as King Abdullah realised he would risk direct confrontation with the royal family if he tried to implement them. This requirement for, but impossibility of implementing even moderate reform in the political system meant Saudi officials were preoccupied with finding a solution to an internal affair, which meant they could not involve themselves in the important external affairs of the period, namely, the Iraq War (2003). In other words, all the capacities and capabilities of the political system were focused inwards towards domestic concerns rather than outwards towards Iraq and the attendant changes in regional power.

During an interview conducted for this research project with Ali Hassan Jaafar, the Deputy Vice Foreign Minister, I enquired about the strongly worded statement by the Saudi minister al-Faisal and exactly when he noticed that a change in Saudi foreign policy was going to happen. He explained:

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[85] Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix, *Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, Political, Economic and Religious Change*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 21-23.

After it became apparent in the middle of 2004 that Abdullah would soon have the reins of power in his control…the Crown Prince Abdullah ordered certain government institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to provide updated reports regarding particular external issues, and make the Iraq issue a first priority. The Crown Prince emphasized that reports must be written and that increased coordination between the intelligence and the interior ministries must occur through a joint committee in order for the recommendations to be unanimous and because proposals were urgently required.[86]

In addition, Crown Prince Abdullah's request coincided with the commencement of moderate reforms in the Saudi political system with the approval of municipal council elections in August 2004, which represented an unprecedented advancement in the nature of Saudi governance as citizens were permitted to participate in decision-making and to manage their local affairs. Although municipal council elections had already been formally announced in Resolution No. M/5, which was approved by royal decree on 19th February 1977,[87] during the reign of King Khalid, an era of "prosperity and boom" for citizens,[88] the incompatibility of the principles that engendered these instances of modest reform with the conservative traditions of the ruling family were acutely apparent at that time. For this reason, they were never properly implemented. Prince Talal bin al-ʿAzīz, the brother of the King, who was an advocate for democratic reform and women's rights, confirmed these differences within his family in an interview with *The Christian Science Monitor*, explaining how he knew "from last year's meeting of senior princes that the ruling family has the intention and desire to make changes, but there's disagreement on the pace".[89] The outcome of the political system was not radical reform or drastic change but it still marked a historical step. Even this minimal change, which only permitted a small level of public participation along tribal and ideological traditions, indicated the

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[86] Author's Interview, with the Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Ali Hassan Jaafar, Riyadh, February 9, 2016.
[87] Official Document, No. M/5 on 19-02-1977
[88] Joshua Craze and Mark Huband, *The Kingdom: Saudi Arabia and The Challenge of the 21st Century*. (London: Hurst & Co, 2009), pp.249-251.
[89] Faiza S. Ambah, "In Saudis' first nationwide poll, candidates test limits," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 10 February 2005. http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0210/p04s01-wome.html. Accessed February 11, 2014.

possibility of transition towards actual public participation in the decision-making process. In January 2005, these changes began to manifest when the first public elections in the history of the Saudi Kingdom were held, an event celebrated by both citizens and reformers, who felt their demands were being acknowledged and positively responded to by the government.[90]

Most significantly, this instance of moderate reform assuaged the internal pressures exerting influence on Saudi officials, which meant they could then focus their attention on external issues. In an important sense, the restriction that limited Saudi involvement in regional and international events, and predetermined the pattern of its foreign policy decisions, began to immediately change in its diplomatic discourse. A more prominent and proactive position was assumed in foreign policy decisions, with greater emphasis placed on Saudi involvement in regional affairs. As mentioned previously, the Foreign Minister, Prince Saud, confirmed the consequences that this restriction was having on Saudi Arabia and its interests in the region when he suggested that "we are handing the whole country [Iraq] over to Iran."[91] In another speech, this time to the Council of Foreign Relations in New York, he further emphasized the significance that moderate reform was having in addressing the internal issues restricting Saudi Arabia's involvement, and thus influence, in regional affairs:

> We are steadily modernizing our political institutions; our Consultative Council has expanded both in membership and authority to be a more representative body in expressing the popular will. In addition to the traditional participatory practice of enabling any person in Saudi Arabia to take his or her grievance directly to any official including the King, we are beginning to broaden citizens' participation through elections.[92]

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[90] Mufyid al-Zaydīya, "Muḥāwalāt al-ʾIsḷāḥ al-siyāsaī fī al-Saʿūdīyah," *Majallaht al-Mustaqbal al-ʿArabīyahah*, Markaāz Dirāsāt al-Waḥḍah alʿArabīyah, no.435, May 2015.pp. 42-61.

[91] Prince Saud al-Faisal Speech, "The Fight Against Extremism and the Search for Peace", address to the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 20 September 2005.

[92] Prince Saud al-Faisal Speech to The Council on foreign Relation in New York, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September, 20, 2005. http://www.mofa.gov.sa/sites/mofaen/aboutMinistry/Minister/Official Speeches. Accessed January 26, 2015.

When King Abdullah assumed power after the death of King Fahd in August 2005, and took complete control of the authorities, these policies of moderate reform designed to resolve the internal issues affecting Saudi Arabia were not reversed. Instead, seeing how they were removing the restrictions imposed on national foreign policy, they were strengthened, thus leading to increased internal cohesion and consensus regarding Saudi Arabia's strategic interests in the external environment.

(5.3) "Handing the whole country over to Iran"

The next section is going to explore the above statement, issued by the Saudi Foreign Minister, to determine if it represents either a radical or gradual change in foreign policy or if it is instead consistent with the traditional pattern of implementing a reactive policy. Saudi Arabia expressed concern for Iraq's instability as a result of the Sunni-Shi'ite divisions in the country and the increasing influence of Iran in the region, both of which posed threats to its own strategic and security interests.[93] Saudi officials repeatedly explained and restated the Saudi position towards Iraq through strongly worded speeches, while also directly criticizing the U.S.'s policy in Iraq. As a result of the repercussions of September 11th, it is evident that U.S. – Saudi relations were negatively affected. However, Saudi officials accused the U.S. of secretly permitting or being tacitly involved in the handing over of Iraq to Iran, meaning not that there was a conspiracy by the U.S., but that the United States administration found itself embroiled in the Iraqi chaos, and as the violent situation began to expand, it did not have many options or alternatives to achieve stability. Therefore, the U.S found that the situation required engaging Iran, considered the most influential player after the fall of Saddam in Iraq, which would be able to play a supporting role in ensuring political stability. Despite the hostility between Iran and the United States, the latter allowed the Pro-Iranian parties to dominate the political system in Iraq, with the marginalization of the Sunni and some of the Shiite Arabs in the process.[94] This tacit permission ensured that Iran would be keen to restore stability, because it served their interests within Iraq.

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[93] Alfred B. Prados, "Saudi Arabia: Current Issues and U.S. Relations," Congressional Research Service, *The Library of Congress, U.S*, Order Code IB93113, 24 February 2004, CRS-7.

[94] Ray Takeyh, *Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), pp. 160-183.

Saudi Arabia normally refrains from openly criticizing U.S. policy in its official statements and speeches, at least at the highest level of diplomacy or other governmental representation. As Anthony H. Cordesman, the holder of the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a consultant to senior U.S. officials and commanders, observed, "Saudi Arabia has not been openly critical of the U.S.".[95] Saudi Arabia's dissatisfaction with and concern regarding Iranian influence in Iraq has always been clear. However, a question remains about its ability to shift from a position of diplomatic condemnation to actual foreign policy decisions and attendant actions in three primary contexts: the political, the economic, and the military. It is in these areas that any change toward a policy of confrontation can be readily identified and its importance measured.

Saudi officials realized the significant radical implications of becoming involved in the Iraq conflict, while also acknowledging that involvement could be met with the condemnation of the international community. The other option available was to continue its support for the U.S., which would allow officials to apply a certain amount of pressure while also remaining at a distance from the issue. However, a third option was possible: gradually intervening in the conflict within a limited timeframe. This last option proved most viable given the circumstances, primarily, that any hesitation would make addressing the Iraq issue more complex and consequently result in a major shift in the regional balance of power. Iran was poised to benefit from this shift and Saudi officials began to speculate that a period of rapprochement between Iran and Iraq was underway, due to most of the leading Shiite politicians in Iraq having strong connections with Iran, having been political refugees there during Saddam's rule. These include the leaders of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the *al-Daʿwa* party, which are the main parties in the United Iraqi Alliance,[96] and won the majority of seats in both the provisional Iraqi election in January 2005 and the December 2005 election.[97] Therefore, the majority of the government in Iraq was made up of Shi'ite Islamists, and their interests were associated with Iran. This government was also granted

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[95] Anthony H. Cordesman and Khalid R. Rodhan, *Gulf Military Forces in an era of Asymmetric Wars*, (Washington, D.C: Praeger Security International Published in cooperation with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), p. 236.

[96] The Alliance was established in the lead-up to the January 2005 elections. It mainly consists of Shi'a parties, and was created by the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).

[97] John S. Duffield and Peter J. Dombrowski, Balance sheet : the Iraq War and U.S. National Security, (Stanford, Calif: Stanford Security Studies, 2009) pp. 75-77.

permission by the U.S. administration to strengthen its relation with Iraq. With Shi'ite Islamists in control of the country, further cooperation between Iraq and Iran was a distinct possibility and represented a disastrous set of circumstances from a Saudi perspective, especially in terms of its regional interests and strategic objectives.[98]

Saudi Arabia also quickly realized that it did not possess the same amount of influence amongst the Sunni population of Iraq as Iran did with the Shi'ite equivalent. As a result, a diplomatic and media campaign was undertaken to ensure Iraqi Sunnis occupied a common political and ideological position, and supported the complete rejection of increased Iranian influence in the region.[99] At the same time, the Saudi government faced growing public pressure to support Sunnis in Iraq, pressure that was intentionally heightened by the official Saudi press,[100] which speculated about the increased rate of cooperation between the U.S. and Iran against Sunni interests.[101] In early 2006, Saudi Arabia began outlining its demands as the sole defender of the Sunni population of Iraq, with Prince Turki al-Faisal,[102] insisting in an interview with CNN on an "equal share in the resources of Iraq and safety from retribution by Shi'ites."[103] Such demands required effective political behavior and foreign policy decisions to be realized. As such, the Saudi government decided to cease its unconditional support of U.S. policies in Iraq and instead started seeking its own strategic position in the country's political environment. Saudi officials decided to assume the initiative by working collectively with the GCC and supporting Sunni tribal groups.

In October 2006, the Iraqi Sunni Arab cleric, Harith Dhari,[104] visited Riyadh to meet Saudi officials.[105] In an interview with Prince Prince Saud al-Faisal conducted

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[98] Ali Adami and Najmieh Pouresmaeili, "Saudi Arabia and Iran: the Islamic Awakening Case," *Institute For Strategic Research Journals* (ISR), Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs, Vol. 3, no. 4, (Winter 2013), p.161.

[99] For examples of Iranian influence in Iraq, see Robert Lowe and Claire Spencer, (eds.), "Iran: Its Neighbors and the Regional Crises," *Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Chatham House, (2006); and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Iran's International Posture After the Fall of Baghdad," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, no. 2, (Spring 2004). For the Saudi policy see in Lionel Beehner, "Iran's Saudi Counterweight", *Council on Foreign Relations*, (16 March, 2007).

[100] Such as, "Shī'ait al-'Irāq Yaqtulun al-Muslimīn al-Sunnah", *al-Muslim*, 23 February 2005.

[101] Frederic M. Wehrey, Op.Cit., 2009, pp. 28-29.

[102] The former Saudi ambassador to United States, and the U.K, and the former head of intelligence.

[103] Alfred B. Prados, "Saudi Arabia: Current Issues and U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, The Library of Congress, U.S, Order Code IB93113, (February, March 2006), CRS-7.

[104] Harith Dhari was a religious scholar from a well-known family. He was the grandson of Sheikh Suleiman Dhari who was a leader in the 1920 revolt against British rule in Iraq, the leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars, to become the spiritual and political head of the Sunni community in the new post-Saddam Hussein Iraq.

for this research project, he explained how the aim of the visit was the unification of the moderate movements under one entity. He also claimed that the Iraqi government was more preoccupied with the implementation of Iran's agenda than it was with achieving security for the Iraqi people as a whole.[106] Domestic demand for Saudi intervention to protect Iraqi Sunni Arabs increased markedly when, on 7th December 2006, thirty-eight senior scholars signed a declaration denouncing the murder and displacement of Sunnis by Shiite militias, declaring that "we should openly side with our Sunni brothers in Iraq and lend them all appropriate forms of support"[107] Prior to this declaration, thirty-two prominent Saudi scholars called for jihad through a statement entitled "The Home Front Against Challenges," which encouraged support for the Mujahedeen fighting in Iraq.[108] Edward W. Gnehm, former U.S. Ambassador in Kuwait and Jordan, identified this new orientation in Saudi foreign policy from December 2006 onwards, in particular its cooperation with other Gulf States to support Sunni groups.[109] Prior to this, in the fall of 2006, King Abdullah warned Vice President Dick Cheney that his government would provide financial support to Sunni tribes in Iraq. In her article in *The New York Times*, Helene Cooper, who interviewed numerous U.S. officials, explained how "they believed that Saudi Arabia's direct support to Sunni tribesmen increased this year."[110] Iraqi officials were also aware of Saudi Arabia's desire for increased influence in their country, with Hoshyar Zebari, the Iraq Foreign Minister, expressing at a meeting of regional foreign ministers in March 2006 that he "hope[d] that Saudi Arabia will keep the same distance from each and all Iraqi Parties."[111]

On 29th November 2009, Nawaf Obaid, a Saudi government adviser, managing director of the Saudi National Security Assessment project and an adjunct fellow of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, published

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[105] Abdullah Shihri, "Clerics Urge Muslims to Back Iraq Sunnis," *Associated Press*, 12 December 2006.

[106] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013.

[107] Quoted in Frederic M. Wehrey, Op.Cit., 2009, p. 28. See more in Frederic M.Wehrey, *Sectarian Politics in the Gulf: From the Lraq War to the Arab Uprisings*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).pp. 124-129.

[108] Bayān al-Ulamā' (32), "al-Jabhah al-Dākhīlīyah 'amām al-Taḥaddiyā,t," *al-Mukhtaṣar*, (March 2006).

[109] Cooper Helene, et al., "Saudis' Role in Iraq Frustrates U.S. Officials", *The New York Times*", p. A1, 27 July 2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/27/world/middleeast/27saudi.html. Accessed June 22, 2015.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Salah Nasrawi, "Saudis reportedly funding insurgents", The Seattle Times, December 8, 2006, p. 11A. http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/saudis-reportedly-funding-insurgents/. Accessed April 8, 2015.

an article in *The Washington Post* claiming that appeals were made by high-ranking Iraqi figures and other Muslim countries for Saudi Arabia to provide financial support and military resources to Iraq. These appeals were in part due to the historic ties between tribal groups in Saudi Arabia and Iraq, which could be used to counter growing Iranian influence in the region. As Frederic M. Wehrey argued, "Riyadh could easily support Iraqi Sunni tribes against Iranian militias and paramilitaries, using Jordan and the Shammar tribe as the principle conduits,"[112] adding that a new generation within the ruling Saud family understood that the Saudi kingdom had to assume a more proactive, effective role in the Iraq issue. Obaid also identified how Saudi Arabia had already started to reassess its role in Iraq, having realized its most viable option was to support Sunni militia leaders in the same way Iran was providing military, logistical and financial support to Shi'ite militias. In addition, Saudi Arabia was beginning to establish new Sunni militias to help limit Iranian influence in Iraq because the Iraq government was deemed incapable of doing so, and by extension to protect the Sunni Arab population. Obaid further argues that Saudi Arabia should be at the forefront of action in Iraq because it occupied a moral position and had sufficient leadership potential, thus providing it with a mandate to protect the entire Islamic world.[113] According to the U.S. Iraq Study Group Report, funding for Sunni Arab groups increased significantly following Saudi involvement in regional issues.[114] In excess of $20 million dollars was given by Saudi Arabia to Sunni rebels to help them purchase armaments, such as Strelas, the Russian, shoulder-fired, anti-aircraft missile, from Eastern Europe.[115]

However, the most influential Sunni militia on the ground in Iraq were Sunni extremists with connections to terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaeda and *Jamāʿat al-Tawḥīd wa al-Jīhād*.[116] These groups are extreme Salafi, and were anti-Saudi; they "saw the Saudi 'regime' as deviating from its original Wahhabi convictions by

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[112] Frederic M. Wehrey, Op.Cit., 2009, p.63.

[113] Nawaf Obaid, "Stepping Into Iraq: Saudi Arabia Will Protect Sunnis If the U.S. Leaves", *Washington Post*, 29 November 2006, A23. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content /article /2006/11/28/ AR200611280 1277.html. Accessed November 14, 2015.

[114] James A. Baker III, et al., *The Iraq Study Group Report, the Way Forward A New Approach*, authorized ed., New York: Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 28-29.

[115] Salah Nasrawi, Op.Cit., 8 December 2006, p. 11A.

[116] Organization of Monotheism and Jihad formed in 1990, the group was led by ʾAbū Muṣʿab al-Zarqāwī, he took responsibility for numerous acts of violence in Iraq including suicide bombings. In late 2004, the group joined al-Qaeda, and pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden. The group became known as Tanẓīm al-Qāʿidah al-jihādīyah fī Bilād al-Rāfidayn (TQJBR). See Michael Eisenstadt and Jeffrey White, "Assessing Iraq's Sunni Arab Insurgency," *the Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, (December 2005).

succumbing to Western cultural influences and aligning itself with the Christian imperialist United States."[117] Thus, the options for Saudi Arabia to support the influential Sunni militias were limited in Iraq, and Saudi Arabia preferred the Sunni tribal leaders in Iraq as a safer option due to the strong tribal and ethnic links among the tribes in Iraq and Saudi Arabia, in particular the al-Anbar Governorate, which has related branches in Saudi Arabia.[118] There is a history of migration between Saudi Arabia and Iraq,[119] such as the al-Dulaym and Shammar tribes. Moreover, the Anaiza tribe is located beside the Saudi Arabian border. Its leader, Sheikh Miteb al-Hathal al-Anaiza, is an Iraqi citizen and General of the whole Anaiza tribe across Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The tribe includes the House of al-Saud, the royal family of Saudi Arabia.[120] In 2006, as a result of the instability in Iraq, these tribes began to form the Sunni militia referred to as the Anbar Revolutionaries,[121] after a series of meetings among Sunni tribal leaders. There were speculations that Saudi Arabia contributed financial and arms support to the group in order to destroy al-Qaida and oppose the U.S military occupation of Iraq and its policy condoning the growth of Iranian influence in Iraqi affairs. However, there was a split among Sunni insurgents regarding the issue of cooperation with the U.S government or Zarqawi's forces.

These speculations of Saudi support for Sunnis are important but of greater importance is the credibility of such claims. While it is quite difficult to completely confirm the accuracy of this information, it is possible to deduce that this information is correct with some certainty, based on a brief interview conducted with Prince is referred to as "A.A." on his request to protect his identity. When asked to what extent there can be certainty regarding Saudi backing of Sunni military groups, he responded that "it might have been done" but it was intended as humanitarian assistance for a variety of communities consisting of multiple denominations. He added that " if those assumptions are accurate, it is not a shame to give money to a human being to buy a weapon in order to be able to defend himself for survival, people's lives are

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[117] "Who Are the Insurgents? Sunni Arab Rebels in Iraq", Special Report. 134, *Institute of Peace*, (April 2005), p.10.
[118] Hussein D. Hassan, "Iraq: Tribal Structure, Social, and Political Activities," the *Congressional Research Servisec*, CRS Report for Congress, Order Code RS. 22626, March 15, 2007. CRS-2.
[119] Lin Todd, et.al, "Iraq Tribal Study-al-Anbar Governorate: The Albu Fahd Tribe, The Albu Mahal Tribe and the Albu Issa Tribe, Global Resources and Global Risk, *Group Study Conducted Under Contract with the Department of Defense*. (18 June 2006), p. ES-11.
[120] Ibid. pp. 4-4 – 4-5.
[121] Ibid. pp. 4-20 – 4-22.

priceless."[122] While he did not provide exact details to prove the credibility of claims regarding Saudi support for Sunnis in Iraq, his comments strongly suggest the beginning of a radical reorientation in Saudi foreign policy from non-intervention to involvement, albeit indirect at this stage. These claims can, however, be tested through alternative means. By analyzing coterminous changes within different departments of the Saudi government, it is possible to confirm state-sponsored support for Sunnis in Iraq at this time. For example, determining the quantitative and qualitative changes in military capabilities can be used to measure a change in Saudi foreign policy. Similarly, on a basic economic level, by analyzing the quantity of financial resources allocated to foreign policy, a change from non-intervention to active participation can be readily discerned. The changing nature of Saudi Arabia's relations with strategic allies during this period and its behavior toward influential actors in the international environment is a further indicator of shifts occurring in its foreign policy strategy.

However, Saudi foreign policy has never been characterized by recklessness or impetuousness, given the fact that decision-makers wanted to avoid dangerous policies when using their foreign policy instruments. In other words, if Saudi Arabia pursued a reckless policy, it risked isolating itself from both the regional and international environments. Instead, officials decided to implement multiple strategies at the same time by employing the diplomatic, economic and media instruments at their disposal. For example, the *al-Arabiyyah* channel, which was popular throughout the Middle East; the *al-Rafidain* satellite channel in Iraq, which was established by the Muslim Scholars Association (MSA) and headed by Harith al-Dhari; and *al-Sharqiya* TV, were all funded by Saudi Arabia.[123] All of these instruments were utilized to expose Iran's influence in Iraq, thus serving to achieve Saudi Arabia's objective of counteracting the political and ideological messages being disseminated by Iranian media outlets. Concurrently, Saudi Arabia sought to encourage Iran to become more engaged in issues in the region through increased diplomacy. As such, the Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was invited to attend a GCC summit

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[122] Author's Interview, with Saudi Prince A.A, who prefers to remain anonymous, Riyadh, March 18, 2016.
[123] Ahmed K. Rawi, *Media practice in Iraq*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.178 Appenix, See also in pp. 97-117

in December 2007 as a display of friendship.[124] This incorporation of multiple strategies is considered a consequence of the lack of clarity amongst Saudi leaders regarding their understanding of the nature of U.S. policy in Iraq. However, Saudi officials believed that pretending to enter into a period of rapprochement with Iran would put increased pressure on the U.S. to change its policy regarding Iraq. Saudi officials, however, recognized that it could not risk pursuing a directly confrontational policy because this would have immediate detrimental effects on Saudi-U.S. relations. Nevertheless, they were not satisfied with the strategic policies of their ally, which allowed for increased Iranian influence in the region, which threatened Saudi Arabia's geopolitical interests. Hence their decision to pursue multiple different strategies.

Earlier, in March 2007, the Saudi-U.S. relationship had steadily deteriorated, culminating in King Abdullah describing the U.S. presence in Iraq as "an illegal foreign occupation"[125] in a speech before the presidents of the Arab States. Saudi foreign policy always suffered from a lack of initiative but this became further entrenched following September 11. A direct result of this was its inability to maintain its influence in Arab issues, such as the Palestinian question. In addition, the political landscape in Lebanon was dominated by Hezbollah, who opposed the Future Movement (FM), a Sunni Lebanese political movement led by Saad al-Hariri, who succeeded from his father Rafic and was supported by Saudi Arabia. Quite to the contrary, Iran was able to position itself as completely supportive of Arab issues and, therefore, able to increase its influence in the region while undermining Saudi Arabia's.[126] The conventional pattern of Saudi foreign policy, ultimately using the financial resources at its disposal, has led to observations like Jessica Drum's, that "Saudi Arabia is known for its propensity to use its checkbook and diplomacy to achieve its foreign policy objectives."[127] This approach has had an impact but from 2007 onwards there was a desire amongst officials to move beyond simply planning and facilitating the activities of others and to actually become directly involved in

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[124] The Statements of Hamad bin Jasim bin Jabir Al Thani, Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, "The Conclusion of the 28th GCC Supreme Council Summit in Doha", Qatar News Agency, December 4, 2007. See more in Joseph Kostiner, "The GCC States and the Security Challenges of the Twenty-First Century, Israel,", *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, no. 86, (September 2010), pp.37-39.

[125] Hassan M. Fattah, "U.S. Iraq Role Is Called Illegal by Saudi King", *The New York Times*, 29 March 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/29/world/middleeast/29saudi.html. Accessed April 14, 2015.

[126] Michael Slackman, el al., "Saudi's counter Iran in Region", *The New York Times*, February 6, 2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/06/world/ middleeast /06s audi.html. Accessed August 12, 2015.

[127] Jessica Drum, "Vying for Influence: Saudi Arabia's Reaction to Iran's Advancing Nuclear Program," *the Middlebury Institute of International Studies*, (1 July 2008).

regional events. To this end, Saudi Arabia assumed a leading role in February 2007 by hosting representatives of the Fatah contingency of the Palestinian government and the Islamist Hamas movement in Mecca, in an attempt to reach a compromise and realize a settlement to the power-sharing dispute. Mecca was chosen by Saudi officials because of its symbolic significance in the Islamic world. Hamas and Fatah agreed to end the internal dispute by forming the national unity government. Furthermore, this event signaled to the Islamic world, especially Iran, that Saudi Arabia was both prepared and willing to assume a more active role in existing Arab issues. As King Abdullah remarked, "We do not want any other party to manipulate our causes, profiteer from them, and draw strength from them, we do not want any other country to exploit our causes to bolster its position in its global conflicts."[128]

In terms of Saudi-U.S. relations, the Iraq War was counter-productive. Saudi Arabia could not maintain its confidence in U.S. policy because it could not completely support Nouri al-Maliki's government. As Awadh al-Badi, the director of the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies commented, "We could no longer be sure of the Americans".[129] At the same time, however, Saudi Arabia feared complete U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, which would further shift the balance in favour of Iran, believing that "the United States remains the heavyweight in regional security."[130] Such a position implied an inherent contradiction in Saudi policy, as it meant that U.S. presence in Iraq was preferable to withdrawal because it posed fewer threats to Saudi interests, in particular its security concerns and the fear that if a vacuum was created in the region, it would immediately be occupied by Iran. For this reason, Saudi Arabia encouraged the U.S to maintain the status quo by continuing its occupation of Iraq and thus provide a counterweight to Iran. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia was not experienced enough to manage a country with a Shiite majority, as demonstrated by the decision to not establish extensive networks of allies in Iraq and include the whole spectrum of society. Since the deterioration of Saudi-U.S. relations was confirmed at the beginning of 2006, officials began shifting their diplomatic attention to the East, with the intention of establishing military and economic alliances with China and Russia. Expanding its network of alliances was an essential

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[128] Michael Slackman, Hassan M. Fatah,"Saudis act to counter Iran's influence in the Mideast", *The New York Times*, 6 February 2007. Accessed August 11, 2015.http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/05/world/africa/05iht-saudi.4479806.html .
[129] Ibid.
[130] Frederic M.Wehrey, Op.Cit, 2010, p.55.

objective if Saudi Arabia was to alter its foreign policy strategy and assume the initiative rather than remaining reactive. In order to fulfil a more strategic role in the region, Saudi officials required a number of potential possibilities for all scenarios that would allow for structures of new alliances with countries supportive of their strategy and oriented toward similar objectives. In terms of arms supplies, this shift, designed to include multiple different parties, was not random but strategic, insofar that the decision was informed by particular objectives and planned well in advance. The substitution concept in foreign policy suggests that:

> Leaders choose foreign policies from a set of possible alternatives, depending on the circumstances they face at any given time; leaders have multiple policy tools from which to choose, and they will choose the policy tools they think are most likely to succeed.[131]

Despite this, the shift is often considered an expression of dissatisfaction with what was happening in Iraq and an opportunity to put its ally under pressure, to halt Iranian expansion in Iraq and reduce its dependence on the U.S.

The government understood the need to improve trade relations with China, in particular, to increase Chinese exports to Saudi Arabia because it was a large market in the Middle East. In return, China had to be ensured that oil and gas prices would remain competitive. For these reasons, the Saudi monarch conducted the first state visit to China in January 2006, during which Aramco, the Saudi oil company, was offered $750 million of the total $3 billion in investment to build a petrochemical complex in China that would process more than 7 million tons of Saudi crude oil,[132] in addition to signing five major agreements on energy cooperation.[133] Consequently, Saudi Arabia became the largest trading partner of China in the Middle East and today China is the fourth largest importer of Saudi oil. These economic relations suggest a reorientation in Saudi foreign policy, as exports to the U.S. decreased

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[131] David H. Clark and William Reed, "The Strategic Sources of Foreign Policy Substitution, *American Journal of Political Science* (AJPS), Vol. 49, no. 3, (July 2005), p. 609. For further information see in Benjamin A. Most and Harvey Starr, *Inquiry, Logic, and International Politics*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1989).

[132] Xuecheng Liu, "China's Energy Security and Its Grand Strategy", U.S, *The Stanley Foundation*, (September 2006), p.11.

[133] "China, Saudi Arabia Forge Closer Relationship", *China Daily*, 24 Jan 2006. http://www.chinada ily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-01/24/content_515060.htm . Accessed January 11, 2015.

relative to the increase in exports to China (See Fig. 1.1).[134] This decline began in 2003, the commencement of the Iraq War, and continued unabated until 2009, when exports reached their lowest point. Charles W. Freeman, the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia at the time, observed that as China emerges as an alternative destination for Saudi oil exports a much faster growing market than the United States, Saudi Arabia is increasingly interdependent with the Chinese on the energy."[135]

(Fig. 1.1) Saudi Crude Exports to China and U.S. Charts
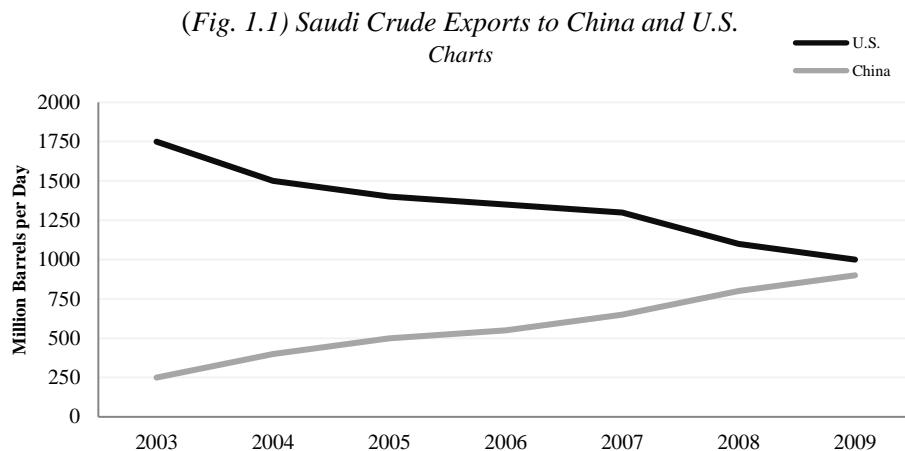
PIRA Energy Group Report, Saudi Crude Exports to China and U.S., 2010

For political and military purposes, Saudi Arabia turned to Russia to propose a range of initiatives that would prove mutually beneficial for both countries. President Vladimir Putin was officially invited to Saudi Arabia in February 2007, a visit that established a bilateral relationship between the two states in accordance with their respective strategic objectives and formalized new agreements regarding the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Putin also used this occasion to criticize what he called U.S. hegemony in global politics.[136] These bilateral relations proved immediately beneficial to both countries, with frequent high-level visits arranged between officials. In November 2007, the Saudi Crown Prince and Defense Minister, Sultan al-Saud, even visited Russia to inaugurate negotiations for a significant arms purchase.[137] Following this meeting, Prince

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[134] PIRA Energy Group Report, Saudi Crude Exports to China and U.S., 2010.

[135] Interview conducted with Ambassador Chas. W. Freeman by the Saudi-U.S. Relations Information Service (SUSRIS), *Middle East Policy Council*, (26 October 2004).

[136] Mark N. Katz, "Saudi-Russian Relation since the Abdullah-Putin Summit." *Middle East Policy Council*, Vol. xvi, no.1, (Spring 2009), pp.113-114.

[137] Zakir Hussain, *Saudi Arabia in a Multipolar World: Changing dynamics*, (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p.114.

Bandar bin Sultan, the National Security Council Secretary, visited Moscow in July 2008 to complete negotiations and finalize the purchase of 150 T-90S tanks for $ 600 Million, 160 Mi-17, Mi-35 and Mi-26 helicopters for a total of $ 1.6 Billion, and 100 BMP-3s infantry fighting vehicles for a total of $ 200 Million.[138] In return, Saudi Arabia permitted Lukoil, a Russian oil company, to develop the natural gas fields of al-Rubʿ al-Khālī (Empty Quarter desert), the largest contiguous sand desert in the world.[139]

In order to implement a foreign policy strategy that will achieve the country's objectives, all relevant instruments must interact effectively and work in unison toward realizing the same goal. In the case of Saudi Arabia at this time, the effort to reorient its strategic alliances from the West to the East encountered a number of obstacles and bureaucratic red tape. For example, the decision to award privileges to a Russian company with the intention of enhancing political and economic relations was met with several internal obstacles, namely, the accusation that the arrangement was not sufficiently beneficial to Saudi Arabia. In an interview conducted for this research project with Dr. Abdulrahman al-Zamil, a former member of *Majlis al-Shūra* (Shura Council),[140] and director of the Saudi Export Development Authority,[141] he explained that one of the primary obstacles to increased foreign investment from global companies was the bylaws, internal policies and legislative regulations outlined in the Foreign Investment Act. This act, in particular Article 18, imposed higher taxation rates on foreign companies and increased bureaucratic procedures, thus making foreign investment incompatible with the diplomatic and strategic efforts of Saudi Arabia.[142] Due to these constraints, Russia's Lukoil was ostensibly a formality in Saudi Arabia as, according to Reuter's only "six or seven people will be there, so this is not a company anymore, there are uneconomic issues."[143] As a result, both sides lost interest in making the project succeed. In terms of the new economic

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[138] John C. K. Daly, "Saudi-Russian Military Cooperation," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 5, Issue.137, (18 July 2008). See more in Aleksandr Latyshev, "Prince Arrives 'Off Balance': Saudi National Security Official 'Sounds Out' the Kremlin," *Izvestiya (World News Connection)*, 10 August 2007. Also see in Mark N. Katz, Op.Cit. , 2009, pp. 113-119.

[139] Mark N. Katz, 2009, Op.Cit, p.115

[140] The Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia, it is the formal advisory body of Saudi Arabia, The Consultative Assembly has limited powers in government, it consists of 150 members.

[141] Author's Interview, with former member of Shura Council (Consultative Council), and Director of Saudi Export Development Authority Dr. Abdulrahman Al Zamil, Riyadh, January 20, 2016.

[142] "The Saudi Foreign Investment Act", Article 18.

[143] "Russia's Lukoil last to leave Saudi Arabia's search for gas", *Reuter*, 13 April 2015. http://www.reuters.com/article/lukoil-saudi-gas-idUSL6N0X30HB20150413. Accessed January 4, 2016.

arrangements with China, Saudi regulations regarding the exploration and extraction of oil resources prevented foreign companies committing investments. China, however, discovered that other countries did not impose complex processes to grant permission for these activities and to invest in the oil sector, in particular, Iran.[144] The insistence on such precautionary processes raises an important question about the extent of Saudi Arabia's desire to actually establish new alliances outside its pre-existing international relationships. As a sovereign state with its own strategic, long-term objectives, Saudi Arabia should be able to find a solution to the bureaucratic complexity and any problem encountered when trying to achieve these objectives.

Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia still intended to expand its alliances eastwards in order to achieve its strategic objectives. Saudi officials sought rapprochement with Russia for the purpose of expressing their dissatisfaction with U.S. policy in Iraq and its persistent indifference regarding the growing influence of Iran in the region. During the fieldwork undertaken for this research project, Ali Hassan Jaafar, the Saudi Ambassador to Russia (2007-2013) and the Deputy Vice Foreign Minister, explained that Saudi Arabia's interests were negatively affected as a direct result of U.S. policy in Iraq and the power imbalance in the region that was beginning to favour Iran. Saudi officials sought to strengthen its relationship with Russia through economic measures in order to either isolate Iran from its allies or to utilize Russia's influence to pressurize Iran into changing its behavior in Iraq. [145] This was corroborated by a Russian newspaper, *Kommersant*, which confirmed "big arms contracts and developing business projects in Saudi Arabia with the participation of Russian companies. Lucrative offers can become a reward of Russia's refusal to back Iran."[146] In February 2008, Prince Saud, the Saudi Foreign Minister, visited Moscow. According to Russian media, the Prince:

> Conveyed a personal message from the King, where Riyadh expressed its
> concerns over Iran's growing impact in the Middle East. The Kingdom

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[144] Leverett Flynt and Jerey Bader, "Managing China-U.S. Energy Competition in the Middle East," *Washington Quarterly*, (Winter 2005–2006). p. 191-192.

[145] Author's Interview, with the former Saudi Ambassador in Russia, and Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Ali Hassan Jaafar, Riyadh, February 9, 2016.

[146] Quoted in John C. K. Daly, Op.Cit, 2008.

suggested that Moscow should scale down its cooperation with Tehran. In exchange, Saudi offered beneficial contracts. [147]

Despite the best efforts, this attempt to isolate Iran from Russia did not succeed, a fact confirmed by Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, who claimed that any allegations of cooperation with Saudi Arabia that "may in any way be linked to the Russian-Iranian dialogue are out of place and untrue." [148] However, this did not completely deter Saudi Arabia from pursuing another strategic interest associated with its relationship with Russia that is, improving the quality and increasing the quantity of military resources acquired from Russia. As Ali Hassan Jaafar confirmed in the interview, Saudi Arabia had begun to doubt the U.S.'s desire to continue as a supplier of appropriately sophisticated weaponry." [149] For example, at this time, attempts by the Saudi government to purchase technologically advanced arms, such as Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM), from the U.S. was met with unwillingness amongst officials to complete the deal due to the weapons' capabilities. [150] Additionally, in August 2007, President Bush received a letter signed by one hundred and fourteen members of Congress protesting the sale of technologically advanced weapons to Saudi Arabia, vowing to "vote against the deal"[151] because they believed approving it would "erode Israel's 'qualitative edge' over its Arab neighbors."[152] U.S. Ambassador Charles W. Freeman, when describing Congress' continued refusal to permit further arms sales to Saudi Arabia, claimed that:

> The arms sales relationship, which was traditionally at the heart of our cooperation, is diminished as the Saudis look elsewhere for new or replacement

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[147] Alexander Gabuev, "The Arab Seduction" Kommersant Russia's *Daily Online*, 15 July 2008. http://www.kommersant.com/p912419/r_1/Saudi_Arabia_to_offer_Russia_lucrative_arms_contracts/. Accessed March 4, 2015.

[148] "Moscow: Iran Playing No Role in Russian-Saudi Arms Trade", *World News Connection* (AVN), 16 July 2008.

[149] Author's Interview, Ali Hassan Jaafar, Op.Cit, February 9, 2016

[150] The Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) is a guidance kit that converts unguided bombs, or "dumb bombs" into all-weather "smart" munitions. JDAM-equipped bombs are guided by an integrated inertial guidance system coupled to a Global Positioning System (GPS).

[151] Office of U.S. Representative Anthony Weiner (NY-9),"Broad Bipartisan Coalition of 114 Congressional Members Release Letter to President Bush Opposing Arms Sale to Saudi Arabia, Say Will Vote to Stop Sale", 2 August 2007.

[152] Christopher M. Blanchard and Richard F. Grimmett, "The Gulf Security Dialogue and Related Arms Sale Proposals," *Congressional Research Service*, CRS Report for Congress, prepared for members and committees of congress, U.S, Order Code RL34322, October 8, 2008, GRS-9.

systems. So, the military or security element of the relationship is in fact in the process of being lowered in the level of importance for both countries.[153]

According to Ambassador Ali, following the official visits in 2007, the Russians vowed to provide Saudi Arabia with the kind of sophisticated weaponry if required, which put additional pressure on the U.S. to complete the deal. To help resolve this complex situation, Bush pledged to provide Israel with JDAM technology of a higher caliber than that provided to Saudi Arabia, thus ensuring the former felt confident of possessing better laser-guidance and anti-jamming capabilities than its regional rival.[154] Even with this additional reassurance, the deal continued to prove particularly difficult to pass through Congress. It was not until May 2008; following the publication of four highly classified briefings by the Foreign Affairs Committee confirming that the deal did not threaten either U.S. interests or Israeli security,[155] that the deal was ratified.[156]

The data outlined above illustrates the rapid increase in the quantity and quality of armaments being acquired by Saudi Arabia. It also enables us to determine the orientation of Saudi foreign policy. For example, if Saudi Arabia was still dependent on the U.S. for its national security, then the increase in armaments cannot have been for defensive purposes. Quite to the contrary, the armaments can only have been for offensive purposes, which might indicate a radical reorientation in Saudi foreign policy from its conventional pattern of reaction to one characterized by more active and proactive. Furthermore, escalating regional instability and rapidly increasing oil prices from 2007 onwards,[157] helped engender hitherto unseen levels of weapons sales, with Saudi Arabia spending more than any other country in the Middle East. At the IDEX Arms Fair in Dubai in February 2007, Saudi Arabia spent an estimated $50 billion on military equipment, including 300 tanks, cruise missiles,

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[153] Interview conducted with Ambassador Chas. W. Freeman by the Saudi-U.S. Relations Information Service (SUSRIS), *Middle East Policy Council*, 26 October 2004.

[154] Herb Keinon and Yaakov Katz, "Bush Expedites Saudi Smart Bomb Deal," *Jerusalem Post*, 8 January 2008. http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1198517328646. Accessed April 9, 2015. See more in Dan Snyder, "Israel to get 'smarter' U.S.-made bombs than Saudis," *Reuters*, January 13, 2008.

[155] Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the110th Congress, 2nd Session, Issue: Vol. 154, no. 25,Washington, February 14, 2008.

[156] Quoted in Christopher M. Blanchard and Richard F. Grimmett, Op.Cit, 2008, CRS-8.

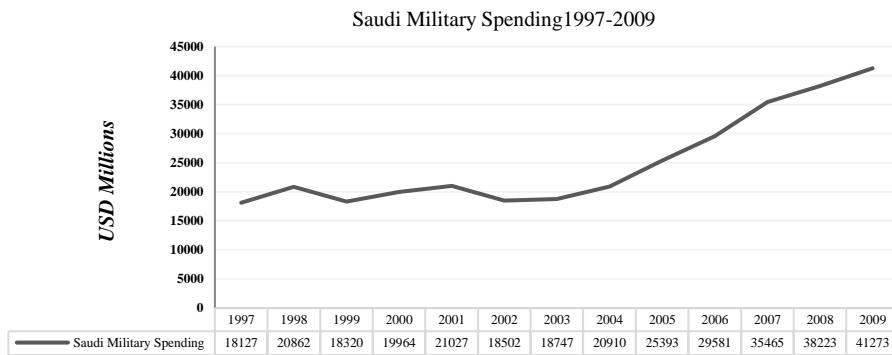[157] Markets Data Center, *Wall Street Journal*, 29 April 2008.

attack helicopters and fighter aircraft.[158] In comparison to the $2 billion Saudi Arabia spent at the same exhibition in 2005,[159] this signaled a phenomenal shift in Saudi attitudes toward its military capability and its understanding of its position in the region. From 1997 to 2004, Saudi military spending increased at a reasonable rate compared to other regional countries' spending patterns. However, 2004 saw an unprecedented increase in spending, with the trend continuing until 2006, when Saudi Arabia spent the largest amount of money on military resources in the nation's history.[160] It is significant that this change was preceded by the Iraq War, which also provided the catalyst for Saudi Arabia reconfiguring its foreign policy strategy.

Figures 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 below illustrate the remarkable increase in military spending in Saudi Arabia from 1997-2009. The data is collected from three different sources. The following charts, which detail trends in Saudi military spending, provide significant insight into the status of the Saudi arms race, showing a steady increase in spending year on year. The data in Figures 1.2 and 1.3, sourced from International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) respectively, serves to support the data shown in Figure 1.4, which was obtained by the author from a Saudi official at the Ministry of Finance, who wishes to remain anonymous, According to the data, there are considerable disparities in the percentages of total national military expenditure from year to year; for instance, the variation in the eight-year period between 1997 and 2004 showed an increase of only 15 percent, compared to an increase of more than 97 percent in the five years between 2005 and 2009. From 2002 to 2003, the annual variation in military spending showed an increase of 1.3 percent, whereas from 2001 to 2002 it showed a decrease of 12 percent. From 2005 onwards, the variance from year to year was not less than around 20 percent; for example, the variation in the amount of military expenditure from 2004 to 2005 was 21 percent.

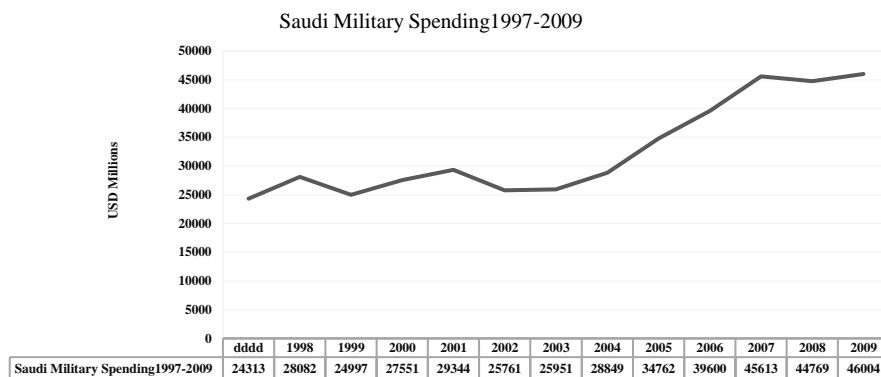[158] "Huge Gulf Spending at Arms Fair", Al Jazeera Net, 18 February 2007 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2007/02/2008525132453197158.html. Accessed April 9, 2015. See more in Ted G. Carpenter and Malou Innocent, Op.Cit.2007, p.67

[159] Ibid

[160] Ibid

Saudi Military Spending1997-2009

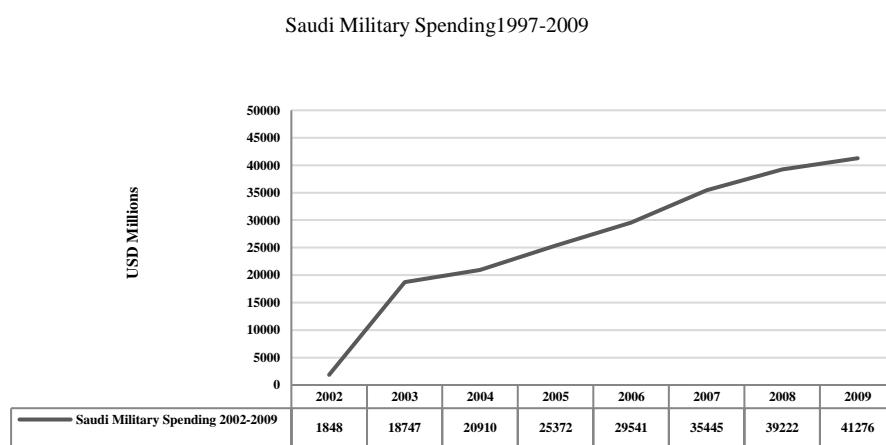| Saudi Military Spending	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	18127	20862	18320	19964	21027	18502	18747	20910	25393	29581	35465	38223	41273

1.2: SIPRI Estimate of Saudi State Military Spending in Current $US Dollars, 1997-2009. Source: SIPRI Military Balance

Saudi Military Spending1997-2009

Saudi Military Spending1997-2009	dddd	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	24313	28082	24997	27551	29344	25761	25951	28849	34762	39600	45613	44769	46004

1.3: IISS Estimate of Saudi State Military Spending in Current $US Dollars, 1997-2009. Source: ISS Military Balance

Saudi Military Spending1997-2009

Saudi Military Spending 2002-2009	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	1848	18747	20910	25372	29541	35445	39222	41276

1.4: Saudi State Military Spending in Current $US Dollars, 2002-2009. Source: Ministry of Finance.

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These numbers provide insight into the direction Saudi policy is taking over time. Following September 2006, It began to actively involve itself in regional environmental issues, seeking to strengthen its capabilities in all areas, renounce any dependence on others – namely, the U.S. – and to be seen as self-reliant and self-governing. Speaking about the Bush administration in 2007, Steve Clemons, director

of the American Strategy Program, stated that it "thinks the Saudis are no longer behaving the role of the good vassal. Saudis see weakness, they see a void, and they are going to fill the void and call their own shots".[161] Ultimately, filling that perceived weakness and void requires the capacity to, in theory, overpower its competitors. Therefore, with Iran being the dominant influence in Iraq, nothing remained for Saudi Arabia but to increase its military spending by rapidly allocating a significant portion of GDP to achieve that aim. In fact, Saudi military spending in 2006 stood at 10 percent of GDP, surpassing not only that of Iran, at 2.5 percent, but also that of the United States and China, at 4.06 percent and 4.3 percent respectively.[162]

Saudi Arabia has nevertheless been taking its relationship with the U.S. into account; it is important to be aware, that Saudi Arabia is percipient that it would not overestimate its capabilities compared to the U.S. in order to continue advancing whilst avoiding any behaviour that might cause a setback with regard to the expansion of its overarching arms-procurement process. To diversify suppliers to achieve strategic goals, it is first important that Saudi Arabia ensures that the flow of arms comes not just from one or two traditional suppliers, but instead from the formation of a network of military exchanges between itself and a number of different countries by associating Saudi interests with those of its suppliers. Such deals will not only be of economic benefit to its suppliers, but will also serve to align said suppliers' interests with those of Saudi Arabia such that they may be of support in any issues with which it concerns itself. Finally, this expansion might lead those suppliers to play a role in the formation of a united front to reject the nature of U.S. policy in Iraq.

Based on these strategic targets, in 2005 Saudi Arabia decided to upgrade its 84 Panavia Tornado IDS fighter aircraft in cooperation with the U.K. BAE Systems. The goal of the upgrade was to provide updates to the aircraft that would allow for the self-designation of laser-guided weapons, to enhance the precision of the Royal Saudi Air Force's guidance systems.[163] Following that, in September 2007, Saudi Arabia bought 72 Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft from the U.K. at an estimated value of $60

[161] Helene Cooper, Mark Mazzetti and Jim Rutenberg , "Saudis' Role in Iraq Frustrates U.S. Officials," *The New York Times*, p. A1, 27 July 2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/27/world/ middleeast /27saudi.html. Accessed August 27, 2015.
[162] "Central Intelligence Agency", *The World Fact Book*, 20 September 2007. Quoted in Jessica Drum, Vying for Influence, Op.Cit., 2008.
[163] Tom Ripley, "Saudi Tornado Upgrade Points to Smart Weapons Purchases," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 14 September 2006.

billion.[164] The importance of this deal derives not only from the purchase of these aircraft or from the significant monetary value it will provide the U.K. over the next 25 years, but also because the continuous nature of the trade association between Saudi Arabia and the U.K. will thereby become inculcated in the minds of British politicians at their relation with Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the sophisticated nature of the technology transferred to Saudi Arabia "involves the establishment of a Typhoon assembly line in Saudi Arabia and an unprecedented degree of technology transfer to a Middle Eastern country."[165] Moreover, in 2006 Saudi Arabia had purchased tanker aircraft, anti-aircraft missiles and helicopters from France in a deal worth approximately \$3.125 billion.[166]

To return to Saudi–Iraqi relations, in February 2007 Iraq opened its embassy in Riyadh.[167] Out of principle, Saudi Arabia did not reciprocate as it remained suspicious of al-Maliki's government, and considered him to be a puppet of Iran carrying out Iran's agenda.[168] From the Saudi perspective, Iran had taken a sectarian stance by marginalizing the Sunni segment of Iraq's population whenever it launched any political initiative seeking reconciliation among the Shiite groups within Iraq. Conversely, Saudi Arabia did not exclude the Shiites from its own reconciliation initiatives. For instance, on 20 October 2006, Saudi Arabia hosted The National Reconciliation and Dialogue Project of Iraq, at which were assembled senior Sunni and Shia religious leaders and scholars, with a view to ending sectarian violence in Iraq through the signing of the Mecca Document. That was under the auspices of the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation), with the full support and cooperation of Saudi Arabia.[169] In November 2006, Iraqi authorities issued a warrant for the arrest of

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[164] Anthony H. Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia: National Security in A Troubled Region*, (Santa Barbara, Calif: Praeger Security International, 2009), pp.138-141.

[165] 'Saudi Arabia Agrees Major Typhoon Deal with UK', *Jane's Defence Industry*, 17 September 2007. Quoted in Jessica Drum, Op.Cit, 2008. For further information see Anthony H., Op.Cit, 2009.

[166] Jac Lewis, "France, Saudi Arabia on Verge of Closing Major Arms Deal," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 13 September 2006.

[167] Raid Qusti, "Iraq Reopens Its Riyadh Embassy After 17 Years," *Arab News*, 14 February 2007. http://www.arabnews.com/node/294419. Accessed December 22, 2014.

[168] Robert Mason, *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia: Economics and Diplomacy in the Middle East*, (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, Library of Modern Middle East Studies, 2015), p.55.

[169] "Mecca Meeting Seeks End to Iraq Sectarian Violence," *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (ABC), 21 October 2006. http://www.abc.net.au/news/2006-10-21/mecca-meeting-seeks-end-to-iraq-sectarian-violence/1291326. Accessed September 9, 2015. See Report to Congress, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2007 (Section 9010, Public Law 109-289), 30 November 2006, pp. 5-6.

Sunni religious leader Harith Dhari,[170] who was present at the signing of the Mecca Document and, moreover, has a connection with the Saudi government, as previously mentioned in this section. The following April, Saudi Arabia rejected Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's request to pay an official visit to Saudi Arabia during his tour of the Gulf states. An apologia for the reception given to al-Maliki cited his negative attitude towards the Sunnis in Iraq and bias in favour of the Shiites, in addition to his relentless pursuit of enhancing an Iranian role in Iraqi affairs. [171]

Saudi Arabia perceived that Iran's efforts in Iraq had consistently sought to achieve reconciliation between Shiite forces while marginalising the Sunnis. For instance, on 30 March 2008, a ceasefire between radical militia groups was brokered in the Iranian city of Qom by Moqtada al-Sadr, the head of the "Mahdi Army", and the Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki. The reconciliation meeting was supervised by the commander of the al-Quds brigade of the Revolutionary Guard Corps (RGC), Qassem Suleimani. [172] When al-Sadr's party, the Sadrist Movement, won a large number of seats in the Iraqi National Assembly in December 2005, Iran was convinced of his popularity. Consequently, it began to supply al-Sadr's militia forces with weaponry and training, despite the fact that al-Sadr had doubts about Iran's intentions due to its unlimited support of SICI (the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq), a close ally – and rumoured puppet – of Iran. The Sadrist Movement believed that it deserved a more prominent role in Iraq and greater financial support than that received by its archrival, SICI, from Iran. However, the taint of incompatibilities between them soon became apparent. The anti-Iranian influence of Iraqi Shiite forces caused suspicion surrounding al-Maliki's loyalty to Iran to mount due to the fact that two of al-Maliki's three special representatives, Hadi Al Amari and Ali Adib, held dual Iraqi–Iranian nationality. Moreover, they had spent time living in exile in Tehran. Amari was the leader of an influential militia the Badr Brigade, which is the military wing of SICI, and has been financed and trained by Iran since 1980. Currently, they hold the majority command of the new Iraqi National Army.[173] This incompatibility with Iran, which would inevitably lead to differences with the Iraqi Government, was illustrated by Iranian Ambassador Hassan Kazemi-Qomi on 21

[170] Kenneth Katzman, Post-Saddam Governance and Security, CRS Report for Congress, *Congressional Research Service*, January 17, 2007, CRS-20.
[171] "al-Saʿūdīyah Taʿtadhr ʿn ʿistaiqbāl al-Malikī ", *Al-'Wusṭát*, no. 1693, 26 April 2007.
[172] Gabriel G. Tabarani, *How Iran Plans to Fight America and Dominate the Middle East*. (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2008), pp. 109–110.
[173] Ibid. pp. 134–163.

April 2008 when he "publicly applauded al-Maliki's efforts and called al-Sadr's followers 'outlaws.'"[174]

In an interview, Saudi Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Ali Hassan Jaafar stated that the Saudi stance on al-Maliki was formed once it had discovered Iraqi governmental manoeuvres to avoid fulfillment of its obligations agreed under the Mecca Document. In addition to this, the Maliki administration had made no serious attempt to settle the sensitive issues of dissolving the militias with a view to national reconciliation, putting a stop to Iran's influence in Iraq, and the political marginalisation and exclusion of Sunni Arabs from governmental processes and decision-making, which ought to be balanced between the different factions of Iraqi citizens. The arrest warrant issued for Harith al-Dhari was seen as a clear expression of the Maliki administration's intentions.[175] Although Saudi Arabia has continued to refuse to cooperate with al-Maliki's government, it nevertheless assisted Iraq economically through the waiver of its debts, which amount to $20 billion.[176] Saudi Arabia considers this debt a means to exert pressure and influence on the Iraqi government. This suspiciousness is a salient feature of the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iraq noted by John O. Brennan, President Obama's senior counterterrorism adviser, when he visited Saudi Arabia and learned that King Abdullah was unable to cooperate with al-Maliki, the King telling him, "I don't trust this man".[177] In retaliation, al-Maliki accused Saudi Arabia of mobilising the Sunnis against his government, leading to political instability. He claimed that Saudi intervention provided a pretext for Iran to interfere within Iraq's affairs and asked the U.S. administration to prevent further Saudi interference.[178]

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[174] Philip Wolny, *Iran and Iraq: Religion, War, and Geopolitics*. (New York: Rosen Pub, 2010), p. 47.

[175] Author's interview with the former Saudi Ambassador in Russia and Deputy Vice Foreign Minister, Ali Hassan Jaafar, Riyadh, February 9, 2016.

[176] Steven Mufson and Robin Wright, "In a Major Step, Saudi Arabia Agrees to Write Off 80% Off Iraqi Debt," *The Washington Post*, 18 April 2007. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp- dyn/content /article/2007/04 /17/AR2007041701950.html. Accessed June 4, 2015.

[177] Michael Gordon, "Meddling Neighbors Undercut Iraq Stability," *The New York Times*, 5 December 2010, p. A11. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/06/world/middleeast/06wikileaks-iraq.html. Accessed March 22, 2015.

[178] Simon Tisdall, 'WikiLeaks cables: Saudi Arabia rated a bigger threat to Iraqi stability than Iran', *The Guardian*, 5 December 2010: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-saudi-meddling-iraq. Accessed August 19, 2015. See Daniel Barnes, "Iraq's Post-Election Political Dynamics: Pressing Concerns and Confliction Agendas," UNISCI Discussion Papers, ISSN 1696-2206, (May 2011), p.105.

On 24 June 2009, the Shiite district of 'Sadr City' in Baghdad was bombed; at least 72 people were killed, and 150 were left wounded.[179] Following the attack, al-Maliki publicly referenced a fatwa, which stated that "Shiites were apostate, unbelievers should be hunted down and killed",[180] made the by Saudi religious scholar Adel al-Kalbani in May 2009. al-Maliki stated, "We have observed that many governments have been suspiciously silent on the fatwa provoking the killing of Shiites." [181] In fact, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iraq continued to be overshadowed by suspicion on both sides, with each directing accusations at the other. Saudi Arabia believed that al-Maliki was no more than the puppet of Iran, while al-Maliki's government believed that Saudi Arabia sought to create instability in Iraq through the support of Sunni groups and Wahhabism. Although Saudi Arabia had long been uncertain of al-Maliki's intentions, it continued to support the Sunnis through the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq, which contains a large Sunni contingent. The Association is known for its rejection of the political process in Iraq. However, deep disagreements between the leaders of the Association led to a number of its members branching off to establish the Fiqh Council of Iraq. Moreover, the Association has no military wing on the ground, unlike the Shiites. Speaking about the lack of any unifying Sunni religious authority to face the escalation of Iran's influence, Hisham al-Hashimi, a researcher in Islamic Affairs, said that:

> The Sunni religious authority in Iraq is loose and unstable due to the different affiliations of scholars; several groups have tried to establish a supreme Sunni authority over the years, including the Association of Muslim Scholars, the Fiqh Council of Senior Scholars. But these attempts only widened the rift instead of uniting and organizing Sunnis.[182]

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[179] "Dozens killed in bombing in Baghdad market," *The Guardian*, 24 June 2009. https://www.theguardian.com /world/2009/jun/24/baghdad-sadr-city-bomb-iraq. Accessed August 22, 2015.

[180] Adel Al Kalbani did not suggest to kill the Shiites or call all Shiites kuffãr (unbelievers), but he mentioned that Shiite scholars are kuffãr, in his interview with BBC Arabic TV, May 12, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n17N5R_oX_Y. Accessed February 9, 2016.

[181] "White House says that new Iraqi bomb carnage will not delay US troop pullout," *The Telegraph*, 25 Jun 2009.

[182] Hamdi Malik, "Why Iraq needs a united Sunni authority to face extremism', *Al-Monitor*, September 1, 2015.

As discussed previously, the only alternative available to Saudi Arabia was, therefore, to support such tribal forces that shared Saudi values and concepts. These tribes were the al-Anza, al-Dulaym, and al-Shammar, all of which have members in both Iraq and Saudi Arabia. King Abdullah was himself born of a Shammar mother.[183] Sheikh Abdullah al-Yawar, a prominent leader among the Shammar tribe and head of the Iraqi Justice and Reform Movement, visited Riyadh in March 2010.[184] At the time, there was speculation regarding his receiving financial support from Saudi Arabia due to his familial relationship to the King.

Following al-Yawar's visit to Saudi Arabia, he returned to Iraq and joined forces with Shiite politician Iyad Allawi,[185] under whose chairmanship the "Iraqi List" party won the Iraqi Council of Representatives election on 7 March 2010 with 91 seats, despite the fact that al-Yawar was a prominent politician, with different orientations, and a different stance on sectarianism. According to a Saudi Foreign Ministry Cable [01] to the King,[186] Allawi, who visited Saudi Arabia and met with the King on 20 February 2010,[187] was himself receiving financial support.[188] An important element regarding the Saudi backing of Iyad Allawi irrespective of Allawi beign Shiite is that Saudi Arabia had started to become more realistic and pragmatic regarding the expansion of its network of allies in Iraq, regardless of denomination and sect, with the proviso that they share Saudi Arabia's goals and standards. By the same token, numerous Saudi Foreign Ministry cables were leaked, of which tow of these, [01], [and 02],[189] whose validity have been confirmed by the author paper, reflect a trend in Saudi politics, regarding the issue of Iraq. This trend indicates the necessity for coordination between Saudi state institutions and the Foreign Ministry,

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[183] Joel Rayburn, *Iraq after America: Strongmen, Sectarians, Resistance*, (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2014), p.160.

[184] Abdulmajeed al-Buluwi, "Saudi Arabia sees allies among Iraq's Sunni tribes," *Al-Monitor*, 25 June 2014. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/06/saudi-arabia-iraq-long-history-suspicion.html. Accessed May 9, 2016.

[185] Iyad Allawi is a former member of the Ba'ath Party, but he had a disagreement with Saddam Hussein and left Iraq in 1971 to live in exile in Lebanon. He took over the presidency of the Iraqi interim government in 2004.

[186] Wikileaks was releasing more than half a million cables and official documents from the Saudi Foreign Ministry, those documents includes "Top Secret" reports, and secret communications between Saudi State institutions, including the General Intelligence Services, Ministry of Interior and Saudi Embassies around the world.

[187] Jane Kinninmont, Gareth Stansfield and Omar Sirri, "Iraq on the International Stage Foreign Policy and National Identity in Transition," *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Chatham House, (July 2013), p. 25.

[188] Saudi Foreign Ministry Cable to the King, unknown date. [01].

[189] Cables and Official documents from the Saudi Arabia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, WikiLeaks, 19 June 2015.

in order to support the Sunnis and prevent the expansion of Iran's influence within Iraq. However, Saudi Arabia has found alternative policies for Iraq to be more problematic in light of the division of interests between Sunni groups and the lack of any political or religious authority for the Sunnis to rally around. The philosophy of Saudi foreign policy regarding Iraq is based on the principle that the Iraqi issue will end when the Syrian crisis does; it has therefore directed the bulk of its attention towards the Syrian crisis, because the alternatives available there may be more numerous than those available in Iraq, a consideration which will be addressed in the following chapter. Saudi Arabia realises that the Syrian crisis is merely an extension of the Iraqi crisis; Saudi has already determined its priorities in Syria: to counter-balance regional Iranian influence in Iraq.

This chapter has attempted to analyse the salient features of Saudi foreign policy in Iraq, in spite of the policy's conservative nature, characterized and tainted as it is by secrecy, through the lens of its diplomatic, militaristic, economic and strategic aspects. Based on the primary and secondary sources examined, this chapter concludes that Saudi policy has attempted to create a footprint in Iraq similar in terms of influence and role to that made by Iran to take steps in Iraq similar in influence and role to those taken by Iran. Such an endeavour would never have existed without the change in Saudi perception that followed the "Handing the whole country over to Iran" speech made by the Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal, which was a turning point in the nature of the traditional pattern of Saudi foreign policy. Following this event, to maintain its economic and security interests in the region Saudi Arabia began to play a bigger role in the Middle East through a more active involvement in regional issues. This change was observed in subsequent Saudi policies and behaviour, which demonstrate a shift in its orientation and the methods used to implement Saudi foreign policies. However, to accurately measure the general pattern of Saudi Arabia necessitates a longer period of time and further case studies in order to substantiate the rigidity of this research hypothesis and determine with any certainty that the change is not merely a reactive or an interactive policy, but a proactive and based on initiative one.

Chapter 6: The Arab Spring: The Bahrain and Syria Crises (2011-2013)

The previous chapter discussed the nature of Saudi foreign policy in relation to the Iraq issue and how its policy shifted toward a more active involvement in the case of Iraq in late 2005, a different approach from its traditional pattern. In addition to many other aspects, its language of diplomacy had started to change. The strategic alliance with the United States was no longer like it had been previously, it instead being directed toward the east and the implementation of a strategic policy designed to realise specific military and economic objectives. Moreover, Saudi Arabia's position at the forefront of the arms race was unprecedented. While this departure from the usual pattern is readily apparent, this chapter will address Saudi Arabia's stance and behaviour toward the Arab Spring, specifically its manifestations in Bahrain and the Syria Crisis from 2011–2013. Saudi attitudes concerning the Arab Spring in general, the country's response to this socio-political occurrence, and the internal and external factors motivating it, will be discussed in more detail. The Bahrain Crisis (2011) will be examined in close detail to explain why Saudi Arabia intervened militarily; to identify the individuals responsible for this and explore their rationale; to analyse the internal and external factors that actively influenced this decision; and to determine what the decision-making mechanism of the government was at this time. In terms of the Syrian Crisis (2011-present), Saudi Arabia's decision to provide military and financial support to the rebels will be examined closely to explain how foreign policy officials arrived at this decision, and identify the internal and external factors that engendered this decision.

The answers to the majority of the above questions provide an approach by which to understand Saudi foreign policy and the factors influencing it more thoroughly, while also ensuring to test this study's hypothesis: that Saudi foreign policy changed from being reactive due to a strategy of passivity, to being increasingly proactive as a result of the country's more interventionist strategy. Furthermore, knowledge of the Bahraini and Syrian Crises, and the decision-making process adhered to by state officials, will help provide a deeper understanding of Saudi foreign policy with respect to the internal and external factors that directly

influenced it, and which significantly contributed to its particular formulation during this period.

(6.1) Saudi Foreign Policy and the Arab Spring

Since the end of 2010, the Middle East has witnessed a series of protests and demonstrations throughout Arab countries, beginning first in Tunisia and expanding until a number of established regimes were deposed. These protests ranged from the generally peaceful in Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen, to those involving militarised rebels and oppositional groups confronting the authoritarian regimes of Syria and Libya. This series of events was unprecedented in the Middle East and public political agitation appeared to continue despite conservative governments' desire to maintain the status quo. The protests, a direct result of increasing dissatisfaction and disenfranchisement within Arab communities due to political and economic corruption and social marginalisation, began on 17th December 2010, when a young Tunisian, Mohamed Bouazizi, self-immolated after his vegetable cart was confiscated and he was publicly slapped by a female police officer. Bouazizi died from his injuries two weeks later, with angry demonstrations immediately erupting in response to his mistreatment.[1] The localised demonstrations quickly expanded to include the majority of regional cities in Tunisia, with many considering this incident as what launched the various popular uprisings in the region that were identified as part of the Arab Spring.

The demonstrations in Tunisia led to multiple deaths amongst and injuries to protesters as a direct result of confrontations with the security forces, which forced President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali to dismiss a number of ministers, including the Interior Minister. Nevertheless, the uprising expanded, increasing in severity until it reached government buildings, with Ben Ali resigning the presidency on 14th January 2011 before escaping to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia.[2] Ben Ali was welcomed in Saudi Arabia as a political refugee, where officials believed that the uprising in Tunisia was

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[1] Brian Whitaker, "How a man setting fire to himself sparked an uprising in Tunisia", in Middle East and North Africa Opinion, *The Guardian,* December 28, 2010. Accessed May 24, 2015, https://www.theg uardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/28/tunisia-ben-ali.

[2] Fawaz A. Gerges, *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 370.

just a minor public reaction, and that he would quickly be able to return to power once it lost momentum and stability was returned. Although Riyadh took no official stance toward events in Tunisia, Saudi scholars condemned Bouazizi's actions on the grounds that suicide was prohibited *[ḥarām]* and, according to their opinion, such an act could easily lead to sedition in the Arab and Muslim world.[3] Nevertheless, the demonstrations in Tunisia inspired other similar demonstrations in the region, including Egypt, where activists and youth movements called for peaceful protests throughout the country on 25th January 2011. While the demonstration was originally against poverty and unemployment, protesters soon demanded the immediate removal of Hosni Mubarak's regime. The political landscape changed irrevocably following the deaths of a number of protesters at the hands of Egyptian security forces, with demonstrators organising a mass occupation of Tahrir [al-*Taḥrīr*] Square in Cairo, which soon became the symbol of the "January 25 Revolution."

As the Egyptian regime used increasingly aggressive means to disrupt the revolution, such as employing baton charges, tear gas and water cannons to disperse the demonstrators, before escalating to the use of live ammunition, protesters began to set fire to police stations. This led to authorities severing lines of communication, including mobile phone and internet networks, in order to prevent the organisation of further demonstrations. President Mubarak enforced a curfew in all provinces of the Republic. On 29th January, President Mubarak made a public speech declaring his awareness of the aspirations of Egyptian citizens and announcing the immediate dismissal of Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif's government, while at the same time enforcing a curfew throughout the country and refusing to relinquish power himself.[4] Mubarak's attempt to make concessions by changing his government failed to convince the protesters, who rejected such overtures and continued to demand Mubarak's removal from power. In a final attempt to disrupt the protests, Mubarak withdrew security from the streets in order to spread lawlessness throughout the country and to force citizens to choose between the stability of the current regime or the indeterminacy of the opposition. In his second public speech on 1st February, he explicitly explained the current situation as a choice between chaos and order. Although he instructed the new government to respond to the public's demands,

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[3] Fawaz A Gerges, Op.Cit, 2014. p.370.
[4] Mohamed EL-Bendary, *The Egyptian Revolution and its Aftermath: Mubarak to Morsi*, (New York: Algora Pub, 2013), pp.19-60.

protesters were not convinced by these initiatives, believing them to be simply further strategic manoeuvres by the regime. Following continued demands for Mubarak's removal, the Vice President, Omar Suleiman, announced that the president had resigned with immediate effect on 11th February.[5]

Compared to the events in Tunisia and Egypt that constituted the manifestation of the Arab Spring in each country, the protests in Libya were unquestionably the bloodiest. Beginning in Benghazi in the north-east of the country on 15th February 2011, demonstrators demanded the immediate expulsion of the Gaddafi regime. Although security managed to suppress protests in Benghazi, the regime utilised foreign mercenaries against its citizens, with the result that confrontations quickly spread to other cities as injuries amongst and the deaths of protesters increased sharply. Such violent response caused a number of Libyan officials to abandon the regime's position and instead align with the protesters. By 21st February, the regime began using aerial bombardments and live ammunition to disperse protesters in Tripoli, while on 17th March 17, the UN Security Council issued Resolution No.1973, imposing a no-fly zone over the country, with NATO announcing it would assume control of all military operations in the country on 25th March.[6] On 20th August rebels succeeded in taking control of the capital city, Tripoli, which led to Gaddafi fleeing until he was captured and killed by rebels outside the city of Sirte on 20th October.[7]

The Saudi stance toward these different Arab uprisings is far more complex than merely being counterrevolutionary; it can be characterised as both changing and asymmetrical. For instance, Saudi Arabia believed that the Tunisian uprisings would not exceed the borders of Tunisia. Moreover, it did not believe the uprisings would succeed; that viewpoint may be inferred from its acceptance of former Tunisian President, Ben Ali, for political asylum, as Saudi Arabia believed that events in Tunisia were merely "exceptional circumstances."[8] For a period of time, Saudi Arabia did not believe the Tunisian uprisings represented a strategic threat; unlike Egypt,

[5] Abdelfattah M. Badawi, *Peace for a Better World: Inspired from the Egyptian Revolution.* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, 2011), p.115.

[6] Cherif M. Bassiouni, *Libya from Repression to Revolution: A Record of Armed Conflict and International Law Violations, 2011-2013*, (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2013), pp. 489-560.

[7] Triestino Mariniello, *The International Criminal Court in Search of its Purpose and Identity*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 166-176.

[8] "Ben Ali gets refuge in Saudi Arabia: Decision to host former Tunisian president sparks angry criticism on the internet," *al-Jazeera*, January 16, 2011. Accessed May 27, 2015. aljazeera .com/news/ dleeast/2011/01/201111652129710582.html

Yemen or Bahrain, Tunisia had no connection with Saudi Arabia, either on political, economic or strategic grounds, or in terms of its geographical boundaries. The Tunisian impact on Saudi Arabia does not compare with that of other Arab countries, such as Egypt, which is within the regional sphere of Saudi Arabia; therefore, the Saudi position toward the Tunisian uprisings did not express an explicit attitude, as opposed to what was beginning and about to happen in Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria in the coming months and subsequent years.

Egypt's uprisings represented the greatest threat from the Saudi perspective; historically and strategically, Egypt has held a pivotal status and played a principal role in the Arab world. More importantly, Mubarak was a strong ally of Saudi Arabia, and Saudi officials feared that any prospective replacement government in Egypt could lead to instability in the country and constitute a threat to the conservative Saudi government. Saudi Arabia's position toward the Egyptian uprising was liable to often rapid and unpredictable change. For example, the former Saudi Intelligence Director, Prince Turki al-Faisal, criticised the regime, claiming that "the future of the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak hinges on the ability of the country's leaders to understand the reasons behind the unprecedented protests," adding, "I really can't say where this is going to go… Whether they can catch up as leaders to what the population is aiming (for) is still to be seen."[9] At the same time, however, the Saudi King held a phonecall with the Egyptian president on 29th January, stating that "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its government stands with all its resources with the government of Egypt and its people," adding, "No Arab or Muslim can tolerate any meddling in the security and stability of Arab and Muslim Egypt."[10] He also discussed the situation with U.S President Obama that same day, asking him "not to humiliate Mubarak."[11]

King Abdullah confirmed Saudi support for Mubarak in order to give him the support and resources to prevent further any deterioration of stability in his country as he recognised that increased instability in Egypt would ultimately affect stability in

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[9] "DAVOS-Saudi prince says tough to predict Mubarak future," *Reuters*, 26 January 2011, accessed May 29, 2015. http://af.reuters.com/article/tunisiaNews/idAFLDE70P0HD20110126.

[10] Sami Aboudi and Martina Fuchsurl, "Saudi King Expresses Support for Mubarak," *Reuters*, 29 January 2011. See also in Sherif Elashmawy, "The Foreign Policy of Arabia and Qatar Towards the Arab Uprising: The Arab Cases of Egypt, Libya, Bahrain," Paper presented at the Gulf Research Meeting in August 2014 at the University of Cambridge.

[11] Hugh Tomlinson, "Saudis told Obama not to humiliate Mubarak," *The Times*, 10 February 2011. Accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/article2905628.

Saudi Arabia. Egypt continued to represent a vital strategic ally to Saudi Arabia,[12] therefore, it was necessary for Saudi authorities to express its position explicitly at the highest level of government. Despite this stance, the Saudi position quickly changed following the collapse of Mubarak's regime, with officials welcoming the success of the revolution and encouraging the peaceful transfer of power in Egypt. Saudi Arabia confirmed that it was willing to provide the transitional government with financial support, emphasising that its previous stance of support toward Mubarak's regime derived from a desire to maintain the continued cohesion of the Egypt. By 12th February, Saudi Arabia confirmed its support of the revolution, claiming that officials were always concerned with the authority of the state and not protecting its president.[13]

On 27th January, following the started of the Egyptian Revolution, in Yemen, a series of public protests demanding the removal of Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime began. The demonstrations ended after the Yemeni president agreed to hand over power to his vice president, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, within thirty days in exchange for immunity from prosecution.[14] Attempts to negotiate a deal involved the members of the GCC and were first discussed on 3rd April.[15] Negotiations to pacify the uprising took more than seven months due to the reluctance, and subsequent procrastination, of the Yemeni president. On 23rd November in Riyadh, Saleh signed the formal agreement to transfer power to the other political parties that agreed to form a national unity government within fourteen days and hold presidential elections within ninety days. King Abdullah attended the signing ceremony, which was broadcast live and attracted a significant amount of media attention both regionally and internationally.[16]

Saudi foreign policy has traditionally pursued a course of quiet diplomacy, primarily utilising its spiritual influence and financial resources to achieve its foreign policy goals in the Arab world. It has also demonstrated extreme caution regarding

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[12] 'Tādamūn 'Arabi rasmī mā 'a Mūbārak', *al-Jazeera*, 20 January 2011. Accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/e827994b-8ef0-4237-bf5c-b34623734a0e.

[13] 'Azmy Bashārah, "Mawwqif al-Duwal al-Khalījīayyh mīn Thawrāt 25 Yānāyīr fi Miṣr, Majallāht al'sīyāsīyah al'dawlīyah, no.187, (January 2012), pp. 48-51.

[14] "Yemen's Saleh signs deal handing over power," *CBSNEWS Interactive Inc*, 23 November, 2011. accessed May 21, 2015: http://www.cbsnews.com/news/yemens-saleh-signs-deal-handing-over-power/.

[15] "Saleh, Yemen's great survivor, finally quits power," *Khaleej Times*, 23 November 2011. Accessed May 22, 2015, http://www.khaleejtimes.com/article/20111123/ARTICLE/311239923/1016.

[16] Ibrahim Fraihat, *Unfinished Revolutions: Yemen, Libya, and Tunisia after the Arab Spring*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016). p.39. See also in Fawaz A. Gerges, Op.Cit, 2013, pp. 373-374.

entering into regional conflicts, choosing instead to maintain the status quo in order to avoid unnecessary further escalations that would threaten the stability of multiple countries. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, significant changes in regional structure of authority occurred following the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, an event which resulted in a strategy vacuum in the region that was almost immediately exploited by Iran to assume a more influential role in Arab affairs. This situation necessitated that Saudi politicians change their perspective in order to have a more effective and serious strategic involvement in regional issues so that its strategic interests, a change that occurred in September 2006. Furthermore, the Arab Spring (2011), while a surprising sequence of events for the entire world, proved particularly troubling for Saudi Arabia as it would radically change the nature of its traditional strategic alliances in the region and even threaten to undo carefully negotiated trade deals with Arab regimes, such as Egypt. In other words, the Arab Spring threatened to isolate Saudi Arabia in the region.

Riyadh was immediately concerned about the Arab uprisings and found itself at the heart of those events that caused allied regimes to fall. This emerging political status meant that Saudi Arabia had to adopt a more active, prominent role in the region, which was quite different to its behaviour regarding previous regional crises, such as the Gulf War of 1990. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Saudi Arabia made no serious attempt to resolve the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait at that time, nor did it give adequate attention to the crisis. This should not be considered evidence of its commitment to finding a compromise to prevent the war but rather was an indication of its lack of proper attention to regional affairs. This was made clear when the King delegated the Crown Prince to welcome Iraqi and Kuwaiti delegations to a negotiation meeting. The Crown Prince and Saudi mediators then left the meeting, allowing the conflicting sides to negotiate without the presence of intermediaries. This is a direct contrast to the Yemen Crisis of 2011, when Saudi Arabia went to great lengths to help achieve a compromise between Abdullah Saleh and his opposition by applying pressure to sign a compromise agreement under the supervision of the King. Saudi policy in the context of the Yemeni crisis is best described as one of "damage control,"[17] which began implementation through its diplomatic instrument in Yemen,

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[17] Frederic Wehrey, "Saudi-US Discord in a Changing Middle East," (Research Paper was originally submitted to *the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies* (ACRPS), Conference on Arab-US Relations held in Doha on June 14-16, 2014, Qatar, (July 2015), p.9.

and military, under the umbrella of GCC Peninsula Shield forces, to impose stability in Bahrain. Furthermore, it provided financial, and intelligence support to moderate rebels in Syria. In order to more thoroughly analyse this new trend and nature of Saudi foreign policy, further investigation of this new character of Saudi policy, with regard to the different situations and locations, is required. Moreover, in order to discover the reasons behind this noticeable shift in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy and the new tendency to be more proactive, the change must be considered in terms of this study's hypothesis. The cases of Bahrain and Syria can help determine if this hypothesis is credible, while also ensuring that the reasons behind this change in foreign policy are identified and properly assessed.

Before addressing Saudi intervention in Bahrain and Syria, it is necessary to re-clarify the difference between reactive and proactive foreign policies. A reactive policy refers to reacting to events after they have occurred, whereas a proactive policy is "introduced and pursued through deliberate choice" to eliminate difficulties and complications before they have a chance to emerge.[18] While both types of policy may be formulated based on reacting to specific events, a proactive policy seeks to be suitably forward-thinking to predict and prevent any undesirable consequences of the events in question. In this case, "interventionism" may be considered an appropriate term to use in the analysis of Saudi foreign policy, and to determine if it is characterised by initiative and is proactive in achieving the nation's objectives. To be considered proactive would require significant acts of intervention in crises and events involving other states that are not directly under its influence; to seek to control the outcomes of events via the threat, or the use, of power.[19] Therefore, "interventionism" will be a central criteria in the following analysis of Saudi foreign policy concerning events in Bahrain and Syria, as it allows for the examination of the justifications for interfering there and an understanding of Saudi Arabia's actions. This will require answering the following questions: why Saudi Arabia intervened; what the intrinsic nature of Saudi intervention was; what the reasons and underlying

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[18] Sherri Torjman, 'What is Policy?', The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Canada, September 2005, p.3.
[19] Alexander Moseley, 'Interventionism', in Internet Articles (Peer Reviewed) the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed April 21, 2014: http://www.iep.utm.edu/interven/. See also: Sergiu Mişcoiu et al., Radicalism, Populism, Interventionism: Three Approaches Based on Discourse Theory, (Cluj-Napoca: The Publishing House of the Foundation for European Studies EFES, 2008). See also: Robert Higgs and Carl P. Close, *Opposing the Crusader State: Alternatives to Global Interventionism*, (Oakland: Independent Institute, 2007).

factors behind that decision were; what the desirable and undesirable targets that led to this intervention were; and how the decision-making circles in Saudi Arabia made the decision to intervene.

(6.2) The Bahrain Crisis

On 13th February 2011, a wave of Arab Spring protests began in Bahrain, concentrated primarily in villages surrounding the capital, Manama. A modest number of youths initially demonstrated to demand social and economic justice, before approximately 6,000 citizens demonstrated throughout the provinces of Bahrain, similarly demanding social reforms and improved economic justice. The protests quickly escalated to violent clashes with Bahraini security forces, who used rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the crowds. Consequently, one young demonstrator was killed and a number of security forces and demonstrators were wounded.[20] In contrast to the scenes of protest in the Shi'ite villages of Bahrain, Manama witnessed pro-government rallies in support of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, intended to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the National Action Charter of Bahrain.[21] By 15th February, the situation had changed considerably, with protesters occupying the 'Pearl Roundabout'[22] in Manama and erecting tents there, making it the focal point of their oppositional agitation. On 16th March, over 5,000 Bahraini security forces, supported by tanks and helicopters, infiltrated the encampment at the "Pearl Roundabout," ultimately expelling the protesters but not without numerous injuries among both the protesters and the police.[23] In response to the increasingly audible demands of oppositional groups, a remarkable development occurred when members of certain political parties, such as the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, withdrew from parliament and began demanding the immediate transition to constitutional monarchy. When the police forces withdrew from the "Pearl Roundabout," demonstrators returned, refusing to disperse until their demands for

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[20] Report of The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, presented in Manama, Bahrain on 23 November 2011, (Final Revision on December 10, 2011), pp. 262-273.
[21] Larbi Sadiki, *Routledge, Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), p.135.
[22] The Pearl Monument located at the centre of the GCC Roundabout in Manama, also known as 'Pearl Roundabout'.
[23] William I. Zartman, *Arab Spring: Negotiating in the Shadow of the Intifadat*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), p.220.

political reforms were properly met.[24] On 22nd February, tens of thousands of protesters in Manama demanded that the existing government must be dissolved before any constructive dialogues could take place. This situation coincided with demonstrators gathering at the "Pearl Roundabout" and involved numerous skirmishes with the security forces. Soon thereafter, a new political coalition, entitled the "Coalition for a Republic" and consisting of three Bahraini-Shi'ite oppositional groups, demanded the abolition of the monarchy and conversion to a republic on 7th March.[25]

During the initial stages of the crisis, circa mid-February 2011, Saudi Arabia confirmed its continued support for, and solidarity with, the Bahraini government.[26] Moreover, in cooperation with the GCC, it launched a plan to aid Bahrain financially modeled on the famous 'Marshall Plan',[27] that is, by improving the living and economic conditions of Bahraini citizens,[28] which had been damaged by the unrest and instability sweeping through the Gulf states. At their meeting in Riyadh on 10th March, the foreign ministers of GCC member states decided to provide $20 billion to support Bahrain and Oman, and to avoid further escalations, and potential repurcussions, of the demonstrations.[29] In terms of the international reaction to these events, Robert Gates, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, visited Bahrain on 11th March and met with King Hamad bin al-Khalifa. Following their meeting, he stated that "under the circumstances and with the political and economic grievances across the region, baby steps [are] not sufficient," adding that "real reform [is] necessary" and confirming that "the opposition is willing to sit down with the government and carry

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[24] "Bahrain mourners call for end to monarchy,"*The Guardian*, 18 February 2011, accessed April 6, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/18/bahrain-mourners-call-downnfall-monarchy.

[25] Lina Khatib and Ellen Lust. *Taking to the Streets: The Transformation of Arab Activism*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), p. 191.

[26] Report by the Saudi Press Agency, 17 February 2011.

[27] The Marshall Plan was a United States initiative to assist Western Europe, to which the U.S. gave over $12 billion for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Europe after the end of World War II; it is named after its architect, Secretary of State George Marshall.

[28] Habib Toumi, "GCC Marshall-style aid package for Bahrain, Oman," *Gulf News*, March 2, 2011. Accessed April 16, 2014, http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/gcc-marshall-style-aid-package-for-bahrain-oman-1.770473.

[29] "Bayān Sādir 'an al-Dawrāh al-Thamnā 'ashār ba'd al mi'ah līl Majlis al-wizāri," Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Press Releases for Sessions, 10 March 2011. Accessed Jun 12, 2015. http://www.gcc-sg.org/en- us/Statements/MinisterialCouncilData/PressReleasesforSessions/Pages/AstatementfromtheEighteenthSes87.aspx. See also: Ibid.

this process forward."[30] As civic unrest continued to escalate, with demonstrators organising sit-ins in front of Bahrain's parliamentary buildings, demanding the removal of Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, an event threatening the security of the Bahrain,[31] Saudi Arabia, with the cooperation of other Gulf countries, attempted, by way of financial support, to empower the Bahraini government to regain control of the domestic situation and reinforce national stability. Despite these efforts, however, authorities failed to achieve the desired objective and the situation in Bahrain quickly deteriorated.

(6.2.1) Saudi Intervention in Bahrain

As the situation continued to deteriorate in Bahrain, Saudi officials decided to adopt a more proactive approach to events, as evidenced by the deployment of Peninsula Shield Forces on Bahraini territory via the King Fahd Causeway on 14th March. This deployment was estimated to have included more than 1,000 Saudi troops and 500 UAE and Qatari troops, with 150 armoured personnel carriers and 50 military vehicles, not including tanks or rocket launchers.[32] The Peninsula Shield Forces were previously located in Saudi territory and led by a Saudi commander. According to the Reuters news agency, "Bahrain had asked the Gulf troops for support in line with a GCC defense pact."[33] The advisor to the royal court, Nabeel Al Hamer, confirmed that Bahrain had requested support from the GCC, confirming that "forces from the Gulf Cooperation Council have arrived in Bahrain to maintain order and security."[34] The Gulf Digital Newspaper, which is close to Bahrain's powerful prime minister, claimed that "GCC forces will arrive in Bahrain today [14th March] to take part in

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[30] Karen Parrish, "Gates Calls for Mideast Reform," *U.S. Department of Defense*, American Forces Press Service, 12 March 2011. Accessed Jun 12, 2015. http://archive.defense.gov/news/new sarticle.aspx?id=63143

[31] "Thousands protest in Bahrain," *al-Jazeera*, 6 March 2011. Accessed August 16, 2014, https://web.archive.org/web/20110412101948/http://english.aljazeera.net//news/middleeast/.

[32] Simon Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Power and Rivalry in the Middle East.* (London: I.B. Tauris and Co., 2015), p.72. See also in "Saudi Arabian troops enter Bahrain as regime asks for help to quell uprising," *The Guardian*, 14 March 2011. Accessed August 18, 2014, https://www.theguardian .com/world/2011/mar/14/saudi-arabian-troops-enter-bahrain.

[33] Lin Noueihed and Frederik Richter, "Saudi Sends Troops, Bahrain Shi'ites call it "war"," *Reuters*, 14 March 2011. Accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-protests-forces-idUSLDE72D0KH20110314.

[34] 'Bahrain Asks for Gulf Help', *al-Jazeera* 14 March 2011. Accessed October 3, 2015, http://www. aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/bahrain/2011/03/201131454020610721.html.

maintaining law and order, their mission will be limited to protecting vital facilities, such as oil, electricity and water installations, and financial and banking facilities."[35]

In contrast to the above statement explaining the function of GCC forces in Bahrain, oppositional parties, including the Wefaq, issued a joint statement, which claimed that:

> We consider the entry of any soldier or military machinery into the Kingdom of Bahrain's air, sea or land territories a blatant occupation, "This real threat about the entry of Saudi and other Gulf forces into Bahrain to confront the defenseless Bahraini people puts the Bahraini people in real danger and threatens them with an undeclared war by armed troops".[36]

In terms of international and regional reactions, White House spokesman Jay Carney told a news briefing that "the United States does not consider the entry into Bahrain of Saudi Arabian security forces an invasion, we urge the government of Bahrain, as we have repeatedly, as well as other GCC countries, to exercise restraint."[37] In an interview with the BBC in Cairo, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton criticised the government's use of force against demonstrators, stating that U.S. officials "deplore the use of force against demonstrators, and we deplore the use of force by demonstrators. We want a peaceful resolution."[38] Iran, on the other hand, believed that Saudi intervention would impact on its own regional interests and threaten the Shi'ites in Bahrain, hence the warning that the deployment of troops in support of the Bahraini government for the forcible suppression of protests would "pitch the region toward a crisis with dangerous consequences."[39] In a similar vein, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ramin Mehmanparast, stated that "the presence of foreign forces and interference in Bahrain's internal affairs is unacceptable and will further

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[35] "GCC backing for Bahrain," *Gulf Digital News*, 14 March 2011. Accessed September 13, 2015, http://archives.gdnonline.com/NewsDetails.aspx?date=04/07/2015&storyid=301763.

[36] Lin Noueihed and Frederik Richter, Op.Cit., March 14, 2011.

[37] Caren Bohan, "U.S. says Saudi forces in Bahrain "not an invasion," *Reuters*, 14 March 2011. Accessed December 6, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-usa-invasion- idUSTRE72D6R B20110314.

[38] "Hillary Clinton condemns Bahrain violence," *BBC News*, 16 March 2011. Accessed February 27, 2015, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-12768108.

[39] Mitra Amiri, "Iran Objects to Foreign Troops in Bahrain," *Reuter*, 15 March 2011. Accessed February 27, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-usa-idUSN1417591520110315.

complicate the issue."[40] The official IRNA news agency also reported that Iran's Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Salehi, warned how the GCC's intervention in Bahrain would only complicate the situation.[41] This led to an escalating war of words between Saudi Arabia and Iran. On 31st March 2011, statements issued by the Iranian National Security Council and Foreign Policy Commission warned Saudi Arabia that failure to withdraw its troops from Bahrain would "result in the accelerated collapse of the al-Saud dynasty in Saudi Arabia."[42] In response, on 1st April, an official from the Saudi government stated that:

> Saudi Arabia condemns in strong terms the irresponsible statement issued in the name of the Committee for National Security and Foreign Policy of the Council of Iranian Islamic Shoura which described the Saudi policy in the Gulf region as playing with fire and demanded the Kingdom to withdraw its forces from Bahrain that the promoters of these lies forget, or pretend to forget, that Iran has no right to violate the sovereignty of the kingdom of Bahrain or poke its nose into Bahrain's or any other country's affairs, or to attempt to deny Bahrain's legitimate right to seek the help of the forces of the Peninsula Shield Force. The right of seeking help of the force is guaranteed to Bahrain as part of the agreements of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.[43]

On 3rd April, the GCC states charged Iran with "plotting to subvert their security and fuel sedition," expressing their concern over "the blatant Iranian interference" in GCC affairs.[44] In a statement to the Saudi *al-Sharq al-Awsat* newspaper, Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal criticised Iranian interference, claiming that "Tehran

[40] David S. Cloud and Neela Banerjee, 'Forces in Bahrain move against crowd in square', *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 2011. Accessed 4 April 2015, http://articles.latimes.com/2011/mar/16/world/la-fg-bahrain-flashpoint-20110316.

[41] Mitra Amiri, Op.Cit., March 15, 2011.

[42] 'Iran and Saudi Arabia Spar over GCC Troops in Bahrain', Middle East in Focus, Middle East Policy Council, April 5, 2011, accessed September, 9, 2015, http://www.mepc.org/articles-commentary/commentary-0.

[43] Saudi Press Agency, Riyadh, April 1, 2011.

[44] 'Saudi Foreign Minister Slams Iranian Statements', Bahrain Press Agency, April 1, 2011, accessed September, 3, 2015, http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/452307?date=2011-04-11.

continues to give itself the right to interfere in the affairs of the region and its states, and violate their sovereignty and independence."[45]

The preceding information provides the main sequence of internal events in Bahrain, which resulted in the Saudi and Gulf States' decision to intervene. According to the official perspectives of these states, such interference aimed to restore stability and protect Bahrain's institutions. Moreover, their intervention was based on a request to do so from the Bahraini government, which led to the political clashes with Iran in the regional context. Nevertheless, Saudi interference in Bahrain surprised the majority of specialists familiar with Saudi foreign behaviour. The various media debates imply that intervention was led by Peninsula Shield forces, but the reality is that those forces were under Saudi leadership. Moreover, the majority of the soldiers and military equipment belonged to the Saudi army, as reported by the world media. During the fieldwork conducted for this research project, I interviewed the Saudi Major General Mutlaq Alazema al-Mutairi, the commander of the Peninsula Shield forces who conducted the operation in Bahrain. During this interview, he explained that on 10th March 2011, the GCC Secretariat instructed the forces to be ready to receive an operational order without providing any further details, before being ordered, on 13th March, to move from Hafr al-Batin in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia to Dammam within the same region. Upon arrival, forces were then ordered to enter into Bahrain itself. He also described the forces as comprising of hundreds of officers and soldiers, as well as military equipment from all the GCC countries, adding that the forward command was mostly comprised of Saudi officers. General al-Mutairi also revealed that the aim of the operation was to protect vital institutions, strategic centres and military bases, explaining that the leadership in Bahrain had semi-confirmed information that there was external plotting by a particular state to indirectly intervene to increase instability.[46] The General assumed that Bahraini forces were completely focused on protecting the internal security and their need to protect the country's borders. al-Mutairi explained that Peninsula Shield forces were stationed along these borders with the specific purpose of protecting them since, he assumed, the objective was not to intervene in Bahrain's internal issues but to be available to intervene as a precautionary measure. Following this limited intervention, the Bahraini King Hamad al-Khalifa declared on 20th March that "an

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Author's Interview, Major General Mutlaq Alazema al-Mutairi, Riyadh, January 19, 2016.

external plot has been fomenting for 20 to 30 years until the ground was ripe for subversive designs" and declaring "the failure of the fomented plot." [47] In the aftermath of the King's announcement, Bahraini authorities designated him an Iranian diplomat non grata due to his suspicious activities and communications with a terrorist organisation, ordering him to leave within 72 hours.[48] Similar accusations against other individuals identified as being on the extreme end of the opposition [and] who have been in touch with Iran" were expressed by senior officials as early as 17th March.[49]

From the Saudi perspective, its intervention in Bahrain depended on the joint defense agreement of the GCC, which was based on the principle of integrated collective security and was signed in Bahrain in December 2000, ushering in a new phase of conversion from military cooperation to joint defense.[50] Afterwards, at the thirtieth meeting of GCC states, held in Kuwait in December 2009, members established an important agreement that allowed for a formal strategy to reinforce the integration of military resources to defend their individual, and collective, stability, regional interests and sovereignty.[51] As noted in the previous chapters, since the 1970s, Iran maintained its claims to Bahraini territory, with politicians still referring to Bahrain as Iran's fourteenth province. [52] Following the use of its military instrument, Saudi Arabia, quite remarkably, began to use its diplomatic instrument to blame Iran for Bahrain's internal unrest. At the GCC summit held in Riyadh in April 2011, the council called on the UN Security Council and the international community to "take the necessary measures to stop flagrant Iranian interference and provocations aimed at sowing discord and destruction," stating that it "categorically rejects all foreign interference in its affairs... and invites the Iranian regime to stop its

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[47] "Bahrain king says forces have foiled foreign plot," *Reuters*, 21 March 2011. Accessed, September, 16, 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/bahrain-protests-king-idUSLDE72K01O20110321.

[48] "Spying for Iran in Bahrain," *al-Arabiya News*, 26 April 2011. Accessed September 23, 2015, https://english.alarabiya,.net/articles/2011/04/26/146768.html.

[49] Helene Cooper and Mark Landler, "Interests of Saudi Arabia and Iran Collide, with the U.S. in the Middle," *New York Times*, 17 March 2011. Accessed March, 12, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/18/world/18diplomacy.html.

[50] Sulaiman M. al-Maamri, "GCC Security and Its Future, International Relations and Security Studies Program," *Security Seminars*, 1 December 2015. p.4. See also in Gulf Cooperation Council, Permanent Committee for Organizing Conferences, Past Summit. Accessed March, 17, 2015, http://gcc-summit.org/en/past-summit.html.

[51] "The GCC: Process and Achievement," Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) *Secretariat-General, Division of Information Affairs*, 8th Ed,(2014). p.34.

[52] M. Khalaji, "Iran's Policy Confusion About Bahrain," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 27 June 2011. Accessed November, 12, 2015, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/irans-policy-confusion-about-bahrain.

provocations."[53] For both Tehran and Riyadh, Bahrain is of substantial geopolitical importance, given its proximity to Saudi Arabia and its role within the GCC, hence why it so quickly became a site of proxy confrontation between the rival countries. In addition to this geopolitical significance, however, the proxy conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran conducted via Bahrain is also motivated by important ideological factors.[54]

(6.2.2) Explaining Saudi Arabia's Actions in Bahrain

Saudi Arabia identified the unrest in Bahrain as a potential opportunity for Tehran to provoke further insurgency against the ruling family in Bahrain, which presented two distinct problems. Firstly, there was the security issue and the question of unity in the country. Due to the fact that Shi'ites made up 49% of the population, while Sunnis comprised the other 51%, [55] figures provided by the Central Informatics Organization of Bahrain, other, independent studies suggest that Bahraini Sunnis comprised 42.4% of the population, while the Shi'ites comprised the remaining 57.6%.[56] Such figures support the argument that the unrest in Bahrain might empower and embolden the Shi'ites to assume control of the power structures in the country, just as happened in Iraq following the fall of Saddam Hussein's reign. As discussed in the previous chapter, the new Iraqi government was an ally of Iran, which led to a significant security problem for Saudi Arabia along its northern border. This geopolitical reality was one of the primary catalysts for the change in Saudi foreign policy after 2005. In the case of Bahrain, Saudi officials assume that if the Shi'ites assumed power in Bahrain, who would undoubtedly be pro-Iran, it would inevitably result in an additional security issue for Saudi Arabia, this time along its eastern border, as the Shi'ite community in the east of the country might be influenced to pursue similar

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[53] 'GCC urges UN to halt "interference" by Iran,' *Khaleej Times*, Dubai, 18 April 2011.

[54] Simon Mabon, "The Battle for Bahrain: Iranian-Saudi Rivalry," *Middle East Policy Journal*, Vol. 19, Issu. 2, (Summer 2012). pp. 84, 92, 94 .

[55] A private, unpublished study done by a research team in the Central Informatics Organization on the population structure of the Kingdom of Bahrain; the estimated percentage of Sunni Bahrainis stood at 51% and that of the Shi'a at 49%.'al-Tārkība al-Sūkkanīyya fi Māmlākat al-Bāhraīn: Dīrāsah Baḥthīyyah Ḥawl al-Takwīn al-Tāaifī'. See in *al-Ayam Newspaper*, Bahrain, no. 8121, 5 July 2011.

[56] Justin Gengler , "Facts on the Ground: A Reliable Estimate of Bahrain's Sunni-Shi'i Balance, and Evidence of Demographic Engineering,' *Religion and Politics in Bahrain*. Powered by Blogger, (April 2011). Accessed June, 13, 2015, http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/facts-on-ground-reliable-estimate-of.html.

political demands as their Bahraini neighbours. Moreover, if Bahrain positioned itself as an ally to Iran, Saudi Arabia would lose one of its most important allies in the region. According to a *New York Times* article published on 11th April, "King Abdullah told President Obama that Saudi Arabia would never allow Shiites to rule Bahrain."[57]

Secondly, and of equal consequence, was the ideological issue posed by the unrest in Bahrain. If the oppositional movements succeeded in changing the Bahrain government, it could possibly have a domino effect in the region. In addition, their demands for a constitutional monarchy posed a significant threat to the political ideologies of the existing, conservative monarchies in all other Gulf States. Ultimately, the principles of the opposition in Bahrain were anathema to the principles associated with other Gulf State governments. Unlike with the earlier example of the Iranian Revolution, which necessitated Saudi Arabia supporting Saddam Hussein in Iraq in order to prevent contagion of this ideology in the region, Saudi officials wanted to prevent a similar outcome with Bahrain before it ever had the chance of materialising. It is worth noting the difference between the cases of Iraq, that is, the first Gulf War (1980–1988) and the Iraq War (2003), and of Bahrain. Unlike with Iraq, Saudi Arabia almost immediately assumed the initiative regarding events in Bahrain rather than deliberating extensively about possible courses of action, in accordance with its foreign policy strategy of being proactive and abandoning its previous stance of being willing "to do nothing and risk looking weak while Iranian power grew."[58] This action is opposite in nature to what we know about Saudi Arabia's usual approach to foreign policy.

It should also be noted that the regional environment, as an external factor, represents a stimulus to determine the nature of Saudi foreign policy. Robert Jervis, in his study *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, argues that 'the international environment determines a state's behaviour, meaning that all states react similarly to the same objective external situation.'[59] Although Saudi Arabia lacked

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[57] Simon Henderson, "Iran's Shadow Over Reform in Bahrain," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 11 April 2011. Accessed June 20, 2015 http://washin.st/2igSVf7. See also in Helene Cooper and Mark Landler, "Interests of Saudi Arabia and Iran Collide, With the U.S. in the Middle," *New York Times*, 17 March 2011. Accessed June 22, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/18/world/ 18diplomacy.html.

[58] Simon Mabon, Op.Cit., 2013, pp.64-65.

[59] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1976), p.18.

the necessary information to completely verify Iran's intentions, certain assumptions could be made based on the "collective memory"[60] of Saudi officials and citizens, alongside the common perception of Iran's history of interference in the domestic affairs of other Gulf States, which began with the Shah's claim to Bahrain and continued with the promotion and dissemination of an Islamic Republican Ideology. Furthermore, ties between Shia clerics in Bahrain and in Tehran were well-established by 2011. For example, Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassem, the spiritual leader of Wafaq, the main opposition party in Bahrain, was a religious representative of the Supreme Leader Khamenei, who collected taxes from the Shiites in Bahrain for him, propagating his religious authority and encouraging people to follow him.[61] The ideological conflict even predates Islam as it originated with the historical conflict between Arabs and Persians. In the context of Islam, this conflict has only grown, since both nations compete for leadership of the "ummah," which secures legitimate authority amongst the Islamic nations.[62]

The above situations were sufficient to affect the nature of Saudi behaviour in foreign policy terms.[63] Robert Jervis' emphasis on the significance of understanding states' intentions can be applied to Iran here, whose intentions remained unclear but which greatly influenced, even determined, Saudi behaviour. Saudi Arabia was acting within its new pattern based on the information it had available; thus, Saudi foreign policy became proactive by assuming the initiative and preparing for the worst-case scenario regarding Iran's intentions. The decision to intervene in Bahrain was arrived at by Saudi officials, who sought to ensure that Iran's intentions were not realised and which allowed them to assume the initiative in the region rather than just responding to Iran's threatening behaviour and provocative actions toward Saudi Arabian sovereignty and strategic interests in the region.

The peripheries of the decision-making process regarding Saudi intervention in Bahrain, what is not always seen in public, need to be considered. During the interviews conducted for the fieldwork component of this research project, I

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[60] Kevin Downs, "A Theoretical Analysis of the Saudi-Iranian Rivalry in Bahrain," *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, Vol. 8, (Winter, 2012/13), p. 230.

[61] Mehdi Khalaji, "Iran's Policy Confusion about Bahrain," *Washington Institute for Peace*, 27 June 2011. Accessed October 9, 2015, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=3376.

[62] Simon Mabon, "FPC Briefing: The Middle Eastern 'Great Game,'" Report, *The Foreign Policy Centre*, June 2013. http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/1555.pdf. See more in Simon Mabon, Op.Cit., 2013, Op.Cit., pp. 42-44.

[63] See in Kevin Downs, Op.Cit., pp.224-232.

personally questioned the Deputy Foreign Minister, Prince Turki bin Mohammed al-Saud, who proposed that, when King Abdullah assumed power, the Foreign Ministry became a priority for the leadership and there was a consequent alteration in the extent of their attention to foreign affairs. As such, financial and political support was given in order for Saudi Arabia to play a bigger role, both in the region and internationally, through the formulation of a long-term strategic foreign policy. The Saudi leadership gave a mandate to the Foreign Ministry, granting it the authority to formulate, implement and act on the general framework of the new policy in full confidence, in terms of national objectives, orientation and foreign obligations, and within the limits of its national interests and objectives, in accordance of both domestic and regional security issues, and in pursuit of economic prosperity. In terms of the external decision-making process, a set of available alternatives would be presented to the King, who would then deliberate with consultants in the Royal Court and with the Foreign Minister in order to determine the best action to take in any given regional issue with regard to achieving particular objectives. International agreements would be passed to the Council of Ministers with a view to issuing a royal decree. The latter process involves the participation of relevant official institutions, such as the Intelligence and the National Security Councils. Despite this established procedure for making foreign policy decisions, certain situations required a different approach and the growing unrest in Bahrain was one such situation.[64] I additionally interviewed Khalid al-Tuwaijri, Chief of the Royal Court and a special aide and secretary of King Abdullah, which made him the highest ranking non-royal in the Kingdom. He claimed that due to the increased pace of civil disobedience and oppositional protest in Bahrain, King Abdullah formally received a Bahraini envoy sent by the King, who informed the Saudi leader that Bahrain was the subject of a foreign plot aimed at exploiting the current instability to create an insurgency against the authorities.[65] Bahrain requested support from Saudi Arabia in its resistance against this conspiracy, with King Abdullah immediately responding by forming an emergency committee to consider the available options and decide on the most appropriate form of action for addressing the situation in Bahrain. This committee consisted of princes who had first hand experience in formulating foreign policy, such

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[64] Author's Interview, Prince Turki bin Mohammed al-Saud, Riyadh, 9 February 2016.
[65] Author's Interview, the Minister of State Khalid al-Tuwaijri, Egypt, Sharm El-Shaikh, 12 January, 2017.

as the Princes Saud al-Faisal, Bandar Bin Sultan and Mohammed Bin Nayef, and consultants not belonging to the royal family such as the Saudi Minister of State Musaid al-Aiban, in addition to senior officials from the Foreign Ministry, the Intelligence, the Interior Ministry and the National Security Council. Arriving at an appropriate course of action from the available choices involved activating the function of political organisations to update information and provide reports concerning the current political complexities in Bahrain.[66]

As al-Tuwaijri explained, following the assessment of the available alternatives, the decision to intervene to help the Bahraini government was made; later, the decision was presented to the leaders of the Gulf States to gain their approval. al-Tuwaijiri also confirmed that this particular decision was made in secret and with limited coordination, with only a select number of officials present who eventually decided to send troops under the umbrella of the Peninsula Shield forces in full awareness of the potential international reaction and acceptance of the potential consequences involved with this particular course of action. The change in Saudi foreign policy at this stage is apparent through a comparison with its behaviour in previous, similar events in the region, such as the conflict between the Yemeni government and the Houthis in 2004, 2005 and 2007. Unlike with Bahrain, where Saudi Arabia conducted its activities under the umbrella of the Peninsula Shield Forces, authorities failed to provide effective support or to intervene militarily to either suppress or eliminate the Houthi movement, even under the guise of the League of Arab States, and thus prevent any further ideological spread in the region. While Saudi Arabia considered the situation in Yemen a direct threat to its national security, it did not take action against the Houthis until 2009 and more recently in 2015. Up to this point, as al-Tuwaijiri explained, President Ali Abdullah Saleh was entrusted to eliminate the Houthis but this decision to not intervene ultimately proved to be a strategic mistake, adding that the issue of perception with respect to Saudi Arabia's regional role differs from one leader to another. Foreign policy decisions are not just the result of influence from external factors; decisions are undertaken by individual officials and are affected by their own self-motivations, characteristics, personality and, perhaps most importantly, their perception of the importance of the country's regional role with regard to foreign policy and maintaining national strategic interests.

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[66] Ibid.

Thus, Saudi foreign policy is the result of a change in awareness engendered by the various factors that determine the pattern of its behaviour. As Saudi leadership changed at the end of 2005, the features of the changes began to appear in the nature of that policy, such as beginning to realise the importance of playing a more effective role in the region.

As Khalid al-Tuwaijiri observed, while King Abdullah preferred careful deliberations and detailed consultations, he also trusted the opinions of the new generation of Saudi princes, who understod the necessary changes in foreign policy that had to be made given the new circumstances the country was facing both regionally and internationally. al-Tuwaijiri further argues that King Abdullah's flexibile personality meant he never made decisions without first consulting this new generation of princes and determining how these decisions would affect Saudi Arabia achieving its strategic goals and interests.[67] As a result, Saudi foreign policy during the reign of King Abdullah was not solely determined by the monarch but rather was the product of an extended network of princes, ministers from the Foreign Ministry and government officials from other involved institutions, such as the Ministry of Defence and the Intelligence Ministry.

(6.3) The Syria Crisis

Before continuing any further with the study of the Syria Crisis, it is necessary to provide a brief summary of the historical background to the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Syria. At their most basic, Saudi-Syrian relations could be described as having been, historically, extremely complicated. Syria was allied with the Khomeini regime against Iraq during the first Gulf War of 1980,[68] in which Iraq was supported by Saudi Arabia. Following Syria's alliance with Iran, Saudi-Syrian relations have radically fluctuated for more than three decades, with innumerable instances of both convergence and divergence, for example, Saudi Arabia hosting

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[67] Author's Interview, the Minister of State Khalid al-Tuwaijiri, Egypt, Sharm El-Shaikh, 12 January, 2017.

[68] Jubin M. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East*, (London: I.B. Tauris and Co., 2009), pp. 5-10.

Islamist dissident who fled from the Syrian regime,[69] and the massacre committed by the Syrian regime in Hama in 1982,[70] respectively. Despite the historical animosity between these two countries, the Taif Agreement (1989), which resolved the Lebanese Civil War, was an important event in the gradual rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Syria. The agreement permitted the presence of Syrian military in Lebanon, which ultimately was a strategic mistake for Saudi Arabia. Later, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 presented President Hafez al-Assad with an exceptional opportunity "to kill two birds with one stone". On the one hand, he got revenge against his historical rival, represented by the Baath Party of Iraq under President Saddam Hussein, while on the other hand, he strengthened his relations with the Gulf States. However, Syria was accused of direct involvement in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri on 14th February 2005.[71] Following the Israeli war against Lebanon in July 2006, Saudi Arabia accused Hezbollah of igniting the war, with Bashar al-Assad responding by describing those Arab Leaders who criticised Hezbollah as "half men." All of these events resulted in greater divergence in Saudi-Syrian relations.[72] However, the estrangement between the countries ended when King Abdullah visited Damascus in October 2009,[73] which suggested an understanding of the political situation in Lebanon and proposed increased economic cooperation through Saudi investments in Syria and the former's support of the Syrian government. Following the King's visit, the governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), Mohammed al-Jasser, announced in March 2010 that it would provide loans to Syria worth $140 million.[74]

The first instance of political unrest in Syria influenced by the Arab Spring occurred when fifteen children in Daraa, located in southern Syria, sprayed anti-regime graffiti on the walls of their school. On 27th February 2011, the Syrian secret

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[69] Sherifa Zuhur, *Saudi Arabia*. (California: Library of Congress, ABC-CLIO-LCC, 2011), p. 124.
[70] Frank Peter and Rafael Ortega, *Islamic Movements of Europe: Public Religion and Islamophobia in the Modern World*, (London: I.B. Tauris and Co., 2014), p. 96.
[71] Sarah Williams, *Hybrid and Internationalised Criminal Tribunals: Selected Jurisdictional Issues*, (Oxford, Portland: Hart Publishing, 2012), p.73.
[72] Sai Felicia Krishna-Hensel, *Religion, Education and Governance in the Middle East: Between Tradition and Modernity*, (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 83.
[73] Khaled Y. Oweis, "Saudi king in Damascus to mend fences with Assad," *Reuters*, 7 October 2009. Accessed October 21, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ba-syria-saudi-idUSTRE59630 I20091 007. See also in Sherifa Zuhur, Op.Cit., 2011, pp. 124-125.
[74] Khaled Y. Oweis, "Saudi Arabia plans aid to Syria as ties improve" *Reuters*, 15 March 2010. Accessed October, 27, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/syria-saudi-idUKLDE62E0OX20100315. See also in Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, *Forty-Sixth Annual Report*: The Latest Economic Developments, 47th Research and Statistics Department, Riyadh, 2011.

police arrested these children, which led to anger throughout the country.[75] Earlier, on 4th February, several activists on Facebook began to call for demonstrations in all provinces under the slogan "A Day of Rage." A demonstration took placed at the al-Hamidiyah market in Damascus but its effect was limited.[76] Subsequent to the arrest of the children in Daraa, on 18th March, a demonstration was arranged involving thousands of citizens protesting against the arrest of the children and demanding their immediate release. The arrest of the children provided an explicit example of the regime's repression and corruption. In response, the regime's security forces confronted the protesters using live ammunition, killing four people and wounding several others.[77]

On 8th April, demonstrations took a new direction when protestors attacked the Baath Party headquarters in Daraa and smashed a statue of Hafez al-Assad. According to the U.N.'s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, at least 37 people were killed after clashes with security forces during demonstrations involving thousands of protesters.[78] Following this development, the protests began to expand to include most of the Syrian provinces. In Damascus and Homs, security forces used live ammunition, which led to the death toll around Syria rising, while dozens were wounded in the Hama, Kafer Souseh, and Harasta areas during demonstrations against the regime. In the east of Syria, protests took place in Abu Kamal and Deir al-Zour against the Daraa arrests and to demand the removal of the regime. In the north, demonstrations also took place in the Kurdish provinces.[79] In the middle of April 2011, the Syrian regime began to deploy tanks in the cities, which increased the violence and death toll among citizens within all provinces.[80] Following this, France, Britain and the U.S. condemned Bashar Al Assad, demanding that his regime end the

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[75] John Davis, *The Arab Spring and Arab Thaw: Unfinished Revolutions and the Quest for Democracy*, (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 94.

[76] Charles R. Lister, *The Syrian Jihad: al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Evolution of an Insurgency*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). p. 12.

[77] Patrick W. Quirk, *Great Powers, Weak States, and Insurgency Explaining Internal Threat Alliances*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 180-187.

[78] Salma Abdelaziz et al., "Dozens of Syrians reported killed in Daraa," *CNN*, 26 April 2011. Accessed November 15, 2015, http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/meast/03/25/syria.unrest/.

[79] Reinoud Leenders and Steven Heydemann, "Popular Mobilization in Syria: Opportunity and Threat, and the Social Networks of the Early Risers," *Mediterranean Politics Journal*, Vol. 17, no. 2, (July 2012), pp.149-151. See also in Katherine Marsh, "Syria's biggest day of unrest yet sees at least 20 people killed," *The Guardian*, 9 April 2011. Accessed March 15, 2015, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/ 2011/apr/08/syria-unrest-killed-damascus-assad.

[80] Bente Scheller, *The Wisdom of Syria's Waiting Game: Foreign Policy Under the Assads*, (London: C. Hurst, 2013), pp. 33-39.

suppression of protests[81] However, a draft resolution by the U.N Security Council aimed at condemning the Syrian regime and finding a solution for the ongoing issues was vetoed by Russia and China.[82]

With the deterioration of the situation, the regime became increasingly deadly in its crackdown, deploying army troops and heavy weapons in order to restore stability. There was also an increase in defections amongst Syrian army officers, who exposed the inhumane and immoral practices of the Syrian army.[83] The repercussions of violence included the formation of armed opposition factions, such as the Free Syrian Army (FSA), which was established on 29th July 2011 by former senior officers in the Syrian army with the purpose of toppling the regime. This ensured the tactical capacity of opposition groups.[84] It is worth noting that, despite the regime's sectarian security strategy, it does not necessarily follow that sectarian beliefs played any significant role in the regime's objectives but were instead merely used to exploit Alawite, Christian, and Kurdish minorities and Sunni loyalists to ensure the regime's survival. This is because the regime's opposition was composed mainly of Sunnis Islamists motivated by the desire to topple the regime and end its aggression towards the protestors.[85] As a result, a pronounced growth of armed opposition groups and insurgent groups emerging from the popular protests occurred. The peaceful civil uprising turned into a civil conflict between the regime and the opposing factions and movements, such as the most prominent movements *Ḥarakat Aḥrār al-Shām al-Islāmiyah* (Islamic Movement of the Free Men of the Levant), and *Jaysh al-Islām* (Army of Islam) led by the Islamist leader Zahran Alloush.[86] These groups are the main rebel groups supported by Saudi Arabia.[87]

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[81] Katherine Marsh and Peter Walker, "Syrian regime sends tanks to Deraa in further toughening of crackdown," *The Guardian*, 27 April 2011. Accessed December 9, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com /world/2011/apr/27/syria-deraa-tanks-crackdown-protests.

[82] Rowena Maguire, Bridget Lewis and Charles Sampford, *Shifting Global Powers and International Law: Challenges and Opportunities*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 91-93.

[83] The defection of Colonel Riad al-Asaad from the Syrian Arab Army, a clip uploaded to YouTube, 5 July 2011. Accessed December 11, 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtGL1gXE5t0 .

[84] Karim Makdisi and Vijay Prashad, *Land of Blue Helmets: The United Nations and the Arab World*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), p. 121. See also in Saskia Baas, "Syria's Armed Opposition: A Spotlight on the "Moderates"," *Security Assessment in North Africa,* SANA Dispatches, (January 2016), p.3. See also in Joseph Holliday, "Syria's Armed Opposition," *The Institute for the Study of War, Middle East Security,* Report 3, (January 2012).

[85] Emile Hokayem, *Syria's Uprising and the Fracturing of the Levant*. (Abingdon: Routledge, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2013), pp.47-53.

[86] He was assassinated by a Syrian Air Force airstrike on 25 December 2015. See Suleiman al-Khalidi, "Top Syrian rebel leader killed in air strike in Damascus suburb", *Reuters*, 25 December 2015.

Throughout all provinces of the country, the number of Sunni rebels grew rapidly. However, because of the decentralised nature of the uprising, each of these factions operated independently, with different command structures, and collective organisation was barely achievable. Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that Sunni rebels became fragmented.[88] Moreover, their ambition was later overshadowed by economic self-interest, which gave rise to an ideologically divided opposition. In addition, with the rapid proliferation of extremist groups such as *Jabhat al-Nusra* (JAN), also known as al-Qaeda in Syria, and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), disputes began to occur between moderate and extremist groups, which prevented the efforts of the opposition being singularly directed toward the objective of toppling Assad's regime.[89]

Since the Syrian unrest began, Saudi Arabia's position was ambiguous. In April 2011, during Saudi Finance Minister Ibrahim al-Assaf's visit to Damascus, a contract amounting to $100 million was signed with the Syrian regime to secure the funds for the construction of a power plant in Deir al-Zour.[90] During the fieldwork, I interviewed Prince Mohammad bin Saud al-Saud, who is in charge of the Syrian file in the Foreign Ministry. He explained how King Abdullah conducted a phone call with President Bashar al-Assad, urging him to achieve some political reforms and to respond to the protesters' demands through improving the living standard of Syrian citizens. He added that King Abdullah guaranteed to completely cover the costs involved, promising to issue the finances as grants rather than loans.[91] The Saudi position at the beginning of the period of unrest in Syria was to avoid making any radical changes that would distract officials from events continuing in Bahrain. A report recounted King Abdullah's statement to Syrian citizens on 7th August 2011:

Accessed June 23, 2017. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebel-death-idUSKBN0U80S420151225

[87] John Hudson, Colum Lynch, "The Road to a Syria Peace Deal Runs Through Russia," *Foreign Policy*, (12 February 2016). Accessed June 22, 2017. https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/12/the-road-to-a-syria-peace-deal-runs-through-russia/,

[88] Elizabeth O'Bagy, "The free Syrian army," *The Institute for the Study of War (ISW)*, Middle East Security Report. 9, (March 2013), p. 9. See also in Joseph Holliday, "Syria's Maturing Insurgency," *The Institute for the Study of War (ISW)*, Middle East Security Report 5, (June 2012), pp. 7-18.

[89] Ruth Sherlock, "Syria: moderate rebels accuse al-Qaeda groups of murdering commander," *The Telegraph*, 2 Jul 2013. Accessed April, 19, 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/ worldnews/mid dleeast/syria/10176996.

[90] "al-Māmlākaah tūqruḍ Sūriyā 375 māilyūn Rīyāl li'inshā' Maḥaṭat tawlīd 'khārbhā*,", al-Rīyād*, 6 April 2011. Accessed April, 19, 2016 http://www.alriyadh.com/621058.

[91] Author's Interview, Prince Mohammad bin Saud al-Saud, Riyadh, February 21, 2016.

What is happening in Syria is not acceptable for Saudi Arabia,' the king said. 'There are only two options for Syria's future: either it chooses wisdom on its own, or it will plunge into chaos and loss. Any sane Arab, Muslim or otherwise, knows that this has nothing to do with religion, or ethics or morals; spilling the blood of the innocent for any reason or pretext leads to nowhere. [92]

Even a cursory analysis of the King's statement reveals that it is not assertive, nor does it explicitly blame the Syrian regime for the current state of civil unrest. Instead, the statement demands an immediate cessation to hostilities by all parties in Syria, while managing to avoid identifying the perpetrator of the increasingly violent activities. Furthermore, it categorically rejects the violence by claiming continued reliance on the wisdom of the Syrian leadership to enact comprehensive reforms to avoid chaos in Syria. However, Saudi Arabia revealed its dissatisfaction with the Syrian regime's actions by requesting the recall of its ambassador to consult on current events there.[93]

The fact that Saudi intervention in Bahrain in late March resulted in critical reactions by the international community explains the lack of stringency in Saudi Arabia's attitude toward the Syrian regime's actions; almost six months passed before Saudi opinion regarding Syria's behaviour was formally expressed. Moreover, Saudi Arabia's efforts were at the time focused on restoring stability in Bahrain. Furthermore, due to the consequences of the Arab Spring, substantial changes occurred in the Arab region after the overthrow of political governments allied to Saudi Arabia, such as the Mubarak regime. Correspondingly, this caused increased pressure on other countries in the region, as internal disturbances contributed to advancements in social reforms in Arab countries, albeit in a highly circumscribed manner and which only lasted temporarily. These conditions reconfigured the political landscape of the Arab region as a whole and would, therefore, have significant implications on the political future of the Gulf States. This in turn had repercussions on the regional situation, particularly with regard to the balance of power and

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[92] The Official Saudi Press Agency, August 7, 2011. See also in Abeer Allam and James Blitz, "Saudi Arabia recalls ambassador from Syria," *The Financial Times*, 8 August 2011. Accessed January 27, 2015, https://www.ft.com/content/21d1c9ee-c1a1-11e0-acb3-00144feabdc0.

[93] F. Gregory Gause III, "Saudi Arabia in the New Middle East," Council Special Report No. 63, *The Council on Foreign Relations*, (December 2011), p.15.

alliances, which led Saudi Arabia to rethink, in political terms, the nature of those new conditions and its current evaluations, which are primarily informed by its desire to secure its strategic interests and maintain its regional influence.

The above objectives are based on the importance of "circles" in foreign policy decisions. In the case of Saudi Arabia, these circles are, firstly, the Gulf Circle, followed by the Arab Circle, then the Islamic Circle, and finally, the International Circle. Saudi Arabia closely follows events in the region but alters its foreign policy reluctantly and cautiously, choosing instead to prioritise internal affairs. For example, on 11th March 2011, it overcame public calls for the "Hunayn Revolution", an unsuccessful attempt to arrange a demonstration demanding political reform. Such events are small in number and, due to its stable economy, Saudi Arabia is able to use its financial reserves to absorb any internal disturbances which might occur. As a case in point, King Abdullah announced royal grants amounting to $130 billion on 18th February 2011, which included an advance of two months' salary for all Saudi citizens, an increase in wages, the establishment of a minimum wage, a programme to construct 500,000 accommodation units for Saudi citizens, and to increase the limit of housing loans.[94] Saudi Arabia largely avoided the contagion of the Arab Spring due to, what Simon Mabon identifies as; the "process of state-formation", that is, the establishment of the Saudi state through a series of social contracts between different tribal groups. This process of state-formation necessitated unifying a number of disparate tribes under a singular nationalist identity, an objective achieved by al-Saud who utilised the influence of Wahhabi clerics to unify the tribes and legitimise the newly formed state. A further means of removing tribal differences was the encouragement of inter-tribal marriages.[95] The social contract established in Saudi Arabia is fundamentally based on the principle of the Rentier state, which involves an implicit agreement between the government and its citizens that political representation will be denied in return for the removal of taxation. In addition, the ruling elite are responsible for providing national welfare programmes in Saudi Arabia, in particular offering free education and healthcare. This social contract is contingent upon the sale of natural resources to other countries. The framework adhered to by the ruling Saud family to secure its governance displays strong parallels

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[94] Abdulkhaleq Abdullah, "Repercussions of the Arab Spring on GCC States," *Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies*, Qatar, May 2012. pp. 11-12.
[95] Simon Mabon, "Kingdom in Crisis? The Arab Spring and Instability in Saudi Arabia," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol.33, no.3, December 2012, p.549.

with that set out in James Quinlivan's study *Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East*, which identifies three distinct components. Firstly, there is the fusing of identities to increase the legitimacy of the ruling government. Secondly, there are the mechanisms employed by the Rentier State to placate opposition groups through the mobilising of networks of patronage and the financial leveraging of protesters. Thirdly, there is the use of force. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the use of direct force via the deployment of the National Guard is avoided in favour of strengthening its authority through counter-terrorism activities, which can also be used against protesters.[96]

(6.3.1) Saudi Arabia's Acions in Syria

The delay in Saudi Arabia adopting a specific policy in relation to Syria does not mean officials took no action at all. Saudi Arabia assumed the initiative by adopting proactive behaviour at the beginning of the Syrian crisis, using its diplomatic instrument to make a serious attempt to convince the Syrian president to undertake political and economic reforms. Furthermore, it used its economic and financial instrument, as mentioned above, through its funding pledge to Assad, which guaranteed that the costs involved in implementing such reforms would be covered by Saudi Arabia. From an analytical perspective, this initiative had explicit strategic objectives, primarily preventing any further increase in instability within and conflict between regional countries. Moreover, if the Assad regime accepted Saudi Arabia's offer, this would inevitably force a compromise, beginning with Syria withdrawing from its alliance with Iran. Syria would then become a tributary state of Saudi Arabia, in a similar manner to how it already was in its political relations with Iran and Russia. Therefore, Saudi Arabia would succeed in reducing Iranian influence in Syria and Lebanon by neutralising Hezbollah, the strategic ally of Syria. Assuming the initiative in this manner indicates an alteration from the conventional foreign policy of Saudi Arabia, which was marked by a lack of initiative, as illustrated during Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which was informed by its reactive policy.

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[96] Ibid, pp. 530-553.

At the beginning of 2012, the Syrian regime began to call on militias from Iran and Hezbollah to fight at its side within Syrian territory,[97] and Prince Mohammed bin Saud realised that the Syrian regime had ignored the King's offer, Saudi policy took a new direction. Saudi Intelligence confirmed that the Syrian regime appealed to Iranian militias, such as the al-Quds Force, which offered support in the form of providing military supplies, technical support and training by the Revolutionary Guard to help preserve Assad's hold on power. This level of Iranian backing was a sufficient indicator for Saudi Arabia that the Syrian regime still insisted on a military solution to the crisis and preferred the Iranian option to Saudi Arabia's proposal. Consequently, Saudi Arabia began to activate its other alternatives.[98]

On 24th February 2012, the "Friends of Syria Group"[99] held their first meeting in Tunis. Saudi Arabia withdrew from the conference because officials believed that humanitarian aid was insufficient at this time, with the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, asking 'Is it justice to offer aid and leave the Syrians to the killing machine?'[100] On the sidelines of the conference, the Saudi Minister met with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, suggesting that arming the rebels fighting the Syrian regime was 'an excellent idea,' adding, 'they have to protect themselves.'[101] From this point, Saudi Arabia decided to support the Free Syrian Army and *Jaysh al-Islām,* by supplying weapons, such as small arms consisting of handguns, rifles, man-portable machine guns and anti-tank weapons, and financial backing to topple the Assad regime.[102] This illustrates the insistence of Saudi Arabia that a transfer of power in Syria must take place, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Following the 'Friends of Syria Group' meeting, the Saudi Foreign Miniser held talks with the General Intelligence in order to prepare an action plan to implement Saudi support by arming Syria's moderate opposition and to strengthen Saudi contact with influential

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[97] Aniseh B. Tabrizi and Raffaello Pantucci, "Understanding Iran's Role in the Syrian Conflict," *Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies*, (August 2016), p.5. See also in Evelyn Scott, "Iran secretly helping Assad to crush Syria protests," *the Times*, 8 May 2011. Accessed November, 12, 2015, http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/article30122_46.ece.

[98] Author's Interview, Prince Mohammad bin Saud al-Saud, Riyadh, February 21, 2016.

[99] A group initiated by French president Nicolas Sarkozy, the purpose of which was to find a solution to the Syrian crisis; it was established in reaction to Russia and China's veto to oppose any resolution condemning the Syrian regime.

[100] 'Saudi official walks out of "Friends of Syria" meeting," *Los Angeles Times*, 24 February 2012. Accessed August 8, 2014. http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/02/saudi-official-walks-out-meeting-syria.html.

[101] "Saudis: Arming Syria rebels an "excellent idea"," *CBS NEWS*, 24 February 2012. Accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/saudis-arming-syria-rebels-an-excellent-idea/.

[102] Author's Interview, Prince Mohammad bin Saud al-Saud, Riyadh, February 21, 2016.

forces on the ground in Syria. This action is documented in a cable [3], released about the outcome of the meeting, which was signed by the Chief of Intelligence and the Saudi Foreign Minister in April 2012.[103] It was necessary for the Saudi leadership to determine which of the moderate factions and groups were capable of realising their military objectives. In the same interview, Prince Mohammed noted that the process of identifying such factions, which involved analysing the information provided by Saudi intelligence services and their partners, was aimed at informing officials about the backgrounds of the different factions, and the ideological and political intentions of their leaders, to ensure financial or military support was not mistakenly given to extremist groups, such as the al-Nusra Front. Prince Mohammed explained that Saudi Arabia had identified the Free Syrian Army (FSA) as a target to make a deal with and effectively support, and in late June 2012, Saudi Arabia began to provide financial support to the Free Syrian Army. According to the *Guardian*, Saudi Arabia started to pay the salaries of the soldiers of the FSA in an attempt to encourage officers and soldiers to defect from the army, which increased pressure on the Assad regime.[104]

In July 2012, Saudi Arabia appointed the former ambassador to the U.S., Prince Bandar bin Sultan, as Chief of General Intelligence.[105] He directly opposed the Syrian regime and was accused by it and Hezbollah of being involved in the assassination of Hezbollah's external security chief Imad Mughniyeh in 2008. According to Hezbollah television, al-Manar TV,[106] the appointment of Bandar was a strong indication of Saudi Arabia's eagerness to overthrow Assad, since he had the capability and experience to assume leadership of intelligence services to support particular oppositional groups in Syria. I interviewed the central operations commander of Saudi intelligence, Major General Y.B,[107] who was entrusted with working alongside the Syrian rebels and determining what factions should receive financial and military support. He explained how Saudi Arabia established 'Field

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[103] Cable released about the record meeting outputs, which was signed by the Chief of Intelligence and the Saudi Foreign Minister, WikiLeaks, April 2012.

[104] Martin Chulov and Ewen Macaskill, "Saudi Arabia plans to fund Syria rebel army," *The Guardian*, 22 June 2012. Accessed November 23, 2015. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/22/saudi-arabia-syria-rebel-army.

[105] "Saudi King names ex-U.S. envoy as Intelligence Chief, *CNN*, 20 July 2012. Accessed June 12, 2015 http://edition.cnn.com/2012/07/19/world/meast/saudi-arabia-intelligence-chief/index.html.

[106] "Bandar Bin Sultan Involved in Mughnieh's Assasination: Report," al-Manar T.V Website, 22 October 2011.

[107] This individual is referred to as "Y.B." on his request to protect his identity.

Operations Room Alpha"[108] in Turkey to the north of its border with Syria, where Saudi intelligence agents began to purchase secondhand weapons and military equipment from Eastern European countries, including Serbia and Montenegro. These were then brought into the north of Syria at the end of September 2012, which helped the FSA achieve important victories in battles against the army and enabled them to gain control of certain areas. Afterwards, in early November, Saudi Arabia established another "Field Operations Room Beta" in the north of Jordan. This site was used to bring weapons such as Concourse anti-tank missiles, rocket launchers, assault rifles, AK-47s, and mortar shells into southern Syria through an arms pipeline from the Eastern European countries.[109] Towards the end of 2013, "Field Operations Room Beta" became the primary base for supporting the moderate factions within the opposition. This military support was reported on by *The Guardian* newspaper:

> The weapons pipeline opened in the winter of 2012, when dozens of cargo planes, loaded with Saudi-purchased Yugoslav-era weapons and ammunition, began leaving Zagreb bound for Jordan. Soon after, the first footage of Croatian weapons emerged from Syria.[110]

Moreover, the Major General added that Saudi Arabia began to train rebels in Jordan to use these weapons, an operation supervised by the Deputy Defence Minister, Prince Salman bin Sultan.

Saudi military support for the Syrian rebellion manifested in two distinct stages. Firstly, from the winter of 2012, Saudi military support was comprehensive and indiscriminate, ranging from the Turkish–Syrian border in the north to the Jordanian–Syrian border in the south, in an effort to aid rebels in their attempts to topple the Assad regime. This behaviour by Saudi Arabia signified to its allies that it was attempting to implement a foreign policy strategy that was no longer predetermined by the U.S., which refrained from instigating military intervention in Syria. Its strategy instead involved fully committing the necessary resources to

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[108] A semi-secret facility operated by Saudi Intelligence.
[109] Author's Interview, Major General Y.B, Riyadh, March 29, 2016.
[110] "Revealed: the £1bn of weapons flowing from Europe to Middle East," *The Guardian*, 27 July 2016. Accessed January 26, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/27/weapons-flowing-eastern-europe-middle-east-revealed-arms-trade-syria.

removing Assad and, in doing so, counteracting Iranian influence in Damascus and limiting its influence in Lebanon. In its initial indiscriminate support of Syrian opposition factions, Saudi conduct during this time may be viewed as impulsive. Secondly, after November 2013, when it began to concentrate its efforts on the operation of bringing arms into Jordan, Saudi Arabia began, under pressure from the U.S., to limit its support to factions in the south of Syria and thus avoid the risk of arms reaching Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Moreover, it was concerned that any extremist groups they supported might return to destabilise Saudi Arabia by clashing with authorities there, as had happened in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1992.[111] As Gregory Gause observes, Saudi Arabia's:

> decades-long patronage of the Muslim Brotherhood did not help them during the first Gulf War, when most Brotherhood groups condemned their policy of inviting U.S. troops to the country and opposed the war against Iraq. Their support of the Arab volunteers in the jihad against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s was a major factor in the development of al-Qaeda, which took Salafi ideas and turned them against the Saudi rulers.[112]

The Saudi interior ministry was warned by its spokesman, Major General Mansour al-Turki, concerning the presence of Saudis fighting in Syria that "anyone proven to have returned from there will be arrested and investigated."[113] In the same context, the Saudi Grand Mufti, Abdulaziz al al-Sheikh, urged that young Saudis "should not go to Syria to fight in the civil war," warning preachers against "encouraging young men to fight in Syria" because "these are feuding factions and one should not go there, (I) do

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[111] By the mid-eighties, the Afghan resistance movement was backed by the United States, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan to defeat the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The Mujahideen were sent by Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries to Afghanistan, to participate in resistance to the Soviet Union. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the Mujahideen began returning to their homes with ideas of jihad and extremism, which led to conflict with their home governments.

[112] F. Gregory Gause III, Op.Cit., 2011, p.21.

[113] Bader al-Qahtani, "Mansour al-Turki Details Saudi Security Situation," *al-sharq al-Awsat*, 25 March 2013. Accessed July 18, 2016, http://english.aawsat.com/2013/03/article55296872/mansour-al-turki-details-saudi-arabias-security-situation.

not advise one to go there."[114] Moreover, at the end of 2013, Saudi Arabia responded to its security concerns by withdrawing the Syrian file from the Intelligence Chief, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, who represented a hardline opposition to the U.S. in the case of the Syrian conflict; the file was given to Interior Minister Mohammed bin Nayef, a known moderate and longtime U.S. counterterrorism ally, who was preferable to the U.S.[115] While Saudi Arabia wanted to act independently, officials remained conscious of the need to avoid unnecessarily agitating the U.S., who remained an important ally in many other events occurring in the region.

However, Riyadh faced difficulty in achieving its objectives in Syria because they differed substantially from U.S. interests. From the perspective of Washington, the overthrow of President Assad could not be achieved through Wahhabi Salafist groups. The irreconcilable differences between the two countries is what led to Prince Bandar bin Sultan, who wanted Saudi Arabia to play an independent role in Syria by supporting Syrian factions indiscriminately, clashing with the U.S. and ultimately resulting in the Syrian file being withdrawn from him and handed over to Prince Mohammed. Saudi Arabia did not wish to irritate its historic ally, therefore, Saudi officials opposed Bandar Bin Sultan's policy and instead took the strategic decision to be more selective regarding which rebel groups received military support. It can be argued, therefore, that the U.S. exercised more pressure on Saudi Arabia, after which it entered into talks with its greatest enemy with regard to the Iran nuclear deal.

An interim agreement on the Iranian nuclear program, officially titled the Joint Plan of Action was reached in Geneva on 24th November 2013,[116] which forced Saudi Arabia to make a number of compromises, the withdrawal of the Syria file from Prince Bandar Bin Sultan being the most significant. However, as is clear from official Saudi discourse, the removal of the Syrian regime continued to be a greater

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[114] Mahmoud Habboush, "Saudi religious leader urges youths not to fight in Syria," *Reuters*, 28 October 2013. Accessed July 22, 2016, http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-syria-crisis-saudi-idUKBRE99R10A 20131028.

[115] Frederic Wehrey, "Saudi-U.S. Discord in a Changing Middle East," *Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies*, Qatar, 2015, pp. 8-9. See also in Suzannah Hills, "Saudi Arabia's Prince Bandar who spearheaded country's hardline stance against Syria's Bashar al-Assad steps down as intelligence chief," *Daily Mail*, 16 April 2014. Accessed July 26, 2016, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2606350/Saudi-Arabias-Prince-Bandar-spearheaded-countrys-hardline-stance-against-Syrias-Bashar-al-Assad-steps-intelligence-chief.html

[116] Daniel H. Joyner, *Iran's Nuclear Program and International Law: From Confrontation to Accord*, (New York:Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 60.

priority than ensuring democratic governance, as deposing Assad was promoted without much attention given to what alternative form of government would replace him. Saudi Arabia, however, encountered a dilemma regarding the fact that many of the armed groups in Syria were incompatible with the Saudi government. Although these groups embraced the ideology of Salafism, like Saudi Arabia itself, officials could not dictate their political attitudes to these Islamist factions. Nurturing more moderate oppositional groups from those already existent in Syria proved quite challenging because extremist rebels, such as the al-Nusra Front and ISIS, were achieving important victories and becoming increasingly influential and predominant in the country. Moreover, these extremist groups resisted the influence of Iran and its allies, and were becoming increasingly influential compared to moderate groups due to their military and political achievements. As such, Saudi Arabia faced two choices: either support the extremist factions to prevent the influence of Iran, which might irritate the U.S., or be selective and support only moderate groups, who were less effective on the ground in Syria compared with extremist groups. In order to maintain stable relations with its strategic ally, Saudi Arabia decided that the second option was the best alternative.

In the same context, Qatar had ambitions of becoming a central actor in resolving the Syria Crisis, which led to a worsening relation with Saudi Arabia. This derived from the difference in opinion regarding which oppositional groups should receive military support, with Qatar favouring those associated with the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood and Saudi Arabia preferring to not support such groups. The dispute between the two Gulf monarchies for control of Syria was replicated in the opposition between different factions within Syria itself. A senior Saudi source explained that "the goal is to be effective and avoid arms getting into the wrong hands," adding that "Saudi Arabia and Qatar share the same goal, (we) want to see an end to Bashar's rule and stop the bloodshed of the innocent Syrian people." [117] Until recently, the FSA's influence was limited to the southern front in Syria, with support from Saudi Arabia, and the northern front was supported by Qatar and Turkey. The lack of coordination between the two fronts is a feature of the divergence of the regional powers' interests, because Turkey's and Qatar's backing of the Muslim

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[117] Mariam Karouny, "Saudi edges Qatar to control Syrian rebel support," *Reuters*, 31 May 2013. Accessed July 27, 2016 http://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-saudi-insight-idUSBRE94U0ZV 20130531 See also in Carmela Lutmar and Benjamin Miller, *Regional Peacemaking and Conflict Management: A Comparative Approach*, (London: Routledge, 2015). pp. 188-195.

Brotherhood and other Islamist factions was perceived with suspicion by Riyadh, which contributed to the weakening of the opposition as a unified movement.[118]

In terms of Saudi diplomatic support, it was one of the countries that formed and backed the Syrian political opposition, particularly the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, which was founded in Qatar in November 2012. Saudi Arabia recognised the National Coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people and ceased its recognition of the regime of Assad. However, the National Coalition has faced intense competition among the regional states. Ultimately, the coalition could not be united due to the polarisation of its constituent members as each state involved in supporting a particular oppositional group did so in accordance with their own agenda. For example, Saudi Arabia on the one hand, and Qatar and Turkey on the other hand, caused a fundamental split in the Syrian opposition. Saudi Arabia played a substantial role in campaigning for the nomination of Ahmed al-Jarba to be President of the Syrian National Coalition.[119] al-Jarba was an ally of Saudi Arabia, as leaders of his tribe, the Shammar, had close ties with the Saudi royal family. In 2014, al-Jarba was replaced by Hadi al-Bahra, who is also pro-Saudi. However, Saudi influence over the Syrian National Coalition was not comprehensive, since the different members of the Coalition were sponsored by diverse foreign regional powers, some loyal to Saudi Arabia and others to Qatar and Turkey. This polarisation led to an internal dispute within the leadership of the Coalition, which prompted several members to pursue their own agendas separate to the larger, collective objectives, which in turn led to a decrease in the Coalition's effectiveness and credibility with regard to political and military opposition in the domestic environment. Moreover, the opposition members in the National Coalition demonstrated a lack of political maturity. Since the decision to intervene in Syria was made in February 2012, Saudi policy toward the Syrian issue has largely been considered irreversible and based on the belief that the only viable solution to the ongoing crisis was the immediate removal of Assad and his associates from government.

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[118] Ibid.

[119] Ahmed Awinnen Assi al-Jarba was born in the city of Qamishli in 1969: a former political prisoner in the regime's prison and a Syrian opposition member as the president of the Syria's Tomorrow Movement and the National Coalition. Due to al-Jarba being one of the elders of the Shammar tribe in Syria that has a strong relationship with its ethnic tribal extension in Saudi Arabia, Saudi found that might serve its interests, as the sheikhs of the Shammar are loyal to the Saudi government.

(6.3.2) Explaining Saudi Arabia's Actions in Syria

The above argument firmly indicates, and provides supporting evidence regarding the nature of Saudi behaviour toward the Syrian issue, beginning with diplomatic efforts at the highest level of government to provide economic incentives to encourage Assad to pursue a political resolution to the emerging crisis. Following the rejection of this first option, Saudi Arabia increased its diplomatic and political efforts when the international community sought to arm the different oppositional groups in Syria. The radical change in Saudi behaviour is apparent when its involvement in Syria is compared with its engagement with other, earlier conflicts and domestic disturbances in the region. For example, in relation to Syria, the Saudi Foreign Minister publicly declared that supporting the rebels by providing access to military resources was an "excellent idea. Compare this to Saudi Arabia's support of the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan in their war with the Soviet Union during the eighties, support which always occurred in a covert, informal manner. As indicated in my interview with the former Saudi Foreign Minister, Saud al-Faisal, Saudi support of the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan "was hidden," that is, it occurred through informal, unofficial channels and without public acknowledgment.[120] The latter is perfectly in keeping with Saudi Arabia's conventional pattern of behaviour, which involves not publicly pronouncing its foreign policy strategy but instead retaining a certain sense of secrecy, whereas the former indicates the radical change that occurred during the time between the Iraq and the Syria crises.

Following the rejection of its first offer, Saudi Arabia ceased to recognise the authority of the Syrian regime, instead supporting, and recognising the political legitimacy of, the Syrian National Coalition as representative of the country's citizenry. Diplomatic efforts consequently ceased and Saudi foreign policy shifted toward a pattern of behaviour based largely on employing particular instruments, such as its intelligence services, military facilities and economic resources, in an attempt to consolidate the existing position of the opposition in Syria and contribute to the actualisation of its primary objective, the overthrow of the Assad regime. This different pattern of behaviour substantiates the claim of this research project that Saudi foreign policy underwent a radical alteration, as officials completely departed from the firmly established tradition of tending toward understated diplomacy and

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[120] Author's Interview, Prince Saud al-Faisal, Paris, August 18, 2013

ensuring distance from regional conflicts that historically characterised the country's foreign policy strategy. The change occurred in September 2005, when Saudi Arabia started to become directly involved in the various regional crises. Following this, a new pattern of behaviour became evident as officials adopted a more proactive approach in how they employed the diplomatic, political and economic instruments at their disposal for realising their foreign policy objectives. Saudi Arabia's involvement in, or at least its engagement with, the series of interrelated events known as the Arab Spring, perfectly encapsulates the change in the country's foreign policy. In particular, following the loss of its regional ally in Egypt when Mubarak was deposed, Saudi Arabia sought to protect its interests by establishing stronger relationships with the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), committing $4 billion in aid.[121] Moreover, with the growing challenges generated by the repercussions of the Arab Spring, in 2011, Saudi Arabia succeeded in generating support from the other Gulf States for its initiative in Yemen to transfer power from Ali Abdullah Saleh to President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi.

The regional shifts caused by the removal of hitherto pivotal countries such as Egypt and Iraq led Saudi Arabia to assume a more active role in the region. This new position of active leadership was confirmed by the new Saudi Foreign Minister, Adel al-Jubeir, in his interview with Euronews TV Channel on 21st July 2016. When asked if this is the "Saudi Arabia the world better get used to?" referring to the country's bold decision to directly intervene in Yemen, al-Jubeir replied that Saudi officials "saw a vacuum, and the vacuum had to be filled, (we) saw a lack of leadership, and there had to be leadership and so (we) worked with our allies and we stepped into the vacuum in order to protect our interests."[122] His statement further substantiates the claim of this research project that a radical change in Saudi foreign policy occurred as a result of the new political realities in the region, such as the collapse of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq in 2003, as discussed in the previous chapter, and the change in Egypt's regime in 2011. This new political reality was unquestionably the catalyst to the change in Saudi foreign policy, as officials acknowledged the power vacuum in the region and the need for another regional power to assume the leading role. While

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[121] Larry Diamond, Marc F. *Plattner and Christopher Walker, Authoritarianism Goes Global: The Challenge to Democracy*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), p. 102.
[122] Adel al-Jubeir, Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, interview with *Euronews TV Channel*, 21 July 2016. Accessed November 5, 2016, 2016 http://www.euronews.com/2016/07/21/saudi-minister-daesh-is-a-gang-of-criminals-psychopaths-and-perverts.

Saudi foreign policy was historically characterised by a refusal to assume the initiative and involve itself in regional conflicts, officials quickly acknowledged the new political reality that a change in behaviour was absolutely necessary.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia's reliance on its strategic ally, the U.S., changed dramatically following September 11, 2001 events and it is now characterised by significant differences regarding how certain regional issues should be engaged with and ultimately resolved, in particular the domestic affairs of Egypt and Syria. The unprecedented expansion of Iranian influence in the Arab region presented a further challenge to Saudi Arabia, as it occurred during a period that saw important domestic changes in the country, most importantly the emergence of a new generation of leaders, which further contributed to the radical change in how the country sought to realise its strategic objectives through foreign policy instruments. In contrast to previous generation of Saudi leaders, those currently in positions of authority are willing to employ the entire range of foreign policy instruments at their disposal and to further entrench the new pattern of behaviour regarding regional affairs. This new pattern of behaviour is characterised by assuming the initiative and being proactive, while utilising its military and intelligence capabilities to the same extent as its economic resources and political leverage. With this foregrounding of its self-interests as the motivating factor behind its foreign policy decisions, Saudi Arabia has necessarily become more self-reliant in the pursuit and realisation of its foreign policy objectives, both in the region and in the international environment.

It is worth noting, however, that the policy of being proactive is not individually taken by Saudi Arabia; instead, the country prefers assuming the role as part of a larger coalition, as happened in its intervention in Bahrain in 2011 and Yemen in 2015. This war, code-named Operation Decisive Storm *('amalīyyat 'āṣīfat al-Ḥazm)*, is a case in point and provides the strongest evidence of the validity of the conclusion of this research project. On 26th March 2015, Saudi Arabia led a coalition of ten Muslim-Arab countries to intervene in Yemen. Operation "Decisive Storm" was launched following a request by the current Yemeni president, Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, to prevent the Houthis from seizing power. At this stage Houthi forces had already begun a massive offensive in the southern provinces and were on the

verge of seizing the city of Aden, where President Hadi had moved to in 2014.[123] Coalition forces supported Hadi as the legitimate government in Yemen against the claims of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his Houthi allies. During the first hours of operations, coalition forces launched air raids against Saleh's forces and their Houthi allies in Sana and other provincial areas, dealing devastating blows to their air defense facilities and military communication systems, and quickly announcing that Yemeni airspace and ports were restricted areas.

Saudi Arabia's actions in Yemen perfectly demonstrate the radical reorientation that had recently occurred in its foreign policy strategy, especially how it relates to regional issues and its position within the Middle East. Intervening in this manner is not just an example of a country trying to become more involved in regional affairs but is similar to that of a superpower attempting to assert its authority in the region. Saudi officials not only assumed the initiative by intervening in the domestic conflict of a neighbouring country to ensure its own security, but by declaring Yemen a restricted area, they isolated the country and assumed control over who is permitted entry for military and humanitarian purposes.

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[123] "Saudi armed forces deploy in al-Harth region bordering Yemen," *Al Arabiya News*, 28 March 2015. Accessed December 3, 2016, http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/03/28/Saudi-armed-forces-deploy-in-al- Harth-region-bordering-Y emen.html. See also in Ken Dilanan, "Saudis Begin Airstrikes Against Houthi Rebels in Yemen,"*ABC News*, 25 March 2015. Accessed December 1, 2016. http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/fall-yemen-government-leaves-us- options-29902643.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research project was not only to provide a historical analysis of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy but to also provide an examination of the different internal and external factors that led to a particular position being assumed regarding the most significant regional and international issues since the establishment of the Third Saudi State. By examining Saudi foreign policy in this manner, a large number of characterising features have been identified, each of which helps in understanding the country's pattern of behaviour regarding recent events, in particular, the Iraq War (2003) and the effect of the Arab Spring in Bahrain and Syria (2011-present). The purpose of the second, third and fourth chapters is to understand the conventional pattern of behaviour observable in Saudi foreign policy decisions in relation to the significant historical events from the founding of the Third Saudi State to the turn of the century. These chapters also provide the necessary historical context for properly comprehending the radical shifts in foreign policy addressed in the two case studies in chapters five and six. The initial chapters also address a number of important questions, primarily: is Saudi foreign policy based on a reactive agenda that sees officials merely responding to circumstances beyond their control, or are decisions the result of a more proactive position, where officials attempt to assume the initiative and intervene in regional and international affairs.

First of all, this research project carried out an anlaysis of Saudi foreign policy in an effort to explain what are normally considered, and consequently dismissed, as persistent ambiguities in the decision-making process. In doing so, it has concisely outlined the various catalysts that ultimately led to significant deviations in Saudi foreign policy from its conventional pattern, a pattern characterised by a reactive stance and the complete preclusion of self-determinacy in an effort to maintain the status quo in international relations and regional geopolitical issues. By firstly analysing Saudi foreign policy decisions as officials responded to the major political events during the period 1902-2005, the changes that occurred from 2005-2013 can be appreciated as major departures from conventional behaviour. Doing so required three distinct efforts: firstly, determining the conventional pattern of Saudi foreign policy; secondly, identifying the principal factors that functioned as catalysts for the changes that occurred from 2005-2013; and, thirdly and finally, providing a qualitative

analysis of Saudi foreign policy based on an examination of a wide range of primary sources and secondary material in order to determine the exact effect that conflicts and political events within the Middle East had on particular Saudi foreign policy decisions, primarily those involving Iraq, Syria and Bahrain.

Summary of Findings

The first half of this research project is concerned with providing an historical analysis of Saudi foreign policy during the period 1902-2002. Chapter 2 outlines the most important events that occurred during King Abdul-Aziz's and King Saud's reigns, focusing primarily on those that occurred immediately following the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. During Abdul-Aziz's reign, 1902-1953, after the initial establishment of the state in 1902, Saudi foreign policy largely adopted a proactive policy toward expansion by annexing the provinces under the rule of the Ottomans and the Hashemites, who were supported by the British. Such actions allowed Saudi Arabia to challenge the isolation it experienced prior to this, as Abdul-Aziz's strategy of utilising tribal allegiances ensured the state's increased openness toward both the Muslim-Arab world and the international community. However, after the initial establishment of the Third Saudi State in 1902, the country did not initially possess the modern institutions required for the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. After 1932, during the latter half of his reign, Abdul-Aziz concentrated on the establishment and development of such institutions, while also focusing on national security, a key determinant in Saudi foreign policy to this date and central to understanding the primary motivation behind the country's regional and international alliances. Ensuring the safety of this nascent state was the most influential factor determining Saudi foreign policy during this period. After achieving its initial goals of uniting the country and gaining the recognition of the The League of Nations, Saudi Arabia adopted a foreign policy strategy that would not give the international community the impression that this emerging state was aggressive in nature. To this end, Saudi Arabia adopted a strategy of moderation that in turn engendered foreign policy decisions that focussed on moderate responses to, and retaining distance from, regional conflicts. As a result,

Saudi Arabia endeavoured to avoid any policies that could be considered confrontational or assertive by the international community, instead favouring policies that maintained the status quo. It must be remembered, however, that this short period does not allow for a comprehensive understanding of Saudi foreign policy as it requires a longer period of survey and more particular issues.

During King Saud's reign, 1953-1964, Saudi foreign policy lacked clear objectives and is best described as being profoundly inconsistent. Because security, economic and ideological issues were not given proper consideration by Saud, either when formulating or implementing Saudi foreign policy, the royal family and the "Ulama" gradually intervened and assumed authority, ultimately, changing both the domestic and foreign policies of the country. In the era of King Saud, Saudi Arabia attempted to exert its independence from the U.S. and to align itself with the Arab nationalist movement emerging in the Middle East under the figurehead of the Egyptian leader Abdel Nasser. Departing so radically from its conventional pattern of behaviour by adopting a more independent stance was ultimately not endorsed by the royal family at large.

As Chapter 3 indicates, King Faisal had to immediately address a number of hugely complex domestic and regional issues when he acceded to the throne in 1964. Chief amongst these were the conflicts with radical Arab countries following the example of Egypt under Nasser and the Palestinian question created by Israel's expansionist agenda. During his reign, 1964-1975, Faisal was largely committed to maintaining the status quo, which necessarily involved adopting the more conservative policy of supporting existing monarchical regimes that opposed radical Arab nationalist movements. Saudi Arabia was willing to abstain from pursuing solely military options, even exposing its own territories to potential violations in order to achieve diplomatic resolutions. Faisal's decision to avoid direct military confrontations also resulted in proxy conflicts. Despite the considerable improvements in Saudi Arabia's military capabilities following its acquisition of modern weapons and aircraft, its foreign policy continued to avoid direct confrontation. This persistent attitude indicates a lack of initiative in this area and a tendency toward reaction. Faisal's decision to avoid direct military confrontations in favour of diplomatic negotiations was characterised by his own cautious, but always informed and realistic, approach to complex regional and international issues.

The pattern of Saudi foreign policy behaviour during the period 1975–2003, as discussed in Chapter 4, illustrates how the country was still not yet interventionist, or even proactive, at this time. Instead, officials continued to assume a reactive position rather than employing dynamic strategies capable of responding immediately to significant changes in the region, as illustrated by the Iranian Revolution and the subsequent delay in supporting Iraq against Iran. Moreover, Saudi authorities failed to give adequate support to help avoid the Iraq–Kuwait conflict in 1990. The indifference shown by Saudi Arabia towards the increased tensions between Iraq and Kuwait indicates that the country's foreign policy was still neither proactive nor pre-emptive, as policy-makers maintained somewhat risk-averse. For this reason, it can be ascertained that there was no coherent policy or comprehensive strategy that managed to clearly interrelate the economic, diplomatic, military and media communication tools that are essential to successfully realising the objectives of a nation's foreign-policy strategy. Moreover, during this period, Saudi Arabia made a mistake when it decided to embrace a rapprochement with Iran during Khatami's reign (1997–2005), a period generally characterised by a high level of cooperation between the two countries. The rapprochement allowed Iran to increase its military leverage and intelligence resources in Iraq, following the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, which served Iran's interests by removing it from the political isolation it suffered as a result of the revolution in 1979. From this choice on the part of Saudi Arabia, it is immediately apparent that it did not have a coherent policy regarding the pursuit and achievement of its regional interests, and that its foreign-policy decisions were determined by the actions of other countries. As its relationship with Iran illustrates, Saudi authorities were reactive rather than proactive. While it was possible for Saudi authorities to develop a foreign-policy strategy that was predetermined by its own principles and interests, and provided a means of employing its potential to realise its objectives, it instead reacted to the behaviour of another state. The rapprochement with Iran, especially since it appears to have benefitted Iran by allowing it to rebuild its economic and military strength and end its political isolation, ultimately enabled Iran to play a significant role in the Iraq War of 2003.

The second, third and fourth chapters outline the history of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy from 1902 to 2003, providing the contextual knowledge required to identify recurrent issues and determine exactly how particular decisions were made during the most domestic and international events of the country's history in the

twentieth century. These chapters ultimately confirm that, from 1902-2003, Saudi foreign policy exhibited no examples of officials assuming the initiative in the pursuit of the country's domestic and regional objectives. As a result, this lack of initiative distanced Saudi Arabia from regional issues. In terms of what Saudi Arabia preferred to use as foreign-policy instruments, there is a preference for political and diplomatic mediation in an attempt to maintain the status quo so that Saudi Arabia could achieve its interests. In addition, the findings of these chapters, in particular the conventional pattern of behaviour identified therein, confirm the hypothesis of this research project, that Saudi foreign policy during this period was more reactive than proactive, based on calculated mediation as opposed to direct intervention.

The U.S invasion of Iraq in 2003 had an immediate effect on the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. In particular, the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime resulted in an immediate shift in the balance of power in the region. This change was instantly apparent in how Iran attempted to exploit the Iraq issue to reduce its vulnerability in the region, especially given the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq. Such efforts would also result in Saudi Arabia's security decreasing significantly. The first case study in Chapter 5, the Iraq War (2003), analysed the most prominent and persistent features of Saudi foreign policy regarding Iraq. By utilizing primary sources, the overall strategy that determined the constitutive diplomatic, military and economic decisions can be understood, despite the charge of secrecy frequently leveled at Saudi officials. This case study is divided into two sections: a demonstration of how Saudi foreign policy continued its conventional pattern from the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003 to the Autumn of 2005, followed by an analysis of how, from 2005 onward, King Abdullah, after succeeding King Fahd, sought to solve domestic issues through minor reforms and ensure greater consensus regarding Saudi Arabia's strategic objectives in the region.

Firstly, continuing to adhere to the conventional pattern of foreign policy decisions can be best understood as an effort by Saudi officials to restore trust to their country's relationship with the U.S. and ultimately improve the negative image Saudi Arabia had within American foreign policy networks and amongst state organisations following September 11. Furthermore, in an effort to retain as many viable options as possible in matters of foreign policy, Saudi officials avoided assuming absolute positions and making definitive decisions regarding issues of both regional and

international consequences. Instead, they preferred to ensure a certain distance between Saudi Arabia and external affairs was maintained. However, as this research project indicates, this stance actually derives from the country's lack of authority regarding regional and international issues due to its limited military strength and industrial capacity, and the demographic make-up of its citizens. It is also apparent that officials lacked the necessary foresight to properly understand the repercussions of regional and international events, and to clearly outline the country's national objectives. Such a situation was especially problematic at this time, given Saudi Arabia's continued reliance on the U.S., who exhibited a certain indifference toward the threat of Iran becoming an central regional power through its involvement in Iraq's domestic affairs.

While the above conclusions are valid, this study has sought to propose alternative interpretations based on the analysis of primary sources, thus allowing for a more reliable understanding of events between 2003 and Autumn of 2005. The instability of the Saudi political system was the primary variable in the formation of Saudi foreign policy during the period in question, that is, it is the factor that exerted the most influence on the decision-making process and those officials associated with and involved in it. Until late 2005, it was the most important factor, which means it influenced all foreign policy decisions in the period prior and subsequent to the Iraq War (2003). This instability was the direct result of the various petitions for political reform in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, domestic instability played a significant role in Saudi Arabia's decision to pursue a policy of complete non-participation prior to the conflict, since if Saudi officials wished to pursue a policy of active participation, this would require consistent internal stability.

In addition to domestic instability, the inability of Saudi leaders to properly understand the changed, and often continuously changing, political realities in the region following the Gulf Wars of 1980 and 1990, and the Iraq War (2003) was an important factor in determining foreign policy. The political changes engendered by these events required reciprocal changes in how Saudi officials developed and implemented foreign policies. Ultimately, the pattern of behaviour had to become dynamic and responsive, with officials willing to adopt strategies that deviated from the conventional, historical framework of foreign policy operations. Such a change, however, required that the older generation of leaders be replaced by those who understood that different options existed for realising Saudi Arabia's domestic,

regional and international objectives. The previous, older generation of leaders believed that policies should continue according to the status quo, as this was the most assured, practical way of guaranteeing the country's political and economic interests both domestically and abroad. As a result, blatant risks were often eschewed. It can be argued, however, that this preference for maintaining the status quo amongst the older generations of Saudi officials actually derived from Arabic-Islamic culture itself, which privileges the inherited ideals and ideologies of ancestors. As a result, policies that protect the status quo are considered the most beneficial and least problematic, hence the reluctance to deviate from conventional patterns of behaviour regarding foreign policy decisions. Continuing in this manner was possible until 2003, when the Iraq War made it blatantly apparent that such an approach was no longer viable, especially the new threats facing Saudi interests in the region. However, committing to the necessary changes proved particularly challenging to the new leadership, which was faced with two options: continue adhering to the former leaders' decision to make minor adjustments to existing operating procedures in response to new domestic and regional political developments, or adopt a completely different position to the conventional paradigm that characterised Saudi foreign policy in order to pre-empt, even anticipate, such dynamic developments.

Secondly, when King Abdullah assumed power following the death of King Fahd, he made some minor reforms to resolve the internal issues affecting Saudi Arabia. Rather than reversing them, he further consolidated them in an effort to remove further restrictions on the national foreign policy strategy and improve consensus regarding Saudi Arabia's strategic interests in the region. The first case study clearly illustrates how the popularity of the traditional foreign policy paradigm initially persisted at the beginning of the war in 2003, but that a radical change had occurred in 2005, as indicated by Saud al-Faisal's, the Saudi Foreign Minister's, "Handing the Whole Country Over to Iran." Delivered in the autumn of 2005, this speech marks a major reorientation of Saudi foreign policy, as officials began to prioritise the country's economic and security interests by insisting that Saudia Arabia should play a larger, more active role in regional issues. Such a role would naturally involve a more interventionist position and changes in how particular instruments are employed in a foreign policy context. In the case of Iraq, this manifested in the decision to provide increased economic support to Sunni forces and to utilise its media, intelligence and diplomatic resources in pursuit of its objectives regarding this

conflict. Most importantly, its diplomatic language was beginning to change, with officials discussing the U.S. less due to a weakening in the alliance and beginning to focus their attention on regional alliances and formulate a strategic policy to realise its military and economic objectives. In addition, Saudi Arabia had also emerged at the forefront of the regional arms race, an unprecedented development that made the country's intention to deviate from its previous pattern of behaviour abundantly clear. Such changes indicated Saudi Arabia's intention of establishing a sphere of influence in Iraq similar to that of Iran and this necessitated radical changes in foreign policy strategy so that officials could intervene to protect the country's domestic and regional interests if required.

The second case study, the Bahrain and Syria Crises, discussed in Chapter 6, is related to the first case study since Saudi officials believe that the Iraq issue will only be definitievely resolved when the Syria Crisis is porperly remedied. This explains why Saudi Arabia focused its attention on the Syria conflict, which was considered an extension of events in Iraq. Furthermore, Saudi officials were presented with increased options for the form intervention should take in Syria in 2011 when compared to Iraq in 2003. Since 2011, therefore, Saudi foriegn policy, at least as it relates to the Middle East, has followed two distinct courses: firstly, the strategy of "damage control"[1] seen operating in Bahrain, Syria and, more recently, Yemen; secondly, the attempt to occupy the regional power vacuum caused by the absence of Egypt and Iraq. In terms of its foreign policy, Saudi Arabia adopted a proactive policy of deterrence, relying increasingly on its military capacities, an option hitherto unavailable due to limited resources. This confirms the new impetus in Saudi foreign policy, with officials willing to employ all instruments at their disposal in pursuit of the country's objectives, as seen in the deployment of troops to protect the Bahraini regime against oppositional protests. While the intervention was technically undertaken by the Peninsula Shield Force, Saudi Arabia was responsible for operations. Intervening in this manner surprised the majority of speciailist familiar with Saudi foreign policy but Saudi officials believed that civil unrest in Bahrain would be utilised by Iran to provoke a military insurgency against the family family. Such an outcome presented a disticnt security problem to Saudi Arabia, as it could potentially empower Shi'ites to assume authority in Bahrain, similar to what had

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[1] Frederic Wehrey, Op.Cit., 2015, p.9.

occurred in Iraq following the deposing of Saddam Hussein. Given the new geopolitical reality caused by the Iraq government aligning with Iran, any increase in power for Shi'ites in Bahrain, which would undoubtedly be pro-Iran, had to be prevented. Saudi Arabia could not afford a security issue along its eastern border with Bahrain in addition its existing security along its northern border with Iraq. Not only would losing Bahrain as a regional ally to Iran be hugely detrimental to Saudi Arabia as a regional power, but the Shi'ite community concentrated in Eastern Saudi Arabia could potentially be influenced by their Bahraini neighbours to pursue similar political objectives, an eventuality that had to be avoided at all costs.

In the case of Syria, Saudi Arabia assumed the initiative by adopting more proactive policies at the very beginning of the crisis, using its diplomatic instrument to make a serious attempt to convince the Syrian president to undertake political and economic reforms. Furthermore, it used its economic and financial instruments to guarantee that any costs involved in implementing such reforms would be covered by Saudi Arabia. From an analytical perspective, assuming the initiative in this manner had explicit strategic objectives, primarily preventing any further increase in instability within and conflict between countries in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia would ultimately succeed in reducing Iranian influence in Syria and Lebanon by neutralising Hezbollah, the strategic ally of Syria. If Assad's regime accepted Saudi Arabia's offer, a compromise could be arranged that would see Syria withdrawing from its alliance with Iran and becoming a tributary state of Saudi Arabia. This procative policy indicates a radical change in Saudi foereign policy, conventionally characterised by a lack of initiative. When Saudi officials understood that Syrian officials were committed to a military rather than a peaceful solution to the crisis, and thus favoured Iran's promise of continued support, they decided to support the moderate rebels by providing military and financial resources. Such decisions demonstrate Saudi Arabia being procative in its foreign policy decisions, insisting that a transfer of power in Syria was necessary, be it voluntary or involuntary.

As previously noted, the reasons for the change in Saudi foreign policy are related to both internal and external factors. One of the former was the change in leadership that occurred in 2005, which proved a major catalyst for the reorientation of Saudi foreign policy. King Abdullah's reign is associated with change as Saudi officials began to understand the necessity of the country playing a more active, and consequently effective, role in regional affairs. This new understanding amongst

Saudi officials of the political reality of the Middle East resulted in the formulation and implementation of more strategic foreign policy decisions. At the beginning of his rule in 2005, King Abdullah issued a number of royal orders that announced unprecedented changes to existing government structures and the established order of succession. The most significant change was permitting second generation family members to be appointed to government positions, which marks a radical departure from tradition as Saudi Arabia had always valued age when making appointments. Prince Mohammed bin Nayef benefitted from this change as he was appointed Interior Minister and subsequently became the Crown Prince instead of King Abdullah's brothers, who were his elders. This appointment is particularly noteworthy because it indicates King Abdullah's awareness that a new generation of leaders was required who could identify the new political reality of the region, primarily, the power vacuum in the Middle East that Saudi Arabia could exploit to its advantage. In terms of its economic and military capabilities, Saudi Arabia had a distinct advantage over other Middle Eastern countries and was thus in the position to assume a more influential position in the region. It can, therefore, be argued that Riyadh will continue to utilise its economic advantages to further strengthen its military capabilities and thus reinforce its position as the most influential country in the region

With regard to the external factors, the unprecedented expansion of Iran in the Arab region was the most influential in affecting change in Saudi foreign policy, a reality understood in the other four Arab capitals in the Middle East: Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut and Sana'a. This new reality was confirmed by Ali Younesi, adviser to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani: "Iran today has become an empire as it was throughout history and its capital, Baghdad now, which is our civilization and our culture and our identity Center today as in the past." [2] Furthermore, substantial changes occurred in the Middle East as a result of the Arab Spring, as the governments of countries allied to Saudi Arabia were overthrown, such as Hosni Mubarak's regime in Egypt. These changes radically reconfigured the political landscape of the Arab region and had immediate effects on the balance of power. Saudi officials quickly realised that a complete reorientation of foreign policy was required if the country's strategic interests were to be protected and its continued

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[2] Michael Segall, "Iran's Defiance: Flaunting a Cruise Missile with 2,500 Km. Range‹" *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, Institute for Contemporary Affairs, Vol. 15, no. 8, (10 March 2015).

influence in the region guaranteed. Of equal consequence was the fact that Saudi confidence in the U.S., a crucial ally for the past thirty years, had deteriorated significantly following September 11th. While Saudi-U.S. relations had always been dynamic, right up to King Abdullah's succession in 2005, the latter's unpredictable responses to events in Egypt and Syria made it blatantly apparent to Saudi officials that they would have to implement their foreign policy decisions independent of its ally. In other words, in order to achieve its own foreign policy objectives, Saudi Arabia had to stop relying on the policies of its ally, thus reducing cooperation to a minimum but never to the extent that conflict would become a possibility.

This different pattern of behaviour substantiates the claim of this research project, namely, that Saudi foreign policy underwent a radical alteration as officials completely departed from the firmly established tradition of tending toward understated diplomacy and ensuring distance from regional conflicts that historically characterised the country's foreign policy strategy. The change occurred in September 2005, when Saudi Arabia started to become directly involved in the various regional crises. Following this, a new pattern of behaviour became evident as officials adopted a more proactive approach in how they employed the diplomatic, political and economic instruments at their disposal for realising their foreign policy objectives. Saudi Arabia's involvement in, or at least its engagement with, the series of interrelated events known as the Arab Spring, perfectly encapsulates the change in the country's foreign policy. Further to this conclusion, Saudi Arabia has more recently adopted a set of political and diplomatic stances that have hitherto not been part of its behaviour toward the international community. For example, on 24th September 2013, Saudi Arabia refused to give a speech at the General Assembly of United Nations in protest of the Security Council's reluctance to act in the Syrian crisis.[3] Furthermore, Saudi Arabia rejected the offer of non-permanent membership to the Security Council in October 2013, a further protest against the Security Council being singularly entrusted with maintaining peace in Syria.[4]

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[3] Yael Yehoshua, "Saudis Infuriated, Insulted By U.S. Efforts At Rapprochement With Iran," *The Middle East Media Research Institute*, no.1032, (31 October 2013).
[4] Robert F. Worth, "Saudi Arabia Rejects U.N. Security Council Seat in Protest Move," *New York Times*, 31 October 2013. Accessed November 21, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/19/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-rejects-security-council-seat.html.

The Original Contribution of the Study

This study analysed the complexities of foreign policy by accessing various sources of primary information and critically assessing the roles of the multiple strategic participants in the region. In practical terms, it is problematic to arrive at a comprehensive interpretation due to the inevitable inaccuracies involved. To remedy this, the study was based on a methodology that concentrates primarily on the various interrelationships that exist between the individuals and institutes involved in Saudi foreign policy. Using a careful selection of events that occurred in the region as case studies, the decision-making process can be comprehensively analysed. The case studies that conclude this research project use recent events in the Middle East to demonstrate how the foreign policy decision-making process is influenced by these interconnections and, perhaps more importantly for the purpose of this study, allow for a qualitative analysis of how decisions were arrived at and a critique of persistent presuppositions. Despite conducting firsthand interviews with those officials involved in the development and implementation of Saudi foreign policy and having access to government documents related to it, it is still difficult to properly understand particular decisions.

This difficulty is partially alleviated, however, through the two case studies, the Iraq War (2003) and the Bahrain and Syria Crises (2011), which allow for an understanding of how Saudi officials engage with other regional powers as they pursue their own strategic interests, in particular the Islamic Republic of Iran. Ever since the Iranian Revolution, there have been more instances of political difference than consensus between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which resulted in ongoing diplomatic confrontations. A period of rapprochement occurred in 1997 following a series of policies aimed at improving regional security, trading relationships and socio-economic conditions. However, this period of rapprochement failed to develop into a long-term, stable alliance, with events from 2005 onward illustrating how both countries' regional interests continue to be a site of pronounced and irresolvable political differences. As this study has demonstrated, Saudi foreign policy is conventionally reactive and characterized by the absence of self-determinacy, as officials attempted to distance the country from regional conflicts. However, as events from 2005 onwards make evident, there has been a radical change toward adopting to a more proactive position. This is even more pronounced since 2011, with officials

committing Saudi Arabia to an interventionist approach to regional issues due to a variety of internal and external circumstances.

This study analysed the complexities of foreign policy by utilising primary sources and critically assessing the existing academic studies on Saudi foreign policy, ultimately with the purpose of identifying the recurrent shortcomings and factual omissions in the latter. By conducting a comprehensive historical study of Saudi foreign policy, this research project provided an original contribution that exposes its unique qualitative aspect and identifies new pieces of information that removed, or at least mitigated, the prominent ambiguities associated with Saudi foreign policy. These ambiguities are the consequence of the official tendency toward secrecy within the Saudi Arabian government. Conducting this research project has made a significant original contribution to understanding the changes that have recently occurred in Saudi foreign policy, while also providing a critical perspective for comprehending these based on evidence from firsthand accounts. This study constitutes an important contribution to the paradigm of Saudi foreign policy. The mixed methodology also allowed for the synthesis of both internal and external variables, so that foreign policy decisions could be understood in a more complete, sequential sense rather than just isolated instances.

How the Research Statement was Examined?

A qualitative research methodology was utilised in this study since it is not possible to quantifiably measure the pattern of Saudi foreign policy. As the preceding chapters demonstrate, it is possible, however, to interpret it based on historical analysis and operational definitions. As such, this approach provided a functional explanation as to why a particular foreign-policy position was adopted within given circumstances, thus providing a more comprehensive explanation as to the relative factors impacting on the decision-making process. This was achieved by answering questions as to how or why certain decisions surrounding central issues were made. These questions included, what military, economic, diplomatic, intelligence and media instruments did Saudi Arabia utilise in the formulation and implementation of its foreign policy, and did foreign affairs occupy a central or marginal position in the decision-making process? Such questions were developed following an examination of the history of

Saudi foreign policy and an analysis of speeches, statements and other archival material. The interviews undertaken as part of the fieldwork for this project were conducted with those involved in making foreign-policy decisions in order to identify the various different ideological perspectives and political objectives informing these decisions. Case studies were then used to supplement the analysis of primary sources as recurrent events could be explored in detail. However, determining the conventional pattern of Saudi foreign policy required a longer period of study. The historical analysis of Saudi foreign policy, therefore, provided the standard against which more recent changes could be measured. As a result, it is blatantly apparent that major changes occurred after 2005, especially when Saudi Arabia's actions in Bahrain and Syria and are compared with its engagement in other regional issues during the twentieth century. Saudi foreign policy can no longer be considered reactive but proactive, given the new impetus toward assuming the initiative and intervening in pursuit of the country's strategic objectives in the Middle East. While this reorientation in foreign policy became apparent in Saudi Arabia's actions in regional issues from 2011 onward, the change was first initiated in the autumn of 2005.

In addition to the historical analysis, this research project utilised content analysis of speeches, official statements and other archival material, which consisted of two separate components. Firstly, for the interviews conducted with Saudi princes and government ministers, it was necessary to identify which individuals were involved with particular decisions, in particular its initial development and its practical implementation. Another requirement was determining exactly to what extent those involved in making foreign policy decisions were aware of and motivated by Saudi Arabia's interests in the region and evaluating why Saudi foreign policy has shown such a variety of different, often conflicting, responses to otherwise similar political issues. Secondly, a selection of official archival documents relating to the initial stages in the development or and the subsequent implementation of foreign policy decisions have been consulted. These documents have been analysed in detail to provide additional legitimacy to the theoretical arguments of this research project.

Limitations of the Study and Potential for Further Research

This research project addresses the major change that has occurred in Saudi foreign policy in the twenty-first century through two comparative case studies, the Iraq War (2003) and the Bahrain and Syria Crises (2011-2013). The fact that these events are so current posed a significant challenge to this project, consequently one of the limitations is the limited amount of secondary material, in particular, comprehensive historical surveys or objective political analyses, available regarding these issues. While this proved challenging, the subject of this research project involved confronting a number of other, inherent limitations. Chief amongst these is the tendency toward secrecy in the Saudi government, which made it particularly difficult to access official documents from the Foreign Ministry and other official institutions associated with this mechanism. Saudi Arabia archives these documents and normally does not release them, whether or not they relate to older or more current events. A further limitation concerns the sensitivity of the subject amongst Saudi officials who were involved in making foreign policy decisions, particularly those associated with military and intelligence agencies. Furthermore, the consequences of Saudi Arabia's interventions in Bahrain and Syria were only becoming apparent to officials in the period during which the interviews were conducted. This explains the reluctance of officials to answer particular questions given the sensitivity of issues and their inability to disclose certain information, as Saudi intervention in these countries was ongoing and the situations were increasingly dynamic. However, expanding the circle of interviewees compensated for this limitation, as the fieldwork provided an insight into the various perspectives amongst Saudi officials involved in foreign policy decisions and the objectives each considered of primary importance. Such insight also allowed for the decision-making process itself to be examined, which proved vital to the heuristic purpose of this research project and its original contribution to this subject area.

With regard to the potential for future work, this research project has attempted to provide a concise and comprehensive picture of Saudi foreign policy, something that is often considered highly ambiguous, and that addresses the recent significant changes which have occurred. While this study focuses on events up to 2013, subsequent events have served to confirm the hypothesis, that Saudi foreign policy has shifted from a reactive position, one founded on mediating regional

disputes and maintaining distance from regional issues through non-intervention, toward a more proactive stance, one based on assuming the initiative regarding the realization of its strategic objectives and direct intervention in regional issues. The Yemen War, 2015-present, is a case in point and provides the strongest evidence of the validity of the conclusion of this research project.

Saudi Arabia's actions in Yemen perfectly demonstrate the radical reorientation that had recently occurred in its foreign policy strategy, especially how it relates to regional issues and its position within the Middle East. Intervening in this manner is not just an example of a country trying to become more involved in regional affairs but is similar to that of a superpower attempting to assert its authority in the region. Saudi officials not only assumed the initiative by intervening in the domestic conflict of a neighbouring country to ensure its own security, but by declaring Yemen a restricted area, they isolated the country and assumed control over who is permitted entry for military and humanitarian purposes. Further study is required to extend the hypothesis of this research project into more recent events and to determine if the Saudi government was behaving consistently by intervening in Yemen in 2015. This will also allow for the underlying motivations of this foreign policy decision to be examined and to determine if its actions are examples of officials assuming the initiative to realize Saudi objectives in the region or of delayed reactions to the foreign policy decisions of other countries in the region. As previously noted, once Saudi Arabia decided to adopt a proactive policy to intervene in particular regional issues, it still preferred to do so only when collective agreements with other Arab countries could be ensured. This support often takes the form of regional coalitions under Saudi leadership, such as that which provided military assistance to Bahrain in 2011 and intervened militarily in Yemen in 2015. Another area for potential further study would be identifying the reasons why Saudi Arabia preferred this option and the strategies officials employed in order to establish such alliances, especially given the potential consequences of becoming involved in complex regional conflicts.

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Appendix 1: Glossary

I have used the translation and transliteration style of the Oxford transliteration. the thesis has cross-referenced source in Stanford Online Library and WardCat organisation and the Oxford Dictionary of Islam to ensure accurate Arabic English transliteration.

"fatwā   Legal ruling on Islamic law by an Islamic scholar.

'Ulāmā'   Refers to the most elite religious scholars in Islamic theological   matters. "Ulama" refers specifically to those who have completed several   years of advanced study in the disciplines such as a mufti, qadi and faqih.

faqīh   An expert in Islamic law; a jurist.

Majlis al-Shūrā   The Consultative Council.

Salafi   Follower of a Sunni Islamic movement that takes the salaf, (pious ancestors) of the patristic period of early Islam as exemplary   models.

Umma   The world community of Muslims.

Ikhwan   The name given to the Bedouins who abandoned their nomadic life in the desert in favour of permanent settlement and adopted Islamic ideology in 1919. This group comprised of several different tribes who cooperated with Abdul-Aziz in the unification of the Saudi State.

Wahhabi   Follower of a conservative Sunni Islamic religious movement that arose in the Arabian Peninsula during the eighteenth century. Wahhabism is Saudi Arabia's dominant faith. Muhammad Ibn Abd al- Wahhab, (1791) was a conservative theologian and Hanbali jurist who proclaimed the necessity of returning directly to the Qu'ran and *hadith*, rather than relying on medieval interpretations.

Mājlis Hayʾat Kībār   Council of Senior Scholars.
al-'Ulamāʾ

Ḥarāam   Legal term for what is forbidden under Islamic law.

Majlīs al-Wūzārā'   The Council of Ministers.
alSu'ūdī

Sheikh   Sheikh an honorific title in the Arabic language. It commonly designates the ruler of a tribe, who inherited the title from his father.

Mūfti   A Muslim legal expert who is empowered to give rulings on religious matters of Jerusalem.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADF	Arab Deterrent Force
ANLF	Arab National Liberation Front
ARAMCO	Arabian American Oil Company
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
FPDM	Foreign Policy Decision Making
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GIP	General Intelligence Presidency of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IR	International Relations
IRGC	Army of the Guards of the Iranian Revolution
IRNA	Islamic Republic News Agency (Iran's official news agency)
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham
JAN	Jabhat al-Nusra
MEED	Middle East Economic Digest
MEES	Middle East Economic Summary
MOD	Ministry of Defence (in Saudi Arabia)
MOI	Ministry of the Interior
MSA	Muslim Scholars Association
OAPEC	Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

OIR	Islamic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula
OPEC	Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PLA	Palestine Liberation Army
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PSF	Peninsula Shield Forces
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RGC	Revolutionary Guard Corps
SABIC	Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation
SAMA	Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency
SANG	Saudi Arabian National Guard
SCAF	Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
SCIRI	Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SDF	Saudi Development Fund
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SNC	Saudi National Security Council
SNSC	Iranian Supreme National Security Council
SOCAL	U.S. Standard Oil Company of California
SOCAl	Standard Oil of California
SPA	Saudi Press Agency
SWB	Summary of World Broadcasts
TAL	Law of Administration for the Transitional Period
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAR	United Arab Republic
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WML	World Muslim League
WWI	First World War
WWII	Second World War