

**The Gulf Cooperation Council's Foreign Policy towards the
Middle East Peace Process (1991-2005) with Special
Reference to Qatar's Foreign Policy**

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Submitted by

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Abstract

This study examines the foreign policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its member states, in particular Qatar, towards the peace process in the Middle East between 1991 and 2005. The study aims to identify, and critically engage with, a set of internal and external determinants, which influenced the foreign policy orientations of the GCC states towards the Middle East peace process after the Madrid conference in 1991 and until 2005. This time frame was selected because significant changes took place in the patterns of alliances among leading Arab states after 2005. Moreover, the study focuses on the extent to which Qatar's foreign policy has been consistent, or inconsistent, with the rest of GCC foreign policy, and the reasons for both consistencies and inconsistencies.

The study posits three main questions. First, what are the main determinants, internal and external, facing the GCC states while formulating their foreign policies towards the Middle East peace process, particularly between 1991 and 2005? Second, what was the overall foreign policy agreed between the GCC states towards the Middle East peace process during the same period? Finally, to what extent was Qatari foreign policy convergent with, or divergent from, the foreign policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council with regard to the peace process?.

To explore these questions, the study adopts a qualitative research methodology and archival document analysis strategy. A wide range of documents was used throughout the study, including UN documents, media data, official statements made by GCC ministers of foreign affairs, closing statements of GCC summits, speeches by the Emir of Qatar, and statements by Qatari diplomats and officials.

The data analyses revealed, first, that the foreign policies of the GCC states and Qatar have converged when it ultimately came to supporting Palestinian rights and the US efforts on the peace process, and, second, that the foreign policies of Qatar and the GCC states have diverged on two significant issues: first Qatar's desire to normalize economic and diplomatic ties with Israel, and, second, US and Qatari initiatives to push political reform agenda (democratization came first, among other objectives) in the region as a possible policy to resolve the Middle East conflict.

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The long and arduous research journey is about to reach its final destination, and yet there are still many things to learn.

Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis is carried out in accordance with the regulation of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed:

Date: July 2017

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the foreign policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its member states, with special reference to Qatar's foreign policy towards the peace process in the Middle East between 1991 and 2005.

The main rationale for conducting this research lies deep in my own personal and professional context. After receiving my first diploma in international relations from Cairo University, and my second in inter-Arab relations from the Arab League, I became more interested in Qatar's foreign policy, but I was unable to find conclusive and clear explanations to verify the validity of some of my observations. These experiences led me to pursue some of these issues during my studies towards a master's degree at the University of Exeter in the UK. While writing my dissertation on the obstacles to unity and integration facing the GCC states, I drew a conclusion based on Ernst Haas's definition of unity. Haas has argued that "political actors in several distinct settings are persuaded to shift their political loyalties, expectations, and political activities towards a new centre whose institutions possess demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing state."¹ In my conclusion, and similar to his assertion that democracies do not go to war with other democracies, I have argued that authoritarian regimes do not unite with each other either. In addition, by making observations about the general trends of GCC foreign policies, I concluded that Qatar's foreign policies were almost always a source of controversy and debate.

I was further intrigued by this topic while working as a political analyst and weekly columnist for a number of Arabic periodicals and newspapers. In all these situations, I continued to make observations about the foreign policies of GCC states, particularly on

¹Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), p.16.

the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East peace process, and made correlations with international and regional developments whenever possible. In short, the more I investigated this topic, the more I realized that further research was needed to find satisfying answers that bridge the gap caused by the scarcity of literature on this subject. Therefore, the current study aims to fill this gap.

1.2 Research context: The origins and evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict

Rory Miller (2016) offers a comprehensive analysis of the rapid rise to power of the Arab Gulf states over the last half-century. Miller also draws attention to the daunting challenges that they confront today.² In this regard, it must be noted that within the international order after the Second World War, the Arab-Israeli conflict has emerged as one of the most significant sources of threat affecting the stability of the Middle East and global peace. Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Arab-Israeli conflict has occupied a central position in the foreign policies of many Western and Arab countries. Throughout these tumultuous years of conflict, there have been several peace initiatives to resolve it. Led mainly by the United States and to a lesser extent by the European Union, these initiatives have been subject to numerous scholarly studies.³

These initiatives were partly due to some dramatic changes in the international order and the Middle East that took place at the end of the last century. Two major events stand out as causing these changes: the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. These two events greatly affected the security and stability of the Middle East, and the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and they stimulated an unprecedented spread of the phenomenon of terrorism, in terms of its geographical breadth, the multiplicity of the tools that were used, and new, previously unimaginable, targets. The

²Rory Miller, *Desert Kingdoms to Global Powers: The Rise of the Arab Gulf*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016).

³Neill Lochery, *The Difficult Road to Peace: Netanyahu, Israel and the Middle East Peace Process*, (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2000).

Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2004).

Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, in particular, was a new and serious threat to the security and stability of GCC territory, and replaced the Arab-Israeli conflict as a major source of threat to the GCC region. The new international order, led by the United States, swiftly and decisively responded to these new regional changes and security threats. For their part, the Arab states demanded US intervention to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, which from their perspective was at the heart of the security threats and instability in the region, as well as the root cause of the rise of terrorism. Along with Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations, the US began to make arrangements to hold the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid in 1991. The GCC states also responded to the rapidly changing threats to security and stability in the region, and participated in the Middle East Peace Conference. The development of these new threats forced them to assume a share of responsibility for this comprehensive and long trajectory, and actively engage in the Middle East peace process.

With the peace process ongoing, divergences in foreign policies between GCC states began to surface, albeit faintly and quietly. These divergences mainly revolved around the role played by Qatar in the Middle East peace process, especially its policy regarding the rapid normalization of trade relations with Israel and the exchange visits with Israeli officials, despite the deterioration of the peace process. Nonetheless, these divergences were of the type that the GCC states have long been accustomed to dealing with quietly and sagaciously in order to contain any discords without jeopardizing their solidarity, particularly with regard to regional security arrangements.

With the Middle East peace process beginning to face more arduous challenges, the capabilities of the parties to arrive at a comprehensive peaceful settlement began to diminish. At that point, the US floated new proposals and nonconventional remedies for the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the “Middle East Democratization Initiative”, which aimed at achieving a number of US foreign policy objectives. In addition to protecting American interests in the region, the initiative was geared towards settling the Middle East conflict by democratizing the political system of the Arab states. This idea was based on

the premise that “democracies do not fight each other”, and therefore that a democratic Arab world would not go to war with Israel, thought of as the “only democracy” in the Middle East.

While Qatar unconditionally accepted the US initiative, the rest of the GCC states did so cautiously and with a great deal of suspicion. Accordingly, Qatar formed its own foreign policy orientation. This eventually led to divergence within the GCC itself, which culminated in a wide rift in 2014, when, in an unprecedented move, the governments of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain withdrew their ambassadors from Qatar.

As has been discussed, this study explores the regional and international political variables that have shaped the Middle East and influenced the foreign policy of the GCC towards the peace process during, and immediately after, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. One of the key results of these changes in the Middle East was that the GCC states attended the Madrid conference. This was significant because it made the GCC states focus their efforts on dealing with their own issues of security and stability, which began to be seriously challenged from new sources of threat, such as Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, and the rising security risk from terrorism. From this perspective, this study aims to critically explore the foreign policy of the GCC towards the Middle East peace process, particularly Qatar's foreign policy. This is based on the assumption that comparing and contrasting the foreign policies of Qatar and the other GCC states will lead to a better understanding of the causes behind their differences and similarities.

The dilemmas of security, stability, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Middle East peace process have become important concerns for the GCC countries, and occupy a central place in their foreign policy. The interwoven structure of these variables represents the core of the research problem, which will be presented in detail below.

It is important to highlight that the period of the study (1991-2005) was chosen because, first, it marks the beginning of the first ever “multiple talks” between the Arab countries

and Israel, including the GCC member states, and, second, it signifies the dismantling of the alliance's traditional pattern in the Arab world, which previously included Riyadh, Cairo, and Damascus, but later became Riyadh and Cairo, when Damascus was distanced because of its support of Hezbollah and its active role in the war of Lebanon in that year.⁴

1.3 The research problem, questions, and objectives

As discussed above, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 resulted in extremely complex and far-reaching threats to the national and regional security and stability of the GCC. The tragic 11 September attacks in the USA in 2001 have intensified this threat, as the rise of religiously motivated international terrorism, often invoking grievances over the plight of Palestinians, has been directly linked with the region. The main consequences of these events can be found in the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the deepening threat that this conflict poses to regional security and global peace. As a result, both the regional actors and global powers have felt the need to launch peace initiatives to address the Middle East conflict that clearly has serious implications for global peace. The peace process had originally promised to improve security and stability in the Middle East in general, and the GCC region in particular. By taking into account the complexity surrounding the Middle East conflict, the present study identifies two general questions as defining its research focus. First, does Qatar's controversial foreign policy with regard to the peace process and the circumstances surrounding it such as Qatari-Israeli and Qatari-US relations represent a threat to the stability of the GCC region and the unity of the GCC? Second, were opportunities to improve the prospects of achieving peace lost because of Qatar's foreign policy? The research problem can therefore be summarized in the three following specific intertwined questions.

⁴Elie Podeh, *Israel and the Arab Peace Initiative, 2002-2014: A Plausible Missed Opportunity*, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 68, no. 4, Autumn 2014, p.592.

1.3.a Research questions

First, what were the main determinants, internal and external, facing the GCC states while formulating their foreign policies towards the Middle East peace process, particularly between 1991 and 2005?

Second, what was the overall foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process agreed upon by the GCC states during the same period?

Finally, to what extent was Qatari foreign policy convergent with, or divergent from, the foreign policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council with regard to the peace process between 1991 and 2005?

1.3.b Research objectives

- 1- To critically explore the determinant factors, internal and external, facing the GCC states' foreign policy decision making towards the Middle East peace process after the Madrid conference in 1991 and up until 2005.
- 2- To analyse and explain the broad GCC foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process between the Madrid conference and 2005.
- 3- To critically investigate Qatari foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process, and to explore the extent to which it was consistent with the rest of GCC foreign policy within the same timeframe.

1.4. The research focus and limitations of the study

This study falls within the scope of political science in general, and foreign policy focus in particular. As this study lies in the foreign policy domain, it only considers the policies or programmes that were carried out by the state or group of states towards another state and regarding a particular case. In this context, foreign policy is in contrast with international relations, which studies sets of actions and reactions, including policies and programmes

that are a reaction or response from the other state to the first international unit. Thus, this study will be concerned only with the programmes, policies, stances, and orientations that the GCC states (with special reference to Qatar) take towards the peace process or relevant issues.

It is important to highlight that the Middle East conflict, and the subsequent attempts to address the conflict, have complex historical and political dimensions that cannot be addressed within the confines of a single study. The current research, while acknowledging the complexity of the dynamics informing the Middle East conflict, singles out the foreign policy of the GCC (with special reference to Qatari foreign policy) towards the Middle East peace process within the period 1991 to 2005.

As will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three, on methodology, the research design of the study also reflects this clear focus. The study adopts an overall qualitative research methodology in engaging with and exploring the central research questions mentioned above. The research design includes multiple data collection methods, including the document analysis of primary sources, such as the officially recorded statements of the leaders of the GCC countries, final statements of the GCC summits and ministerial meetings, and statements of Qatari officials on different levels extracted from semi-governmental Qatari newspapers, United Nations General Assembly meetings, and minutes of the Security Council that have not been used for this purpose before.

It is important to note that despite the fact that this study focuses on Qatar, and contrasts its foreign policy with the foreign policy of the rest of the GCC, it has not been framed as a comparative study as such. Considering the wider research context, it is possible to single out the foreign policies of both Qatar and Oman for a critical and comparative analysis, as they have shown clear signs of divergence from the rest of the official GCC foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process and Middle East conflict. However, due to the fact that the researcher is most familiar with Qatari foreign policy, and is in a unique position to have access to the related original documents that have so far not been

brought to bear on the topic, research is consciously focused on the case of Qatari foreign policy. The researcher suggests that by building on the findings of the current study, a further research project should critically compare divergent patterns of foreign policy exhibited by selected GCC member states regarding the Middle East conflict and peace process.

1.5 Significance of the study

The main contribution of the current research is to fill the gap in the existing literature regarding GCC foreign policy towards the Middle East conflict and the peace process. It examines the political environment and developments affecting the decision-making process informing GCC foreign policy, paying special attention to Qatari foreign policy, with respect to the Middle East peace process, which has not been discussed in previous research on the subject.

Furthermore, the research seeks to explore the main differences between the foreign policy of Qatar and that of the other GCC states towards the peace process in the chosen timeframe. It also aims to demonstrate how this chasm deepened as underpinned by external factors driven by Qatar's supportive stance of US policy, and also how Qatari foreign policies served to intensify the differences inside the GCC. In addition, the thesis sheds light on issues that have so far remained unclear and unexamined, such as the deep ripple effect on GCC regional integration and the formation of a common foreign and regional security policy. With the above outline as the clear focus, the study aims to make an original contribution to both scholarly research on Middle East conflict in general, and foreign policy-related academic discussions on the topic in particular.

1.6 Organization of the study

This study consists of eleven main chapters and conclusion chapter. The eleven chapters are divided into five parts. Part one is theoretical, and includes this introductory chapter, and a literature review and methodology chapters.

The introductory chapter presents the study questions and the objectives, and the wider research context that informs the central research problem. The chapter clearly outlines the research focus by discussing the limitations of the study and its overall significance.

The second chapter explores, discusses, and critically reviews existing literature on three interrelated aspects of the topic. First, it examines discussions that were held on the subject, both at the theoretical and the conceptualization levels, including foreign policies and the regional balance of power and order. Second, it reviews the literature related to selected, significant research on the Middle East peace process after the Madrid talks until 2005, in terms of the opportunities and the challenges that appeared before the political leaders of the region and the world. Finally, the third research area revolves around the relationship between, on the one hand, the notion of bringing democracy to the Middle East to help resolve the Middle East conflict and, on the other hand, the influence of this very same concept in reshaping the Middle East.

Chapter Three discusses the methodological framework and research design that the study adopted to explore the central research questions. This includes the data collection and analysis processes, specifically the compilation of data into serialized tiers that are used in exploring the research questions. The chapter also discusses the issues related to research ethics.

The second part of the thesis consists of Chapters Four and Five, which address the operational environment of making foreign policy at the internal and external levels in the GCC region. They also address the factors that determine decision making in foreign policy towards the peace process and how these factors, first, contributed to conceptualizing initiatives to advance negotiations and hold the international, sponsored peace conference and, second, to supporting engaging the GCC as a political body and the individual states, meaning the motives of each particular GCC member state to push the Middle East peace process forward at times of deadlock.

The third part of the thesis, Chapters Six and Seven, examines the foreign policy of GCC states towards the peace process and discusses how these states used the foreign policy tools in backing legitimate Arab rights and condemning Israel whenever it tried to elude peace obligations, as well as how they encouraged Israel to adopt a certain foreign policy that brought peace to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The fourth part consists of Chapters Eight, Nine, and Ten, which are based on the main original documents, i.e., UN documents, the official addresses of the Emir of Qatar, and official statements as reported within the semi-official *Al Raya* and *Al Watan* newspapers. These three chapters present the main bulk of the original documentary evidence supporting the overall argument of the thesis. Chapter Eight deals with diverse aspects of Qatari foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process since its inception in the early 1990s, the position of the State of Qatar on the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Qatar's welcoming of the concept of an international peace conference on Middle East peace, against the odds and against the many states in the GCC and, more vehemently, in the Arab world. Chapter Nine examines the issue of how Qatar used its diplomatic and economic clout to build bridges of trust with Israel, provide it with incentives to continue and advance the peace process, and to soften Israeli attitudes towards the peace process. Chapter Ten explores the period after the deadlock and a series of derailments, when the US introduced new objectives, including the creation of a new opportunity for peace through changes in establishments in the Arab world.

The fifth part, Chapter Eleven, offers a focused discussion on the central study findings. The main research conclusions, recommendations for further research, and wider policy implications of the study are presented in Chapter Twelve.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been studied from diverse disciplinary perspectives, including those from history and political science. Because of the complex aspects of the conflict, the research focused on foreign policy has, on the whole, adopted an interdisciplinary methodological perspective. This chapter maps out and critically engages with the relevant literature that deals with GCC and Qatari foreign policy towards the peace process in the Middle East. The first group of literature deals with the theoretical components and the analytical framework that was used to shape the framework, set up the dimensions of the study, and establish its limitations. The second group of studies includes a large body of literature dealing with various issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the initiatives made by international and regional parties to peacefully resolve the Middle East conflict. These studies examine the difficulties of the implementation of these initiatives and the complex relations between the original parties to the conflict, and provide a reflection on the Middle East peace process. The third group of literature provides a discussion and analysis of the foreign policy of the GCC states in general, and Qatari foreign policy in particular, towards the peace process.

The fourth set of related studies discusses the relationship between the concept of democratization in the Middle East as one of the tools to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict on one side, and protecting US interests in the region on the other side. This set of works also discusses the criticism of the concept of introducing democracy and political reform in the Middle East, and easing the tension and peacefully resolving the conflict. It further suggests that there is an absence of a correlation between democratization in the Middle East and the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict because the conflict is not only a conflict between two different political systems. The reasons behind the conflict are much broader and more complex, relating as they do to religion, culture, history, the economy, human rights, and

geography. This chapter offers a critical analysis of the previous relevant literature, and is structured and presented around the four broad themes mentioned above.

2.2 Exploring the analytical concepts informing the related literature on foreign policy studies

The first group of studies mainly examines the central theoretical concepts and the main analytic frameworks that explore the diverse aspects of the foreign policy dimensions and regional studies that are fundamental to understanding the Arab-Israeli conflict and, consequently, the peace process.

Mattar and Helal's study (1996)¹ emphasizes the importance of classifying the Middle Eastern region into two broad theoretical categories, in order to properly identify the overall foreign policy patterns of the countries in this large geographical context. Their study suggests the existence of a broader "Arab regional system" and a more specific "Gulf sub-regional system". The research highlights the implications of this division for how the countries of the GCC manage their foreign policy towards the peace process in the Middle East. This thesis has benefited from Mattar and Helal's research in building an understanding of how the dynamics of the regional system work, and how international and regional power influences the security and foreign policy of the regional system.

The impact of any foreign policy largely depends on the overall power of the state or group of states. The significance and power of the GCC countries within the region, and particularly towards the Middle East conflict, have been studied (Korany and Dessouki, 1991).² Essentially, the foreign policy of a country largely reflects the national interest of the state. Accordingly, there is an inevitable element of "rational/pragmatic calculation" in any foreign policy development. Some studies, such as that of Holsti (1998),³ have analysed the

¹Gamel Matter and AliEldenHelal, Arab Regional System: Study in Inter-Arab Relations, (Beirut: MarkzDersatAlwehdaAlarabia, 1996).

²Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hill Al Dessouki (eds), The Foreign Policies of the Arab States: The Challenge of Globalization, (Cairo: AUC Press, 1991).

³K.J Holsti, International Politics: A Frame Work For Analysis (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1988).

function of the rational/pragmatic calculation in shaping the foreign policy of the GCC countries towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

It should be noted that the concepts of “Middle East” and “Near East” are primarily Western depictions attempting to define a geographical region that has a complex cultural and political diversity (Cleveland and Bunton, 2009).⁴ As some studies, such as those of Hinnebusch (2003)⁵ and Holsti (1998),⁶ have shown, the idea of the nation-state itself is quite new within Arab-Islamic culture. Western-style secularism has not been influential enough to shape the overall political culture within the region. On the contrary, religion (Islam) continues to be an important social force, and is recognized as a source of law within most of the GCC countries. Therefore, sentiments of Arab nationalism, as well as Islamic sensitivities, appear to have a notable impact on the foreign policy of the GCC countries towards the Middle East conflict. For example, the images of the daily humiliation of the Palestinians shown on Gulf Arab satellite channels, such as Al Jazeera, inevitably anger the Arab and Muslim populations across the region. The foreign policies of the Gulf states are in turn shaped by this popular anger, which often leads to policy positions that are quite reactionary. On the other hand, the study also refers to other, more important and less important, elements in the internal determinants that influence the decision making around foreign policy in the Middle East. Hinnebusch argues that some of the internal determinants, such as public opinion, are less important than other factors, especially in rich countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, where foreign policy makers can mislead people, and can also change their point of view. He states that “public opinion plays little direct role in the foreign policy formulation... the majority of the population is often inattentive, uninformed, and divided by class or ethnically, hence easily manipulated by the elite on the foreign policy.”⁷

⁴William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *History of the Modern Middle East*, (Colorado: West View Press, 2009).

⁵Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

⁶Holsti, *op.cit.* pp.55-56.

⁷Hinnebusch, *op.cit.*, pp.111-113.

Hinnebusch assumes that the root causes of conflict in the Middle East, and much of the behaviour of the states, can be attributed to the nature of the structure of the regional system, the imperialist intervention, and the distorted form of core-periphery relations. This might be correct overall, but it is not applicable to the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hinnebusch also points out that national security bureaucracies constitute the most important elements, which play pivotal roles in the Middle East, more than anywhere else in the world. Furthermore, he assumes that there is an inverse relationship between the coherence of the professional institutions of foreign policy decision making and the ability of leaders to make foreign policy alone: “The less efficient the institutions, the greater ability of the leaders of the individuals to make foreign policy alone”⁸ This is true to a large extent in most of the Gulf countries, because foreign policy decision making is characterized by personalization as the institutes are weak compared with the leaders, and therefore it is appropriate for the study to examine the personal attitude of the leaders in order to understand the foreign policy of GCC states, including Qatar, towards the peace process.

The study by James Bill (1996)⁹ suggests another interesting theoretical concept, which uses a geometrical metaphor to account for the security tensions within the Gulf region. Bill identifies the presence of a “rectangle shaped tension” structure directly influencing the security and foreign policy concerns in the Gulf. The state actors that define the rectangle are Iran, Iraq, the GCC states, and the US, with one of the interests of the US in the region being maintaining Israeli security. Bill excludes Israel from the tensions equation in the Gulf region, stating that “Israel's leaders are completely clear on their position in this regard, as they consider Iran their number one enemy and have mobilized their political and research entities to propagate this idea.”¹⁰

This statement seems to be an omen for the possibility of an Iran-Israel-US military conflict, in which GCC states may find themselves embroiled. This view gains more credibility given

⁸Ibid.pp.110-120.

⁹James Bill, in Jamal Sanad Al Sewedy (ed.), *Iran and the Gulf: Searching for Stability*, (Abu Dhabi: Centre for Strategic Research and Studies,1996).

¹⁰Ibid. p,161.

the existence of US military bases in the GCC region, which may give Iran the pretext of self-defence to target these bases, if either Israel or the US launched strikes against Iran, therefore pushing GCC states into the centre of the confrontation. This explains the dual nature of the sources of security, which may under certain conditions be seen as sources of threats.

Al Mashat's study (1994),¹¹ while exploring the causes of tension within the Gulf states, singles out the Western military presence in the region as the central factor contributing to the escalation of the tension. Al Mashat shows the shortcoming of James Bill's paper in omitting the role of the Western Allied/US military intervention in the GCC region, and the nature of the US/Israeli alliance, as a source of threat to the security of the GCC region, which affects GCC foreign policy decisions towards the Israeli conflict and, consequently, the Middle East peace process. This thesis benefited from the study of Al Mashat in defining the sources of the changes of the national threats to the GCC.

2.3 The literature exploring the Arab-Israeli conflict

The second group of literature is a large body of literature that has examined the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict and specifically analysed the peace initiatives to resolve the conflict. In this regard, as Miller (2012) observes, it is important to bear in mind that the Middle East conflict has preoccupied a substantial part of US foreign policy, which in turn has made the US a salient actor in the emergence of peace initiatives.¹² In addition to examining the historical emergence of the conflict and the wider dynamics informing the conflict, this group of studies also discusses the implications of the Arab-Israeli conflict for the national security of the GCC states. Finally, these studies highlight the potential positive implications of the peace process for all parties involved.

¹¹Abdelmonem Al Mashat, *Arab Gulf's Security: A Study in Perceptions and Policies*, (Cairo: Center for Political Research and Studies, 1994).

¹²Rory Miller, *US Foreign Relations and the Middle East*, in Timothy Lynch (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Military and Diplomatic History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.203-226.

The study by Uzi Rabi (2005),¹³ while exploring the threats facing the Gulf states, points out the importance of bearing in mind the internal security risks facing each state. He argues that the internal security threats do influence the overall involvement of the GCC countries with the Middle East peace process. The author illustrates his point by giving the example of the Sultanate of Oman, which remained quite distant from the Arab-Israeli conflict until recently, largely because it was preoccupied with its internal security crisis centred on its Dhofar region. Rabi's study, based on a model constructed to interpret why the Sultanate of Oman distanced itself from intervening in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the consequences of this conflict due to the internal security situation in Dhofar province, found that it was due to the good Omani-Iranian relations, which effectively eliminate any direct Iranian threat to the Sultanate of Oman, perhaps because of the sectarian similarities between the two nations. Therefore, the Western military presence in the Gulf region and the Israeli-Western alliance constitute a source of pressure on Iran that may require some kind of intervention from Iran to minimize it. But, at the same time, the Sultanate of Oman is relatively safe from any Iranian reactions to the Israeli or Western threats that may destabilize other GCC states. This thesis has benefited from Rabi's paper in terms of how it views security and internal stability as key elements to enable understanding GCC foreign policy determinants.

Lochery's (1999)¹⁴ study provides a presentation of the complicated dynamics of the peace process, and the nature of Palestinian-Israeli relations since its launch in Madrid and until the end of Netanyahu's first government. Lochery's work is based on two assumptions: first, that it is unlikely that the peace process will achieve success in the foreseeable future, and second, even if Rabin had not been assassinated he would not have been able to take the peace process further than the point at which it stopped after his death. The study criticizes academics' blaming Netanyahu personally for the collapse of the peace process. Lochery argues that the collapse of the peace process was inevitable after the demise of the euphoria that had followed the handshake between Rabin and Yasser Arafat.

¹³Uzi Rabi, Oman and Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Reflection of a Pragmatic Foreign Policy, *Israeli Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 3, July 2005.

¹⁴Neill Lochery, *The Difficult Road to Peace: Netanyahu, Israel and the Peace Process in the Middle East*, (London: Ithaca, 1999).

In contrast with Lochery's argument proposing the inevitability of the collapse of the peace process, Eisenberg and Caplan (2010)¹⁵ argue that achieving a breakthrough in the peace process was possible only if some of the leaderships stopped playing what they called the “dynamics of deadlock”, which means that the leaders must stop calling their people to sacrifice their homeland and the national conflict with the enemies. This is the condition when the leader fails to prepare the people for difficult choices and compromises. Eisenberg and Caplan assert that there was always a window for peace, but the process usually came to a halt because of the inability of the different parties to imagine a reduction in the level of the hostility. Their study suggests two considerations to overcome the deadlock of the process. First, they argue that the leaders must acknowledge the difficult task of building a supportive political base and shaping a political environment that will support their diplomatic overtures. Second, they state that leaders must come to a conclusion that peace will serve their personal and national interests. The main criticism of this study is that it depends on the psychological dimension and perspectives of the leaders to explain the reasons behind the stopping of the peace process, while there are two important factors in determining the state of war and peace, namely the security and cost/benefit of the conflict, which are almost absent from the calculations of the study. This thesis makes use of the work of Caplan and Eisenberg in interpreting the halting of the peace process.

More generally, Ross's (2004)¹⁶ book describes the peace process in the Middle East and the missed opportunities, as well as the efforts of the US administration to push the peace process forward and to convince all concerned parties in the Middle East to sit together and achieve progress in the peace process. Ross describes his personal role in the efforts of the United States in the peace process, and describes the psychological dimensions, fears, and hopes of the leaders of the Middle East he met during his mission in the region. He also provides an explanation of the difficulties that faced all US initiatives, in which he took part as envoy of the US administration. He also describes how the Israelis see the Arabs and vice

¹⁵Lura Zittrain Eisenberg and Neil Caplan, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: Pattern, Problems, Possibilities*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

¹⁶Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004).

versa, and explains the extent of the negative view they have of each other. He emphasizes the sincere willingness of the parties to reach a just peace, but he also underscores the lack of the ability of any of them to take a courageous decision that could make a breakthrough in the peace process. For this thesis, Ross's study has provided an accurate chronicle of the peace process, which helped in the formation of the main structure of the study of the peace process.

Efraim Karsh claims in his study (1996)¹⁷ that Yasser Arafat's intention to declare the independent Palestinian state in the wake of Netanyahu assuming power in 1996 was a clear violation of the Oslo accord, which precluded a unilateral decision on the future of the occupied territories and provided for the negotiated Israeli-Palestinian settlement. The point here is that Karsh states only that Arafat's "intention" is a violation of the Oslo accord, while he does not consider Israeli practice on the ground, such as the expansion of the existing settlements or building more new settlements in the occupied territories, which is clearly a violation.

2.4 Literature discussing the role of the GCC and Qatar in the peace process

The third type of emerging literature focuses on the role of the GCC and Qatar in the peace process. There is now a growing interest in examining the role of the GCC countries in international politics and foreign policy, and the role of Qatar especially. However, only a few studies have examined the role of the GCC and Qatar in the peace process in depth which are reviewed below.

The study by Abdul-Aziz Al Thani (2005)¹⁸ documents the change that has occurred within Qatari foreign policy since the former ruler, Shaikh Hamad, assumed power in 1995. It appears that Shaikh Hamad has shown real interest in the peace process and therefore has contributed significantly to the emergence of an active Qatari foreign policy towards the

¹⁷Efraim Karsh (ed.), *From Rabin to Netanyahu: Israel's Troubled Agenda*, (London: Frank Cass, 1996).

¹⁸Abdul-Aziz Al Thani, *Qatari Foreign Policy: 1995 to 2005*, (no place of publishing: no publisher, 2005).

Arab-Israeli conflict. This study will fully explore this active Qatari foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the Arab-Israeli conflict and discuss its implications for regional stability and world peace.

Christopher Davidson (2011)¹⁹ explores how the presence of oil and gas in the Gulf states has been a primary force in shaping their economies and consequently their politics. On the one hand, Davidson connects the security concerns of the Gulf states and their foreign policies, and argues that their foreign policies were shaped to serve security interests. On the other hand, he claims that Qatar and Bahrain, despite their US naval and air bases, have pursued active neutrality to maintain communication channels with both Iran and Western powers. He claims that Qatar wants to play the role of Switzerland and, therefore, the contradiction between the two roles that Qatar wants to play is clear: there is a clear contradiction between the hosting of US bases and at the same time wanting to be neutral, because the US is the main foe of Iran. This role that Qatar wants to play is almost impossible to maintain; somehow Qatar will join the American pact in its method of seeking a solution for its national security concerns. Steven Wright, also in Davidson (2011), indicates how Qatari foreign policy presents a fascinating example of a small state achieving an international presence far beyond its size. He also indicates that Qatar's geopolitical position underlines systemic security challenges. He also assumes that Qatari political reform was a product of the power of the new generation, not an effect of external, or even internal, power. If that assumption is correct, why was political reform not accomplished? Why did the public election that the prime minister, Hamad bin Jassem, promised in 2004 in the wake of the conference on democracy and free trade in Doha, not take place? The reason mostly is to show Qatar's willingness to accept the idea of the US administration of introducing political reform in the Middle East and spreading democracy, to avoid the potential pressure that may be exerted by the US on the Qatari regime. Davidson's study has contributed to this thesis in interpreting the relationship between the US and Qatar in the light of the security issue.

¹⁹Christopher Davidson (ed.), *Power Politics in the Persian Gulf Monarchies*, (London: Hurst and Company, 2011).

Steven Wright, in Held and Ulrichsen (2012),²⁰ highlights the issues related to Qatar's systematic security problem, and indicates how the Saudi and Iranian governments are able to pose varying degrees of threat to its national security. This security problem has called for Qatar to seek a protective alliance or security umbrella from external powers.

Qatari foreign policy is described in these two studies as pragmatic, independent, and autonomous. These characteristics are the pillars of Qatari foreign policy, which focuses on efforts towards conflict resolution in order to enhance international peace and security. There is a paradox between being independent and autonomous on the one hand, and seeking a protective alliance on the other. Hence, a weak state seeks protection from another state but does not want to fall under its political tutelage.

Davidson's and Held and Ulrichsen's studies have contributed to this thesis in their interpretation of the relationship between the US and Qatar in the light of the security issue, as well as in understanding the often contradictory relationship between how the sources of threat to the GCC region can simultaneously be a source of security. That is the dual nature of the sources: the source of security can also be the source of threat.

In the context of studying the missed opportunities to reach a peaceful settlement for the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the role of Saudi Arabia in the peace process, the study of Elie Podeh (2014)²¹ quoted Abba Eban, the Israeli historical figure who served as Foreign Affairs Minister, saying "the Arabs never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity",²² referring to how the Arabs used to refuse every offered peace opportunity. This point of view is also applied to the Israeli governmental stance towards the Arab peace initiative (API).

Podeh's study offers, in many dimensions, an examination of the Arab peace initiative 2002, which was first introduced as Prince Abdullah's initiative for peace, then adopted by the Arab league. The first dimension is the international circumstances that accompanied it; the second is the Saudi objectives behind the initiative; the third is the secret relationship

²⁰Steven Wright, in David Held and Kristian Ulrichsen (eds), *The Transformation of the Gulf: Politics Economics and the Global Order*, (London: Routledge, 2012).

²¹Elie Podeh, *Israel and the Arab Peace Initiative, 2002-2014: A Plausible Missed Opportunity*, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 68, no. 4, autumn 2014, pp.584-604.

²²https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Abba_Eban

between Saudi officials and their Israeli counterparts; and the final dimension is the Israeli response to the initiative, or rather, the lack of response. It posits an explanation of why successive Israeli governments failed to respond to the dramatic change in the Arab position towards Israel, from the three “noes” of the Khartoum summit in 1967 to the three “yeses” of the (API). The study offers four reasons behind the Israeli failure to respond to the API. First was that Sharon, Netanyahu, and many right-wing politicians ideologically objected to the API as a possible basis for negotiations because they were unwilling to face its implications in terms of territorial concessions (a return to the 1967 borders, even with swaps) and the division of Jerusalem, or accept an “agreed” solution to the refugee problem based on United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194. Even a more moderate prime minister, such as Olmert, was unwilling to openly confront Israel’s right-wing constituency. Second was that the Israelis in general did not believe in Arab willingness to sign a peace agreement, which led Israelis to be suspicious of declarations in favour of peaceful solutions. Third was the fact that the API is associated with the Arab League and Saudi Arabia, which both suffer from a negative image in Israeli society, which cast doubt on its sincerity. Finally, polls indicate that many Israelis are simply unaware of the existence of the API. This fact reflects the general Israeli fatigue about, and resignation towards, solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. The study concludes that the API was and remains a historic opportunity to achieve peace in the Middle East, but that Israel missed this opportunity.

Elie Podeh in his study, which is chronologically located between the two studies of Guzansky (2015)²³ and Yoel Guzansky and Clive Jones (2017)²⁴, refers to the idea of an alliance emerging between moderate Arab states and Israel to build a tacit security system against Iran, Syria, and Hamas, starting in 2006. The study takes a different approach to that of Elisheva Rosman- Stollman²⁵ in discussing the nature of the rapprochement between the Gulf states and Israel, Stollman believes that the rapprochement was due to the desire of the Gulf states to approach the United States by approaching Israel, while Podeh argues that the approach of the Gulf states to Israel was primarily for tactical security reasons.

²³ Yoel Guzansky, Israel and the Arab Gulf States: From Tacit Cooperation to Reconciliation? *Israel Affairs*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2015, pp.131-147.

²⁴ Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky, Israel Relations with Gulf States: Towards the Emergence of Tacit Security Regime?, *Contemporary Security policy*, 2017

²⁵ Elisheva Rosman-Stollman, Balancing Acts: The Gulf States and Israel, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.40,no.4, July, 2004, pp.185-208

In the same context of the foreign policy of the GCC states towards Israel and the peace process, and in the light of the various kinds of pressure (domestic, regional, and international) which the GCC states were facing while formulating their foreign policy, the study of Elisheva Rosman-Stollman (2004)²⁶ raises significant questions: how can weak states such as Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Oman deal with their weaknesses, and how can they handle various sources of coercion when developing their foreign policy towards Israel and the peace process. The study also draws attention to the tendency of the weak Gulf states to view Saudi Arabia with suspicion, and sometimes see it as a cause of tension, due to its clearly powerful position in the region. They do not regard it, however, to be as threatening as Iran or Iraq. The study further argues that there are three different major defence strategies that weak state, as well as any other political entity, may choose when dealing with a given international situation: balancing, “bandwagoning”, and “omnibalancing”. The balance strategy consists of aligning oneself with another power against the source of a given threat, so as to achieve a balance of power. These states tend to choose a balancing strategy in foreign relations, turning to the United States as a hegemonic yet unthreatening power, and using Israel as a way of currying favour with the US. The study suggests that weak Gulf states have chosen to use the strategy of limited normalization with Israel to approach the United States. Rosman-Stollman’s study points out that Israel could not be an effective potential ally in its own right.

The two studies by Yoel Guzansky (2015) and Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky (2017)²⁷ argue that the Gulf states were seeking to build a Tacit Security Regime with Israel to face the threat of the nuclear Iran in the context of the receding American security role in the Gulf.

The study of Yoel Guzansky (2015)²⁸ suggests that the idea of a nuclear Iran has become a source of threat for both sides, the GCC states and Israel. Therefore, it plays a role in the rapprochement between the Arab Gulf states and Israel, stipulating that the establishment of “normal relations” remains dependent on progress in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. The study of Guzansky, in the context of the normalization of the relations

²⁶ Ibid, pp.185-208.

²⁷ Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky, op.cit., 2017, p.9.

²⁸ Yoel Guzansky, op.cit., 2015, pp.131-147.

between Israel and the GCC countries, examines the nature of existing relations between Israel and a number of Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE.

Guzansky's study concludes that there are two important forces determining the nature of the relationship between Israel and the Gulf states: the first is the power that attracts them to build tactical relations to preserve their security from the threat of nuclear Iran, and the second is the nature of the relations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, which may represent a force for exclusion that works to keep them apart, and limit the extent of the achievements realized on the ground from the various agreements of the peace process. The study assumes that the GCC states are unlikely to recognize Israel officially by establishing diplomatic relations, at least until a comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty is reached. Until then, diplomacy based on converging interests between the Jewish state and the GCC will probably remain tacit in nature.

More recently, building on Guzansky's previous study, Yoel Guzansky and Clive Jones (2017)²⁹ have developed an analytical framework that can be used to understand and to explain the practical concerns of Iran, its nuclear programme, and its allies in the region. It discusses the mechanism and the nature of the security cooperation between Israeli and GCC states, especially Saudi Arabia. The study also offers contextualization of how the tacit security regime (TSR) emerged as a pattern of unwritten tactical alliance that may be followed to counter the common sources of threat from the nuclear Iran, and to maintain the strategic interests for both sides. The study concludes that the alliance between Israel and the Gulf states is closely linked to their common understanding of Iran as a major threat to both sides. Another important conclusion of the study asserts that the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians, and the extent to which they achieve an acceptable formula for peace between them, is a determining factor for the ability of the tacit security regime to emerge, continue, and become an institution.

The study of Uzi Rabi (2009)³⁰ explores the Qatar-Israel relationship and argues that this relationship is only one dimension of the regional foreign policy of the State of Qatar. The study iterates that it is imperative to understand the Qatar with its neighbouring states in the Gulf to perceive the Qatar-Israel relationship as part of the parcel of the complex foreign

²⁹ Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky, *ibid.*

³⁰ Uzi Rabi, Qatar's Relations with Israel: Challenging Arab and Gulf Norms, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 63, no. 3, summer 2009, pp. 443-459.

policy of Qatar. It evaluates how Qatar had faced and resisted the pressures from some of the regional states, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iran, in order to maintain relations with Israel.

Rabi's study refutes the arguments that explain the Qatar-Israel relationship, on the one hand as an attempt by Qatar to cultivate its relations with the US and, on the other hand, that Qatar was willing to maintain its relationship with Israel for economic reasons. It sets out an alternative point of view that argues that Qatar maintained its relationship with Israel for two reasons. First, Qatar wanted to demonstrate its independence to execute its foreign policy in the eyes of its neighbouring states. Second, Qatar wanted to portray itself as one of the only neutral brokers capable of winning the trust of all parties. However, the rational calculations of gain and loss for these motives indicate the high cost-low return for this position, especially as no party had challenged Qatar in exercising its independence in the making of its foreign policy. These identified motives, however, remain inadequate to justify Qatar's insistence in maintaining its relations with Israel. The real motives for Qatar's continued relationship with Israel are not fully clear, but the 2009 war in Gaza and its aftermath, of severing its relationship with Israel, may indicate some of these reasons, which are related to Qatar's close ties with Hamas and the controversial Muslim Brotherhood.

2.5 Studies examining regional democratization and peace in the Middle East

The fourth group of studies attempt to link the spread of democracy in the Middle East to regional peace and security. Three major studies have discussed the intertwined relationship between democracy and peace from two different perspectives. These were authored by David Garnham and Mark Tessler (1995),³¹ Kaim Markus (2008),³² and Karen Smith and Margot Light (2001).³³

In the first study, based on the argument that democracies do not fight each other, Garnham and Tessler claim that introducing democracy in Arab countries will lead to alleviating the

³¹David Garnham and Mark Tessler (eds), *Democracy, War and Peace in the Middle East*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995).

³²Kaim Markus, *Great Powers and Regional Order: The United States and the Persian Gulf*, (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2008).

³³Karen E. Smith and Margot Light, *Ethics and Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Arab-Israeli conflict or perhaps even resolving it. They assume that democratic countries often have the same foreign policy goals and, from this perspective, they differ from non-democratic countries. If Arab countries adopt democracy in their polity then, the argument goes, the chances of achieving peace will consequently increase.

From another perspective, the study refers to the possible serious concerns stemming from the inability of the democratic systems to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, therefore increasing the chances of Islamists reaching power, or at least increasing their influence over the rulers and, consequently, the risk of starting military operations against Israel.

The main criticism of the studies that propose that introducing democracy to the Middle East, or the process of democratization, will boost the chances of easing the Arab-Israeli conflict, and perhaps even of arriving at a final resolution, is that they assume that the conflict stems from reasons related to culture, civilization, and the economy. However, these assumptions are not fully fit to be seen as part of the reasons behind the Arab-Israeli conflict, since the real and underlying reason for this decades-old conflict is the nature of the creation of the state of Israel and its relationship with the Palestinians, as it is seen as an occupation of Arab land by force, forcing Palestinians to take on refugee status, or become prisoners in cantons or citizens with incomplete rights.

In the second approach, Michael Hudson³⁴ takes a different view from Tessler and Garnham. Hudson argues that the relationship between the nature of the political system (democratic or totalitarian) and foreign policy behaviour in the Middle East, especially with regard to the Arab conflict, cannot be proven. In sharp contrast to Tessler and Garnham, he concludes that democratic systems will be less inclined to make peace with Israel than totalitarian regimes. He argues that democratic regimes may be more belligerent when dealing with non-democratic regimes. He asserts that the argument “democracies do not go to war against each other” within the Middle East context in general is incorrect with respect to the Arab-Israeli

³⁴ Michael Hudson, in , David Garnham and Mark Tessler (eds), *Democracy, War and Peace in the Middle East*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p.217.

conflict, since the causes of the conflict are real grievances, security issues, and ideological factors.

The third study is by Karen Smith and Margot Light (2001).³⁵ The study concludes that some countries initiate and promote democracy in other countries for different reasons. There are mainly three reasons: first, there is the belief that democracy is a good way to rule; second, there is a belief that it is easier for the governments of democratic countries to deal with foreign governments who share the same values than with those who do not; and finally, there is the conviction that democracy establishes appropriate and necessary conditions for investment and free trade. From this perspective, democratic governments are seen as the best trading partners. Democracy constitutes a barrier to prevent sudden changes in policies and plans. Holders of democratic principles believe in the ease of doing business with states who share the same values and principles. They also argue that countries with democratic systems are more peaceful than their undemocratic counterparts.

The study by Smith and Light shows the US governmental perspective adopted by Anthony Lake, who believes and asserts that the expansion of the values and practices of democracy is in the interest of the US because it would bring greater security and prosperity. Once again, the logic is that democracies are less prone to waging war, let alone waging war against the US.

Spreading democracy in the Arab countries has emerged as a strategic US foreign policy tool to advance long-term US interests in the region. However, as Steven Cook argues, policy makers in Washington have found themselves in an awkward position regarding this often overtly stated democratizing policy when it comes to the Gulf region

While the US has committed itself to promoting democracy in the Arab states in general, and the Gulf region in particular, the US has found it difficult to trade off with its security

³⁵ Karen E. Smith and Margot Light, *op.cit.*

options, which do not match democratic values. Consequently, this contradiction has raised the following question for policy makers: will promoting democratic reforms in the Gulf compromise US interests? There is no easy answer to this question, but it is certain that “the process of political reform in the Gulf and the region in general will be the result of internal political dynamics, which will set some countries on a democratic political trajectory, while the status quo remains in the other, and limited reform becomes hallmark of still others.”³⁶

The main criticism of this approach can be found in the concepts raised by Tessler and Granham (1995) and Salame (1994), who propose that the democratization of Arab regimes may lead to the ascent to the helm of power of political forces that do not believe in democracy,³⁷ which may further complicate, rather than resolve, the crisis.

Therefore, we are confronting a situation that dictates that democracy must be selective in terms of who is allowed to rise to the helm of power, which contradicts the dynamic nature of democracy based on free and unrestricted competition.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has identified and critically reviewed different types of literature related to the topic. The analysis of the works exploring the construction of the analytical framework and the theoretical concepts revealed the meaning of the regional and sub-regional systems, the international world order, and the relations and interactions between these systems and how these relations affected GCC regional security and pushed the GCC into adopting a certain foreign policy with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process.

The second set of literature discussed in this chapter aimed to explore the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict until the peaceful settlement phase, and how the conflict affected the

³⁶Steven Cook, in Kaim Markus, *Great Powers and Regional Order: The United States and the Persian Gulf*, (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2008), p.84.

³⁷Ghassan Salamè, *Democracy Without Democrats: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*. (London: I.B.Tauris, 1994).

security of the GCC region, as well as the positive impact that may result in the Middle East in the case of a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The examination of the third set of literature showed gradually emerging research interest in discussing GCC foreign policies in the light of regional and international developments, and the role of Qatar's foreign policy, and the motives, objective, and main premise informing Qatar's foreign policy.

The fourth set of literature discussed the relationship between democratization and peace and security in the Middle East, and argued how democratization may be instrumental in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, taking into consideration that the results of the democratization process might conflict with US interests in the region.

Overall, the critical analysis of the relevant literature revealed that no previous study has directly examined GCC foreign policy with specific focus on Qatari foreign policy towards the Middle East conflict and the related peace process between 1991 and 2005. Thus, the literature review shows the originality of the current study. The next chapter will discuss the methodological orientation and the data sources the study relied upon, and present the data collection and analysis procedures.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Research Design of the Study

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological orientation and details of the research design adopted to explore the central study questions. After a brief discussion of some of the central theoretical concepts in social sciences, particularly related to the political sciences and foreign policy studies, the overall qualitative methodological framework of the study is presented. The specifics of the research design, including the data collection and analysis procedures together with the ethical issues related to the research, are discussed in detail.

3.2 Defining the concept of foreign policy

Before explaining how this research will address the three research questions, it is appropriate to first discuss some of the various foreign policy definitions in the literature, and how this research defines the term.

According to one approach in the literature, led by Seabury, foreign policy is defined as a synonym for state objectives:

The set of objectives and connections and relations through which the state tries, and through the authorities and powers vested in the state under the constitution, to interact with foreign states and issues shaping world environment using influence, power and sometimes military might and violence.¹

Another approach defines foreign policy as the process of transforming inputs into activities (programmes) that aim to achieve specific objectives and purposes. George Modelski is among the proponents of this approach, and he defines foreign policy as “A system of activities developed by communities to change the behaviour of other states and

¹ Paul Seabury, *Power, Freedom and Diplomacy: The Foreign Policy of the United States*, (New York: Random House, Vintage, 1965), p.7.

to regionalize its activities according to the international environment. Within this framework, there are two main activity trends, namely inputs and outputs.”²For his part, Charles Hermann defines foreign policy implemented by statesmen and official decision makers as “consisting of the official and distinctive attitudes upheld by official decision makers or other duly authorized representatives and which are intended to influence the attitudes of foreign world units.”³Patrick Morgan defines foreign policy as “official and specific acts executed by authoritarian decision makers in national governments or their representatives with the aim of influencing the behaviour of other active international players.”⁴Walter Carlsnaes defines foreign policy as “the acts expressed in the form of expressly declared directives executed by duly authorized government representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign communities and clearly directed towards objectives, circumstances and active government and non-government players out of reach and beyond the scope of the regional legitimate boundaries of such communities.”⁵Jonathan Wilkenfeld et al. define foreign policy as “consisting of official actions (or reactions) initiated (or received and responded to later) by sovereign states with the intent of changing or creating new conditions (or issues) outside its sovereign boundaries.”⁶Another definition of foreign policy, based on the elements of planning and national interest, was proposed by Plano and Olton, who defined foreign policy as “a planned work methodology developed by decision makers with regard to other states or international units for the purpose of achieving specific objectives within the framework of national interest.”⁷

From this brief discussions of some of the various definitions found in the literature, this research will adopt the following definition of foreign policy, which encompasses the different dimensions of the study: Foreign policy is a set of programmes, policies, and

²George Modelski, *A Theory of Foreign Policy*, (New York: Praeger, 1962), pp.6-7.

³Charles Hermann, *Policy Classification: A Key to the Comparative Study of Foreign Policy*, in James Rosenau, V. Davis, and M. East (eds), *The Analysis of International Politics*, (New York: Free Press, 1972), p.72.

⁴Patrick Morgan, *Theories and Approaches to International Politics*, (Palo Alto, Calif.: Page – Ficklin, 1975), p.166.

⁵Walter Carlsnaes, *The Concept of Foreign Policy Actions in Comparative Analysis: Co-operation and Conflict*, *Sage Journal*, vol. 15, no.1, 1980, p.6.

⁶Jonathan Wilkenfeld et al., *Foreign Policy Behavior*, (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985), p.110.

⁷Jack Plano and Roy Olton, *The International Relations Dictionary*, (Santa Barbara: A.B.C. Oli, 1982), p.7.

patterns of relations adopted by an international actor, whether state or non-state, vis-à-vis another international actor, and on a specific issue, with the aim of achieving specific objectives within the national interest and/or maintaining a preferred international situation.

3.3 Methodological concepts and orientations in political science

According to the American Political Science Association, political science is the study of governments, public policies and political processes, systems, and political behaviour. Political scientists are engaged in revealing the relationships underlying political events and conditions, and from these revelations they attempt to construct general principles about the way the world of politics works. Subfields of political science include comparative politics, international relations (IR), and political theory and philosophy.⁸

Foreign policy is a subfield of international relations; therefore, what applies to international relations from the methods of empiricism or interpretive and methodological approaches, also applies to foreign policy.

Within the framework of social sciences research, the nature of the research topic undertaken plays a crucial role in constructing an appropriate research design to study a particular set of research questions and aims. Before discussing the research design of the study, it is important to note that research is essentially about the production of new knowledge that is reliable and accurate. Both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms are necessary to reach conclusions about the nature of events, issues investigated (usually referred to as ontological assumptions), and what can be known or whether the knowledge produced can be trusted (usually recognized as epistemological concerns). In more detail, ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, reality, or existence, as well as of the basic categories of being and their relations, meaning what exists or the reality that is being investigated by the researcher. Epistemology is concerned with the way in which we can come to know about the world around us. As such, methodology refers to the wider framework and the means of acquiring

⁸http://www.bcps.org/offices/Lis/researchcourse/poli_sci_research.html

knowledge, or the design and techniques used by the researcher to investigate the reality under exploration Anderson, Healy and Perry⁹.

There are two main epistemological traditions in studying IR and foreign policy: empiricism and interpretivism. Both traditions seek the type of knowledge and disciplinary value that research should produce.

Empiricism, originally shaped and advocated by the methodological orientation known as positivism, which gradually gave way to quantitative-experimental research design, is concerned with using the application of the methods of natural science to social science in general, and international relations in particular. It is based on the broad assumption that knowledge can be accumulated through experience and observation, and is also often referred to as positivism. Empiricism aims to advance cumulative knowledge through observation and hypothesis testing. As IR is part of the social sciences, it should be studied in a systemic, replicable, and evidence-based manner.¹⁰ There are three core characteristics of IR empiricism:

- (1) international politics can be studied as an objective reality; that is, there is a world “out there “that is distinct from the researcher;
- (2) Theories are held to the standard of predictive validity; and
- (3) Hypotheses tested in IR research should be falsifiable.¹¹

It must be noted that the contemporary concept of empirical methodology, as distinct from the notion of “positivist empiricism”, has been widely used in social science, including in political science. By exploring the views of certain study participants, most of the qualitative research designs are qualified as empirical studies. As such, the questions and objectives of the current research, which seek to explore the developments and foreign

⁹ Christopher Lamont, *Research Methods in International Relations*, (London: Sage, 2015), p.19

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p.19

¹¹ *Ibid.* p.20

policy events and behaviour of GCC countries towards the Middle East peace process, can be addressed by adopting a qualitative and empirical research design.¹²

As will be discussed below, qualitative methodology is often depicted as interpretive in nature, and as not accepting the rigid application of the methods of natural science to the social sciences. Rather, it calls for the interrogation of the ideas, norms, beliefs, and values that underlie international politics.¹³ It does not necessarily seek to explain events within the framework of cause and effect. Rather, it is referred to as “reflectivism” or “post-positivism”, as it focuses on understanding social meanings embedded within international politics. Interpretivists aim to reveal the core assumptions that underlie the positivist image of the world in an attempt to counter the perceived empiricist orthodoxy in IR. Interpretivist research agendas seek to understand identities, ideas, norms, and culture in international politics.

In addition to the qualitative methodology mentioned earlier, there are two more major methodologies used in international relations and foreign policy:

1. Quantitative methods in international relations: What are they and why do we use them? Quantitative methods refer to data collection and analysis strategies where numeric data are collected in order to determine whether or not a relationship exists between two or more variables. This can be done either through attempting to predict the value of one variable on the basis of another known variable, or through attempts to model interactions among actors. Thus, quantitative methods encompass both statistical analysis and formal modeling. When attempting to understand the relationship between variables, this relationship is usually deduced from some form of theoretical proposition.¹⁴
2. Mixed methods research is commonly defined as research that combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Mixed methods have been used for a number of purposes, from complementarily, to triangulation, to simply

¹²Ibid.p.17.

¹³Ibid. p.18.

¹⁴Ibid. p.96, p.97.

gathering more information on a given topic. In order to effectively make use of mixed methods, the researcher should have a clear idea as to why they are using mixed methods from the outset. Furthermore, in addition to bringing together methods across the quantitative–qualitative divide, innovative methodology is one more methodology that can be included among the methodologies, such as agent-based modeling, which is hard to categorize as either quantitative or qualitative, since it combines elements of both types.¹⁵

3.4 Qualitative methodology

The nature of the research problem, and the questions posed, usually help to identify the type of research methodology and research design in a given study. The concept of methodology refers to the way in which one may acquire knowledge in a systematic way. In more detail, qualitative methods are data collection and analysis techniques or strategies that rely upon the collection of, and analysis of, non-numeric data.¹⁶

Qualitative methods are used in order to better understand how we make sense of the world around us, and as such require us to focus on the meanings and processes that make up international politics. Often this is done through in-depth studies of particular events, phenomena, regions, countries, organizations, or individuals, while qualitative methods in international relations are sometimes conflated with case study research design. Qualitative methods here are meant to describe the diverse set of tools and resources that we can draw upon to collect and analyse data that come in the form of spoken or written language that is not formalized into numbers. Qualitative methods often rely on inductive reasoning because qualitative researchers commonly generate theoretical propositions out of empirical observations.¹⁷

To understand the meaning and the dimensions of methodology, it would be useful to have an overview of the term and its different definitions. Sahin refers to methodology in

¹⁵Ibid. p.115.

¹⁶Ibid. p.79.

¹⁷Ibid. p.78.

general terms as “the process, principles and procedures used in order to approach life-problems and come up with their possible solution. As a technical term, it can be explained as the way a research project is carried out.”¹⁸ Silverman, on the other hand, refers to the choices of methodology we make about the case to study, the methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis, and so on, in planning and executing a research study. So our methodology defines how we will go about studying phenomena. It can be defined very broadly as qualitative or quantitative, or more narrowly as grounded theory or conversation analysis.¹⁹

Both Sahin and Silverman agree on the procedural nature of methodology, but what Sahin summarizes as “the procedures”, Silverman elaborates on and sets out broadly as “Methods of data gathering, and forms of data analysis.”²⁰ In other words, Silverman does not restrict methodology to its procedural nature, but goes beyond that to state that methodology comprises a preference for certain methods among many other methods: the theory of scientific knowledge or set of assumptions about the nature of reality; the role of the researcher, and the concept of action and social actors; the range of solutions, devices, and stratagems used in tackling a research problem; and, finally, the systematic sequence of procedural steps to be followed once the method has been selected.²¹

The second point that should be discussed is qualitative analysis, which, along with quantitative analysis, is one of the two main analytical methodologies. This research makes use of overall qualitative analysis techniques, which means that the data describe or interpret the subject of the research using words, images, or diagrams, rather than statistics, digits, and numbers. The reasons that qualitative analysis was the selected methodology for this research are that, first, this approach offers a deep understanding of the subject of the study and, second, this approach can provide answers to questions beginning with “Why”, instead of just settling for describing the phenomenon or the frequency of its occurrence. In

¹⁸Abdullah Sahin, *New Directions in Islamic Education: Pedagogy and Identity Formation*, (London: Kube Academic, 2014),pp.52-69.

¹⁹David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, (London: Sage, 2006),p10.

²⁰Ibid.p.10.

²¹Ibid. p.15.

other words, this approach provides a more efficient framework that enables us to interpret and discuss the subject of the study.

The research was carried out in a number of phases. The first phase was before the start of the main research and involved determining the research problem, the research questions, and the research objectives behind the research questions. The second phase included specifying the types of sources required the sources suitable for this research, and the procedures to be followed for the collection, extraction, and analysis of data. The last phase was the writing up of the discussions, findings, and conclusions

3.4.1 Construction of the research design in the study

Before discussing the construction of the research design in the current study, it is important first to define the concept of research design. Research design refers to the overall strategy that one may choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring one will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. The other important point is the function of the research design, which can be summarized by stating that the function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables one to effectively address the research problem as logically and as unambiguously as possible.²²

Another definition refers to the research design as “the proper choice of cases (number and types), the type of indicator and the mode of analysis that are needed to provide a proper answer to the research questions asked.”²³ Another, simpler, definition for the research design can be found in Lamont’s work. He refers to the research design as “setting out the steps you need to take in order to complete your research essay.”²⁴

²²<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchdesigns>

²³Paul Pennings, Hans Keman, and Jan Kleinnijenhuis, *Doing Research in Political Science: An Introduction to Comparative Methods and Statistics*, (Sage: London, 1999), p.4.

²⁴*Ibid.* p.40.

Van Evera's definition of theory is a useful illustration: "Empirical researchers draw some form of proposition out of a relationship between two or more variables. In fact, for empirical researchers, this proposition defines positive theory²⁵. Theories are general statements that describe and explain the causes or effects of classes of phenomena. They are composed of causal laws or hypotheses, explanations, and antecedent conditions. In short, theories describe or explain causes or effects. For students of international relations trained in political science, this is likely how they will approach the question of theory. From the perspective of an empirical researcher, theories lend themselves to empirical testing and are falsifiable. There are two broad strategies that one can employ in order to test one's theory: observation and experimentation. The most frequently used strategy in IR is observation. When designing empirical research as a study grounded in observation, there are two further choices: to observe a large number of cases, or just a few. When a large number is observed, this is referred to as "large-n research"; when looking at just a few, this is known as "case study research".²⁶

Based on the nature of the research questions, and the nature of the knowledge that it is expected that the answers will produce, the nature of the research design will be determined. If the research is seeking to explore and examine causal relations between two or more variables, or to explain phenomena, the research is empirical. However, if the research is focused on ideas, concepts, or meaning, or on ontological givens that we take for granted, such as sovereignty and justice,²⁷ the research will be interpretive in its design as well.

Types of research design in international relations and, of course, in foreign policy do not differ much compared with those in political science, in general terms, and the rest of the social sciences. Each of these types has advantages and disadvantages; the researcher can choose which best suits the research in terms of subject, the amount of data required for research, the cost/benefit, and researcher skills. The most important types of research

²⁵ Ibid.p.40.

²⁶Ibid. p.41.

²⁷ Ibid.p.41.

design can be summarized as case study design, descriptive design, experimental design, exploratory design, historical design, observational design, and sequential design.²⁸

3.4.2 Engaging with the research questions

First, what were the main determinants, internal and external, facing the GCC states while formulating their foreign policies towards the Middle East peace process between 1991 and 2005?

Second, what was the overall foreign policy agreed upon by the GCC states towards the Middle East peace process during the same period?

Finally, to what extent was Qatari foreign policy convergent with, or divergent from, GCC foreign policy regarding the peace process between 1991 and 2005?

The first research question is addressed by drawing on the literature that explores various issues related to the nature of foreign policy dynamics, especially that dealing with the security threats in the Gulf region. Engaging with the main internal and external determinants facing the GCC states as they develop their foreign policies towards the Middle East peace process will help further to clarify the wider research context of the study.

The research assumes that the internal determinants, such as political and security relations among GCC member states, public opinion, and some of the regional incidents that led to international interference in the region, had an impact on the GCC and the foreign policies of its member states with respect to the peace process. From this perspective, the study examines the influence of such internal and external determinants in the formulation of the foreign policies of the GCC. This study, however, expects that these determinants had various degrees of influence on GCC foreign policies.

²⁸<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchdesigns>

In addition, this study examines a number of external determinants that constitute sources of tensions and threats to GCC security. For example, it investigates how the threat from the Arab-Israeli conflict, which had been one of the most important sources of threat to GCC security, had receded and was nearly fully replaced by the Iraqi and the Iranian threats, and how this new development further increased the tensions in US-Iraqi relations, on the one hand, and US-Iranian relations on the other. Finally, it looks at how these new tensions affected GCC security, and consequently reshuffled their foreign policy objectives.

Another external determinant is the effect of the 11 September attacks in 2001, and the subsequent pressures exercised by the US on GCC member states for the purpose of applying the US-proposed democratic model on GCC regimes. It is important to highlight that this model was based on the assumption that democracies possess a means of expressing anger other than violence, and, consequently, it is possible and easier to build real and long-term political partnerships with democracies than with autocracies.

The second question of the study revolves around the broad GCC foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process between the Madrid Conference in 1991 and 2005. To address this question, the study will also examine GCC foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process since the start of the process through closely analysing the statements issued by GCC annual summit meetings, as well as the statements released after ministerial meetings with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East peace process. Furthermore, the study examines GCC foreign policy with respect to the Palestinian Intifada and the Roadmap, as well as the more recent developments in the aftermath of the death of Yasser Arafat.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the study focuses on the State of Qatar to critically investigate its foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process and to explore the extent to which it was consistent with the rest of GCC foreign policy between 1991 and 2005. To address this issue, the study briefly examines Qatar's foreign policy orientations prior to the Middle East peace process and after the first Lebanon invasion in 1982, and its

attempts to encourage the US to engage in direct negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as well as its foreign policy with respect to the Middle East peace process, through which Qatar sought to support Arab rights in general, and Palestinian rights in particular, with a special emphasis on the issue of Jerusalem. The study then moves to examine how Qatar's foreign policy shifted and began to engage with Israel, encouraging the latter to adopt certain policies to assist in the success of the Middle East peace process. The study will also explore how such policies asserted for Israel the importance of reaping the dividends of the peace process, in case Israel succeeded in achieving permanent peace with its Arab neighbours, and how Qatar's foreign policy was also consistent when it came to condemning Israel and its policies from the Qatari perspective.

From another perspective, this part of the study examines how US foreign policy has influenced Qatar's foreign policy with respect to two particular issues. First, the normalization of Qatari trade relations with Israel, which entailed inviting the Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu to attend the Middle East and North Africa Economic Cooperation Conference held in Doha in 1997, despite Netanyahu's extremist policies, which Qatar viewed as detrimental to the Middle East peace process, as well as the dissatisfaction of major Arab states such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt with this invitation. Second, it investigates Qatari support for the US Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), which aimed, among other things, to support democratic values in the Middle East, despite the fact that, at the time of writing, Qatar still has not fully democratized its own methods of governance.

In comparing the findings of this study regarding the GCC member states and Qatar's foreign policy orientations, particularly with respect to the Middle East peace process, the relationship with Israel, and the US, the study will identify the extent of Qatar's foreign policy convergence with, or divergence from, GCC foreign policies, thus reaching some recommendations that could help ease the tension within the GCC. Furthermore, this study offers conclusions to assist in achieving peace between both the Arab and Israeli sides

3.4.3 Data sources and data collection/analysis procedures

Within qualitative research designs, there are many strategies used for collecting data in international relations and foreign policy. These include interviews, focus groups, internet-based research, and archival or document-based research. Moreover, they also include non-textual forms of work, such as studying monuments, maps, art, or other social artefacts.²⁹ There are also two more strategies: the questionnaire and the survey.³⁰ For the purpose of validation of the collected data, it would be useful to triangulate the techniques used to collect the data. As discussed above, the main data that the current study will generate are primarily contained within the official documents produced by the UN, as well as by GCC countries (mainly the Qatari government). Therefore, document analysis constitutes an important part of the data collection strategy in this study. The procedures of the document analysis and the main data sources in this study are discussed below.

3.4.4 Document analysis

As this research is mainly engaging with documents produced by institutes and officials, and media and policy documents, it makes use of archival and document analysis of primary sources. It is important, therefore, to shed light on the definition of document analysis:

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. Documents contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention.³¹

²⁹Op.cit. Lamont, p.79.

³⁰Op.cit, Pennings et al., p.78.

³¹Op.cit., <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3316/QRJ0902027>

Atkinson and Coffey (1997) refer to documents as “social facts”, which are produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways. Documents that may be used for systematic evaluation as part of a study take a variety of forms. They include advertisements, agendas, attendance registers, minutes of meetings, manuals, background papers, books and brochures, diaries and journals, event programmes (that is, printed outlines), letters and memoranda, maps and charts, and newspapers.³²

3.4.5 Introducing the primary sources

A number of primary sources are used within this research, such as the statements of the leaders of the GCC countries, closing statements of the GCC summits and ministerial meetings, statements of Qatari officials on different levels extracted from semi-governmental Qatari newspapers, and some governmental archives, United Nations General Assembly meetings, and the minutes of the Security Council that have not been used before in research.

The documents of the final statements of the GCC summit were used for two purposes: to explore the general frame and the guiding trends established by the Supreme Council in dealing with the relationship between the GCC states and Israel, and to examine the foreign policy stances of the Council on the issues related to the peace process.

The UN documents, whether from the General Assembly or the Security Council, were used to explore Qatar's diplomatic stance towards the issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab rights, and then the various issues pertaining to the peace process. It must be noted that the overall tone of the language has always been pragmatic. For example, the Emir's addresses to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) reflect quite a harsher tone than the other Qatari officials' statements delivered before the UN Security Council while discussing the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The selected semi-official Qatari newspapers, and the statements of the Qatari governmental officials, have generated rich data to explore and understand the nature of the

³²<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3316/QRJ0902027>

goals, strategies, and manoeuvres that Qatar adopted to achieve its objectives regarding its relationship with Israel and the peace process, and to take certain positions related to the peace initiatives, including the initiative for political reform in the Middle East.

The official documents used in the study are described below.

3.4.5.a UN documents

UN documents used include two types of documents: the addresses delivered by Qatari officials (Emirs, foreign ministers, diplomats) before the UN General Assembly during the ordinary or extraordinary sessions, and verbatim documents of UN Security Council meetings. These documents were collected from the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York with the assistance of a friend who helped the researcher to work in the library. These documents were photocopied, before data were collected and analysed. The documents obtained from the Dag Hammarskjöld Library covered the period from 1991 to 2002. Documents relevant to the later period covered by the study (2002 to 2005) were collected from electronic sources when these documents were made available on the internet.

3.4.5.b The Emir of Qatar addresses

The researcher obtained the addresses delivered by the Emir of the State of Qatar from the Emiri Palace Library in Doha, to which the researcher was granted access. The author requested permission to access the speeches delivered by Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad and Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa. The speeches of Khalifa Bin Hamad were not available; however, the speeches of Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa were available, and were provided to the researcher as separate, unpublished documents for each speech, grouped in a number of pages. This phase only required two days. These speeches covered the period from 1996 to 2005. This was followed by the data collection and analysis of data as detailed below.

The Emir's addresses covered the issues concerning the peace process. These addresses indicated the Qatari understanding and the role played by Qatar based on such an understanding, as well as the orientations of Qatar's foreign policy with regard to these

issues and Qatar's relationship with its neighbours and the world's superpowers. The main substance of the discussion in Chapters Eight to Ten is also mainly based on a close analysis of the Emir of Qatar addresses, as mainly reported in the official archive and the semi-official *AL Raya* and *Al Watan* newspapers. These newspapers are described in detail below.

3.4.5.c The Qatari press

The Qatari press contained the largest quantity of primary documents, which were also the most enriching. Statements by Qatari officials, such as ministers, ambassadors, and diplomats, regarding the subject of the research, which were published in Qatari newspapers such as *Al Raya* and *Al Watan*, were of great importance because for a long time, Qatar did not have a department in each ministry to archive the statements made by officials of these ministries, nor a state institute like the Public Record Office in England. Therefore, the semi-official *Al Raya* and *Al Watan* newspapers were considered as the most credible and reliable media to research the opinions, views, and statements of the State of Qatar.

No newspaper in Qatar is permitted to publish news or even photographs regarding the Emir or the ministers, or to quote statements, without referring to either the Emiri Palace or the Secretariat General of the Council of Ministers of the relevant ministry for approval of publication.

The statements by Qatari foreign ministers and ambassadors, and other Qatari diplomats, on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process covered nearly the whole time span of the study, except for a few months of 2000, which were missing from the archives of the Qatar National Library. These documents were also not available from its publisher.

It was not possible to access old issues of the *Al Arab* and *Al Raya* newspapers through the internet; to find them required researching the archives of the Qatar National Library. This was not an easy task, as officials at first refused to extract these issues, which were kept in

a special archive. When these officials realized that the researcher was not asking for specific issues but all the issues kept in the archive from 1970 to 2005, their answer was adamantly negative. Through contacts with Qatari officials in the Publication and Information Department of the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Heritage, the researcher was granted a permit to use all the resources of the Qatar National Library, and officials in that department began cooperating. The author agreed with library staff that they would bring all the issues covering a three- or four-month period, and that these would be left for the researcher to extract the issues that were needed.

The researcher began extracting the data related to the subject of the research, placed Post-it notes to mark the newspapers, and recorded the headline, page, and date of publication in a separate notebook. Then the newspaper articles were photocopied, before returning the original issues to the archive. The researcher transferred the photocopies into special files, which were serialized in a primary manner according to date. This process took nearly one year. This work required photocopying nearly one hundred kilograms of documents and statements published by *Al Raya* and *Al Watan Al Arab*.

After the collection of data, the documents were serialized chronologically, and then photocopied again. A copy of the documents was kept in Doha, and a second copy was shipped by airfreight to Cairo, where I began collecting the data. The reason the researcher photocopied the documents and kept a copy in Qatar was that the researcher feared that all or part of the documents might be lost during airfreight to Cairo.

3.4.5.d The statements of the GCC summits and GCC ministerial meetings

Statements of the GCC summits and GCC ministerial meetings were obtained from the website of the GCC and the newspapers. These documents were treated in the same way as the documents used to collect the data for the addresses delivered by the Emir of Qatar.

3.5. Data analysis procedures: identification of the main themes

According to the research questions and objectives, the data to be collected were classified into two main types related to the general subject of the study and its timeframe. These types were: data related to the GCC and GCC member states, and data related to the State of Qatar.

The issues relevant to the subject of the research were classified into:

A: The Middle East peace issues during the timeframe of the study, which are the issues supported by the foreign policy of the GCC and GCC member states, including: the Madrid Conference; the multiparty talks; the Oslo Principles Accord; the Gaza-Jericho Accord; the Second Oslo Agreement; the Redeployment Protocol; the Economic Cooperation in Middle East and North Africa; normalizing relations with Israel; the Wye Plantations Accord; the Wye River Accord; the Second Camp David Agreement; the issue of Jerusalem; the Second Intifada; the American stance versus the stances of the GCC member states with regard to terrorism; the right of self-determination; the Roadmap; and the stances of the GCC member states with respect to the US drive to promote democracy in the Middle East as a means of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict and protecting US interests in the Middle East.

B. Data related to the issues mentioned above in addition to smaller secondary issues, which aim to clarify and detail Qatar's foreign policy. As Miles and Huberman propose, analysis "is made up of three types of follows of activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing."³³ Miles and Huberman refer to data reduction as: Simply the elimination of redundant and useless data to answer research questions and to keep data simple, abstract and focused on the research subject and questions so that such data would later be presented as readable and meaningful data.³⁴

³³ Mathew B. Miles and Michael Hubermann, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, (Sage: London, 1994), p.10.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.10-11.

This analysis process continued for the entire duration of the research. For example, in the case of the addresses of the Emir of Qatar, a document may consist of a number of pages but only a few lines are useful to help in producing answers to the research questions. Therefore, all the document data that contain important information but that are outside the scope of the research are eliminated. Practically, these phrases are usually in the form of complete sentences or paragraphs that are placed inside a coloured frame until the more advanced analysis phase. The same applies to UN documents, statements from GCC summits, and statements from GCC ministerial meetings.

With regard to data extracted from newspapers, which included the statements of government officials or official statements, such data were reduced in a primary way at the data collection site and a coloured mark was placed on the news item and another frame on the part relevant to the research. The entire item was then re-examined after the completion of the data collection process.

3.5.a Document summary form

During the process of data collection, when each document used in the research was accessed, a document summary form was attached to the document detailing the data collected, the site of collection, who was involved, a description of the document, a brief summary of the content, which page of the document was relevant for the research, and finally the importance of the document.

3.5.b Engaging with the data: Discerning patterns of meaning from the data

After the completion of the data collection process, assigning codes to documents and to issues, and assigning other codes to data inside documents and categorization, it was necessary to display such data in a readable form that gave meaning to the subject of the study. This was achieved through the coding method explained above. Having provided preliminary conclusions about the phenomenon being studied, at an early stage the

researcher suggested expanding the research to cover unexplored areas, such as the relationship between the US, Qatar, and democracy.

This previous issue resulted in a shift in explanation of what, how, and why the foreign policy of Qatar regarding the Middle East peace process differed from that of the rest of the GCC member states. This is in line with Gherardi and Turner's statement that "Data are used to fill in gaps in puzzle",³⁵ and with Miles and Hubermann's view that "Qualitative studies are often mounted for exploring a new area and to build or emerge a theory about it."³⁶

Contrast-comparison tactics were adopted throughout the writing up of the findings and conclusion.

What emerges at this point is the comparison between what types of data there are and to which issues they are relevant. Comparisons were first made between the statements of the makers of foreign policy and the actual policies implemented, and between the GCC foreign policy orientations and Qatar's foreign policy, and even between the statements made by a particular official and the statements of the same official at a later time.

In conclusion, the choice of the qualitative approach methodology for this study was made for objective reasons related to the ability of this methodology to reveal new facts, as well as to discuss old and established facts, and its ability to provide an interpretation of the subject of the study, namely foreign policy.

This approach was adopted throughout the study while complying with the standard rules, and introducing a few modifications to the analysis tools to fit the nature of the study.

³⁵Silva Gherardi and Barry Turner, *Real Men Don't Collect Soft Data*, (dipartimento di politica social, Universita di Trento:Trento,1987).

³⁶Mathew B. Miles and Michael Hubermann, *Qualitative Data Analysis*,(Sage:London,1994), p.90.

3.6 Research ethics

The researcher observed the standard ethical procedures of impartiality and objectivity throughout the study. The primary or secondary sources originally in Arabic were translated into English with the utmost care. In order to avoid any possible bias reflecting the views of the researcher concerning the ideas in these sources, the translation was overseen by an independent expert translator. Similarly, the researcher did not deliberately conceal or avoid any sources that might have been contrary to his perceptions or intellectual conviction. The researcher has maintained "critical reflectivity" throughout the study in order to avoid the possibility of the researcher's own views influencing the use of the original sources. In addition, the data have been safeguarded and maintained in the best possible way in their raw and analysed forms, to protect them from the risks of loss or misuse.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the overall research methodology of the study and offered a rationale for adopting a qualitative research design to explore the central research questions. After a brief discussion on the nature of research methodology and the types of research design used in political sciences and international relations, the main data sources and specific data collection and analysis procedures were presented. The documents and other archival data sources were also explained in terms of their importance and how they were collected. The chapter explained the procedures of data analysis and the related ethical issues.

The next chapter will discuss a number of internal determinants that contributed to shaping the political environment under which foreign policy decisions for GCC states were made with respect to the Middle East peace process.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Internal Foreign Policy Determinants of the Gulf Cooperation Council towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict and the Peace Process (1991-2005)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the internal determinants that influenced the foreign policy of the GCC states towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process since the Madrid Conference, and up until 2005. The chapter will discuss security and political cooperation among GCC states, the dilemma of regional security and sub-regional threats, and the conflicting US-Iranian interests in the Gulf. It will also discuss the influence of public opinion on the GCC countries regarding the Palestinian question. Finally, it will shed light on the attitude of the Palestinian leadership towards the GCC policy regarding the Palestinian cause after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The discussion in this chapter is primarily based on the existing relevant literature gleaned from different sources, including journals, academic papers, and books, that can be regarded as secondary sources, as well as primary sources, such as final declarations issued after GCC summit meetings and official diplomatic statements published by various newspapers.

4.2 The concept of ‘determinant ‘factors in foreign policy studies

This chapter and the next chapter explore what are known as the external and internal determinant factors in foreign policy studies, which interact to produce effects on foreign policy decision makers that vary in strength. The political science literature on foreign policy suggests that foreign policy is a product of interwoven and overlapping factors that interact to formulate general foreign policy frameworks that prudent foreign policy

decision makers must respect and observe.¹ These factors differ, with different foreign policy issues being important for different states. For example, the internal and external determinants that influenced the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding the apartheid regime in South Africa will differ from the internal and external determinants that shape Saudi Arabia's foreign policy on the Indian-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir, and so on.²

Internal and external determinants influencing the formulation of foreign policy are affected by a broad spectrum of factors, including population, economic strength, military and media capabilities, security issues and borders, external influence and clout and its effect on the political decision-making process, disputes and rivalry, and finally internal stability.

Since its establishment in 1981, the GCC has tried to manage foreign policy, and maintain coherence and balance between each country's wish to shape foreign policies reflecting its national interest (which is of central importance for the foreign policy of any country) and its political, economic, and security capabilities. It has demonstrated its awareness of the sources of external threats, the necessity of unifying the GCC's foreign policies in a way that will establish security and stability in the region, and the importance of putting into effect Arab coordination on the external level.

4.3 The internal determinants influencing the political and security cooperation of GCC countries

There are two types of relationships among the GCC countries: the first one consists of bilateral relationships that interact outside the GCC's framework, which attempt to solve the border disputes among various countries of the Council and represent them in their truest form; the second type is represented in the multilateral relationships among the GCC countries. The most important governing determinants of the relationships at this level are

¹Lloyd Jensen, *Explaining Foreign Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1982), pp.3-12.

²Mohamed S. Saliem, *Analysis of Foreign Policy*, (Cairo: Al-Nahdah Al Masryeh, 1988), p.137.

border disputes on the one hand, and extreme adherence to the national sovereignty of every country on the other hand.³ This is attributable to the tribal nature of the Gulf countries, whose regimes usually stabilize under the settlement of the patriarchy system, based on taking care of the tribe as a whole, and the patriarch's ability to influence individuals and the environment surrounding his tribe, as well as his ability to distribute sources of wealth within the tribe.⁴

Since its formation, the GCC has acted as a framework wherein the various views and conceptions of its member countries are blended to bring them closer together in an attempt to unify them and to find a network of joint interests. The aim of this joint Gulf framework has been to endeavour to provide the optimal degree of interaction and coordination among its countries at the official and public levels, and some aspects and indicators refer to the intensity of the breadth and the depth of the political situation between the GCC states. The intensity of interaction among the GCC countries was represented in summits or bilateral meetings, and the nature of Council convention at its various levels, starting from the Supreme Council, which represents the leaders passing through ministerial councils, sub-committee meetings, and so on.⁵

4.3.a Political cooperation among GCC countries

In addition to the alarming structural deficiencies in the executive mechanisms, which limit the actions and successes of the GCC, and also the deficiencies in the executive apparatus of the GCC that could well derive from weakness in official political administration among the leadership of the Council,⁶ there is also a disparity in tendencies and political viewpoints on many issues among the GCC countries. This pragmatic divergence has had a negative effect on the potentiality for crystallizing joint views and common conceptions of the GCC,

³Ali Mohamed Fekhro, Reality and Future of the Gulf-Gulf Relations, *Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, vol. 268, June 2001), pp.125-126.

⁴Mohamed El Remeihy, Gulf Security and GCC Arab Countries, in Gamal Sanad El Sewedy (ed.), *GCC Arab Countries on the Verge of the 21st Century*. (Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Centre for Researches and Strategic Studies, 1999), p.174.

⁵Mamdouh Saber, Manama Summit: A Perusal of Challenges and Consequences, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, vol. 40, winter 2005), p.98.

⁶Ali Fakhro, *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, vol. 5, no. 4, October–December 2012, p.517.

in spite of not yet reflecting the Gulf's unanimity. However, there is a problem if the individual policy of a country has an influence on the general entity, namely the Council. This appeared in the boycott by Bahrain of the Gulf summit held in Doha between 7 and 9 December 1996. As seen in the border dispute between Qatar and El-Bahrain, this step had a dangerous effect on the course of the Council's action.

Also, democratic development in the GCC countries has advanced gradually, as has been manifest in the developments witnessed by Shura councils year after year, whether concerning the constitution or competency, and the best example of which is the consultative body affiliated to the Council,⁷ which was formed at the 18th summit held in Kuwait from 20 to 22 December 1997.⁸ This body is considered to be one of the mechanisms that has led to the enhancing of the Gulf meetings and councils on various levels.⁹ It is also an important step on the road to acting on and activating public contributions to the decision-making process at the group level, and in the future this will be developed to become a "Gulf Parliament, whose members can be gradually elected by direct free election.

It is noteworthy that emphasis on the political development of GCC countries is not taken as a symmetrical political unit, as each of the Council's six countries has a special developmental political context through which differences and various realities have been formed.¹⁰ This can be explained by the circumstances of origination of each country, its internal political structure, the degree of its political stability, and the nature of its relationship with its geographical surroundings.¹¹

⁷For more information, see Mohmaed Alswied, *The Gulf Cooperation Council: A Model of Regional International Regime*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1988), pp.186-203.

⁸Salah Salem Marzouka, *El Doha Summit and Gulf Cooperation Challenges, As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah* (Cairo: El Ahram Establishment, vol. 127, January 1997), p.197.

⁹Ashraf Saad El-Eissawi, *Gulf in the 21st Century: Towards a Comprehensive Strategic Security, Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Strategic Studies, Cairo, vol. 4, April 1999), p.18.

¹⁰Mohamed Khalifa, *Arab Gulf: Conciliation Aspects that should be Invested In. Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, vol. 6, June 1999), p.14.

¹¹Ghanim Al-Najar, *Reality and Future of Gulf States' Political Situation, Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies (Issue) no. 268, June 2001), pp.90-91.

As the reciprocal visits were the most prominent interaction pattern among GCC countries at the bilateral level, the ministerial meetings, which issue similar data or that adopt some distinct attitudes towards regional or international issues, are still considered to be the most important methods of interaction at the annual collective level within the GCC framework. This is without ignoring the central importance of the annual summit that is held at the end of each year, and the consultative summit agreed upon by the GCC in the first half of every year. (Council members agreed to hold two yearly meetings at the top level for GCC countries, instead of only one meeting.) Thereupon, the first consultative summit for GCC leaders was convened in Jeddah on 10 May 1999. The mechanism of this type of summit suits the nature of GCC countries and agrees with their structures, as it provides freedom of discussion and an atmosphere giving a suitable opportunity for engaging in dialogue, through which viewpoints on pending issues are exchanged to reach a unified attitude towards them.¹²

The meeting of GCC foreign ministers in Jeddah from 8 to 9 April 2000 was held in the light of important developments that occurred at the relationship level among the states of the GCC, which reflects the common willingness to build additional economic integration, and the potentiality for progress in projects that would realize more political cooperation and convergence between the GCC states. The most important aspects of this can be crystallized in four points:¹³ first, the mutual feeling of relief in Bahrain and Qatar after the mutual visits of the leaders of the two countries; second, diplomatic and consular cooperation between Bahrain and Oman; third, the establishment of the Higher Joint Committee between the UAE and Bahrain; and fourth, the development that took place in relations between the UAE and Oman after the settlement of the border issue between the two countries.

¹²Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Fourth Gulf Consultation Summit in Jeddah: An Assessment, *Shoa'oun Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 30, summer 2002), p.130.

¹³Mohamed Khalifa, Gulf meeting in Jeddah and the Re-affirmation of the Fixed Standards, *Shoa'oun Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 16, May 2000), p.42.

Furthermore, the events of 11 September 2001 imposed pressure on GCC countries to adopt political and democratic reforms. US President George W. Bush delivered a speech to the American Research Institution on 26 February 2003 about re-mapping the Middle East,¹⁴ encouraging the spread of democracy in the region, and making broad political and economic reforms. He declared that the new Iraq after the downfall of Saddam Hussein's regime in March 2003 would be part of a good pattern of democracy in the Middle East and would be, as he expressed it, the motive for implementing changes, modernization processes, and political exposure in exchange for marginalizing extremist factors, so that a new Middle East could be born.¹⁵ Also, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wrote an article in the *Washington Post* on 7 August 2004, addressing American persistence in changing the Middle East, and saying that the new Iraq, which was to be built from the debris of Saddam Hussein's regime, would be a fundamental element in building a new, different Middle East.¹⁶ What was also emphasized was the differences between the GCC countries regarding their relations with Israel, at least at the public level. Qatar's foreign minister, Hamad bin Jassem, asserted that he met with Israeli officials on 26 occasions up until 2006.¹⁷ However, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, for example, never met with any Israeli official, at least publicly, although it was claimed that some Saudi officials met with their counterparts or other Israeli officials at intervals.¹⁸

The relations between GCC countries and Israel range from public and repeated visits (in the case of Qatar) to the full refusal and denial of the existence of the state of Israel, and the lack of any cooperative interaction between them in public (as in the case of Saudi Arabia).¹⁹

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Mohamed Kamal, Democracy in the American Agenda, *Aldemocratayah* (Cairo: Centre for Political Researches and Studies, Issue no. 13, January 2004), p.34.

¹⁶ Pakinam El-SharKawy, Democracy in the American Vocabulary, *Aldemocratayah* (Cairo: Centre for Political Researches and Studies, Issue no. 13, January 2004), p.44.

¹⁷ An interview with Hamad Bin Jassem, Qatari Foreign Minister, 2004.

¹⁸ Elie Podeh, Israel and the Arab Peace Initiative, 2002-2014: A Plausible Missed Opportunity, *Middle East Journal*, vol.68, no. 4, autumn, 2014, p.592.

¹⁹ Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky, Israel's Relations with the Gulf States: Toward the Emergence of a Tacit Security Regime?, *Contemporary Security Policy*, 2017, p.13.

Therefore, processes of democratic reform and development have come to have an advanced standing from the point of view of the security of the GCC, considering the fact that the development of political systems towards democracy and political reform is a necessary condition for increasing the ability of these systems to deal with such internal, regional, and international variables for establishing national security as a broad concept.²⁰

Under this framework, it can be said that methods of integrated interactions among the six GCC members are limited, whether at the bilateral level or the collective level. The Council has remained a mere consultative field for its members, not being entitled to issue resolutions, regardless of the ambition to carry them out and follow-up their execution, as resolutions are still sovereign ones issued by the absolute will of GCC countries on the basis of their wishes or recommendations passed by the GCC. Therefore, it is noted that the most important achievements that took place under the auspices of the Council were executed within the frame of bilateral relations only, with the exclusion of collective relations.²¹ However, on the institutional level the GCC showed some success in building cooperation at different levels between its member states.²²

This conclusion applies to the two most important events that the GCC experienced before 11 September 2001, namely, the Bahrain-Qatar agreement on the verdict pronounced by the International Court of Justice concerning the border disputes between the two countries, and launching thereafter the development of a considerable integrated framework between them. Also, there was the signing by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Qatar of demarcation plans concerning border disputes between the two countries.

4.3.b Dilemma of Gulf defence and security arrangements in the region

The countries that became members of the GCC faced several threats before the GCC was established. Some of these were local, territorial, and international threats that urged them

²⁰Mohamed Saad Abu-Amoud, *Democratic Development of the Arabic World and Arab National Security, Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issueno.22, spring 2001),p.47.

²¹*Gulf Strategic Report 2001-2002*, (Sharja: Dar El-Khalij for Press, printing and publication, 2003), p.60.

²² <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08b7be5274a31e0000ba4/WP45.2.pdf>

to think carefully about finding ways to secure their national security, protection of sovereignty, and independence against foreign threats of all types. Hence, when Gulf security, we should first mention the sources of tension and instability in each country, and then the efforts exerted by the GCC to overcome these problems.

4.3.b.i Sources of tension and instability in the Gulf²³

There are three countries that particularly constitute either a threat or a possible threat to the national security of the GCC countries:

- 1) Iran and its ambitions constituted a threat to GCC countries for a long time, in spite of the improvement in relations that occurred during the reign of Mohammad Khatami, and yet there are several obstacles that stand in the way of the evolution of Iranian-Gulf relations. The Iranian nuclear programme is one of the concerns for GCC countries regarding their policy of refusal to support the spread of nuclear armaments.
- 2) Iraq is a source of tension in several respects, starting with dissension between the Iraqi people and the populations of other Gulf countries and ending with the American occupation of Iraq, in addition to the instability resulting from this occupation, namely the disturbance inside Iraq, and also the nature of American-Iranian relations. In addition, the continuity of instability in Iraq will negatively affect its neighbouring countries, the GCC countries foremost among them.
- 3) The continuous occupation of Arab lands, which has led to the Arab-Israeli conflict, has remained a source of tension, hampering the negotiations of the peace process, and putting obstacles in the way of solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In addition, there is the unsolved question over highly sophisticated Israeli nuclear

²³Abd-El-Rahman Roshdy Al-Hawari, Security Threats against Gulf Cooperation Council States, in Gulf Defense Dilemma and Region's Security Arrangements, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, 2000), pp.16-18.

capabilities. At different levels, all of these elements have represented a threat to Middle East stability.

4.3.b.ii Security and defence cooperation among GCC countries

Immediately after the end of the second Gulf War, with regard to a new security system in the Gulf, it was essential to express the actual and the real balance of power in the region, as well as to reflect the ambitions and political aims of all parties.

Therefore, a set of projects and independent judgements were, as per their originators' perspective, all aimed, in one form or another, at establishing security in the Gulf. The most important perceptions of these were those of the Americans, Europeans, Iranians, Egyptians, and the Gulf states.²⁴

4.3.b.iii The three important different points of view concerning Gulf security

There are three main countries that contribute, collectively or individually, to forming and maintaining the security of the Gulf region: the US, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. These states do not share the same point of view regarding the regional security of the Gulf. Their specific points of view concerning the security of the Gulf region can be summarized as follows:

The American perspective²⁵

The American perspective focuses on the protection of the Gulf region against risks and threats that may impact on its countries. This can be done by virtue of security agreements with such countries, provided that security can be maintained through various factors: first, to maintain the military presence of the US and some other Western countries in the Gulf region to ensure realization of stability in the area and maintain a regular flow of oil at suitable prices; second, to maintain the political stability of the counties of the region, providing various guarantees for preventing conflict from escalating and ensuring human

²⁴Diplomatic Centre for Strategic Studies: Forum on Gulf Cooperation Council States and Options for Security Establishment, Cairo, June 2001, (Bayan: 25-7-2001).

²⁵Abd-El-Rahman Roshdy El-Hawari, p.11.

rights; third, to free the Gulf region of terrorist elements and organizations; and finally, to take appropriate measures for the limitation of armaments in the region, particularly weapons of mass destruction.

The Iranian perspective²⁶

After the second Gulf War, the Iranian view of Gulf security centred on four pillars: first, that security arrangements in the region must be based on the common historical, religious, and economic relations between its countries; second, it is solely the responsibility of countries lying on the two banks of the Gulf to keep the region secure; third, the GCC has to refuse any kind of foreign interference in Gulf security arrangements; and finally, the convocation to dissolve the GCC and proposition of a security system in which Iran assumes a leading role according to its capabilities relative to its neighbours.

The Saudi perspective²⁷

Saudi Arabia considers that defending the Kingdom and GCC countries can be effected within a framework consisting of a number of circles sharing one fixed central point, interacting with, and enhancing, one another. Saudi Arabia and its armed forces are located in the first circle; the six countries of the GCC are in the second circle with regard to the fact that the GCC is considered as the basic source of its members' solidarity; the third circle is formed of the countries' friends within the broader boundaries of the Middle East and South Asian region (Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, and Turkey) such countries should work in cooperation with GCC states in performing an important role, as well as acting as a contact channel with regional allies and Western friends, and carrying out joint military training.

The security of GCC countries is crystallized in their ability to protect and develop various capabilities and potentialities in a collective way (in all economic, social, political, and military fields), taking into consideration regional and international variables, and provided that such countries should be able to face diverse threats towards them, recognizing that

²⁶Abd-El-Rahman, Roshdy El-Hawari, op.cit, p.12.

²⁷Mohamed El-Sayed Selim, in Abd-El-Moneim El-Mashat (ed.), op.cit, pp.56-67.

concepts of security in the Gulf region vary according to the views of countries having vital interests in this area. Essentially, Gulf security means establishing stability and tranquillity, and avoiding²⁸ disturbance or change that threatens the countries internally or externally. The perspective of GCC countries concerning Gulf security is based on their conception and awareness of the nature of the risks imposed by the regional environment, which are basically a result of their relations with the active and influential parties in the region, in addition to the internal risks of the region. Although there is general agreement on some principles governing the overall security situation in the region, there is still a disparity in the ideas put forward about the mechanisms for establishing security. The Gulf countries did not reach an agreement on the mechanisms that crystallize such a defensive policy, demonstrated clearly in the postponement of the study of a project for structuring a unified Gulf army and in partially replacing this idea by supporting, arming, and training the Island Shield's armed forces.²⁹

It can be seen that the tendencies of GCC countries have varied, whether with regard to the determination of allies, or confidentiality, publicity, and content of this alliance. In addition, in spite of the one aim of providing the foreign guarantee of the security of such countries, the slogan of 'collective security' collapsed, to far extent, due to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Thus, the GCC countries did not hesitate to request or accept, directly, foreign protection, and to change the system of collective Gulf security into a strategic alliance with Western countries, especially the United States.³⁰

In turn, this resulted in a radical change in the structure of the new Gulf security system, where the majority upheld territorial security over collective security, and there was a divergence in views concerning its optimal framework.

²⁸ Abd-El-Rahman Roshdy El-Hawari, p.10.

²⁹ Osman Kamel, Cooperation between Gulf Cooperation Council States and Regional Security Arrangements, a paper presented in the forum on the Gulf Defence Dilemma and Region's Security Arrangements, op.cit,p.42.

³⁰ Yehia Helmy Rajab, Arab Gulf Security in the Light of International and Regional Changes,(Cairo: Al Mahrosa centre,1997), p.257.

4.4 The most significant GCC resolutions regarding security and military matters between 1991 and 2005

The second Gulf crisis had a role in encouraging the GCC countries to take an interest in the defensive and military aspects of security, whether at the interrelationship level or the foreign level. The GCC countries had reconsidered the integrated procedures between them, which led these states to adjust some of their attitudes related to security coordination, while keeping the unity of the Gulf region and preventing it being disbanded. They also took the initiative, through the Doha Summit of 22-25 December 1990 and the Kuwait Summit of 23-25 December 1991, of discussing the security situation in the region.³¹ Such meetings reflected a relative disparity in the GCC's points of view regarding security arrangements.

From 19 to 21 December 1994, the GCC leaders at the El-Manama Summit called for the adoption and establishment of self-defence power steps via a unified strategy and developing the peninsula's armed forces to be capable of effective movement, but this summit failed to accomplish the unified security project.³²

In the summit held in Kuwait in 1997, the Gulf leaders approved two important projects at the level of military coordination and joint defence. One project was the security belt project, with its first phase actually ending in 2000. This aimed at connecting GCC countries to a unified early warning network and setting up a joint operation monitoring room for any foreign attack that these countries could be exposed to. There was also a secured communication project in order to edit intelligence communications in a secure and confidential manner.³³

The GCC leaders signed the Gulf joint defence agreement at the El-Manama Summit held in Bahrain from 30 to 31 December 2000. This agreement expressed the common wish to achieve military cooperation in the way the region's countries and populations were

³¹Hoda Mitkis, *Gulf Cooperation Council and Post-Crisis: Reality, Challenges and Prospects*, *Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, Issue No. 168, February 1993), p.107.

³²*Arab Strategic Report 1994-1995*, (Cairo: Strategic and Political Studies Centre, 1995), p.209.

³³Kamal El-Harbi, *Collective Security System of the Gulf Cooperation Council*, unpublished master's thesis, (Cairo: Cairo University, Faculty of Economy and Political Sciences, 2003), p.190.

aspiring, and confirmed a courageous step in the transition towards the creation of a joint self-defence strategy, and the gradual removal of the American security and defence umbrella.³⁴

4.4.a Joint Defence Agreement

The Gulf joint defence agreement contains 12 articles in addition to the preamble, and focuses upon a group of principles concerning the collective security of the GCC countries, and the enhancement of their unity to maintain the region's security and peace in accordance with the GCC's fundamental system provisions, the Arab League countries treaty, and the United Nations Charter.³⁵

This agreement includes important trends and concerns: state members of the GCC deem any attack against one of them as an attack against them all, and any risk threatening one of them as a menace against them collectively; importance must be given to the establishment and development of a military industry base; the constitution of a supreme council for joint defence and higher military committee, besides other military committees; state members have to(should) take the initiative immediately for assisting the state(s) being attacked by driving away any aggression or threat thereto, together with adopting any procedure, including resorting to military force, for warding off such an attack; the necessity for mutual consultation between member countries when one or more states perceives that their regional safety or political integrity faces external threat; and finally, that the members should engage in the development of armed forces for the peninsula and in assuring military cooperation among their forces by conducting joint training.

It may be perceived that this agreement would meet the security requirements of GCC countries, as they have no other option but to unify and interweave their efforts, other than coordination in all fields, particularly in the collective security determined by the terms of this agreement.

³⁴Abd-El-Malek Salman, *The Palestinian Intifada in the Gulf Press, Shoa'uon Khalejeh* (Cairo: Gulf centre for strategic studies, issue no. 24, winter, 2001),p.131.

³⁵Qatari official Journal, 13-3-2002, Issue no. 3. See Appendix no. 1 for the original copy of the agreement.

Furthermore, this agreement is not directed against any one country; On the contrary, it is related to the improvement of the collective security concept and perspective of GCC countries,³⁶ and thus it could be acknowledged as a first step towards finding a joint defence strategy with a legal dimension.

This requires working on issuing a joint defence policy for GCC countries, possessing sufficient deterrent weapons to create the required balance of power in the region, unifying the military system, and coordinating foreign policies, in addition to operating the Island Shield (*Deraa Al Jazeera*) armed force role, and its participation in joint training inside GCC countries and establishing a Gulf military industrial base.

The defensive and security cooperation among GCC countries and the US assumed new dimensions after the events of 11 September 2001, as these events attenuated the tension, enhanced correlation and cooperation, developed the Island armed forces and diminished the dependence on foreign forces.³⁷ This was due to the American war against Iraq in March 2003, which had created several developments constituting, as a whole, the controlling determinants of the GCC view of Gulf security, the most important of which was the US tendency to inaugurate a new regional security system that firmly established its presence in the region. Such a presence represents a worry to some GCC countries, particularly the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.³⁸

Furthermore, the Gulf countries continued to work on creating direct political interaction among individuals and political authorities. This was due to several factors, including the tribal structure and increase in per capita income for Gulf citizens compared to that of their peers in the remaining Arab states, and the head of state's absolute authority over distributing its proceeds,.

³⁶(El Siyasa: 26-6-2001)

³⁷Ibrahim Ghrabia, Political Developments and Arab and Regional Relationships of the Gulf States in 2003.<http://www.balagh.com/islam/ac0phgy3.htm>

³⁸Ashraf Saad El-Eissawi, Defence and Security Dimensions of the USA Relationships with the Gulf Cooperation Council States, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 38, summer 2004), p.86.

This was confirmed by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah through the speech he gave to the Arab summit in Riyadh in March 2007, in which he described the American presence in Iraq as illegitimate. This reflected Saudi Arabia's worries concerning the American role in Iraq and its consequences for the Kingdom's security as a result of intensifying the Iranian role in Iraq, and the inability of the US to curb ever-increasing Iranian power.

In spite of the increasing fears and threats regarding internal security and the Gulf Ministers of the Interior agreement, in their 19th meeting in Riyadh on 25 October 2000 to endorse a joint security strategy aiming at formulating an effective security cooperation between GCC countries,³⁹ the 24th GCC Summit, held in Kuwait from 22 to 23 December 2003, failed to conclude the unified security agreement and referred it to the Ministers of the Interior for discussion.⁴⁰

In this respect, the GCC Ministers of the Interior signed the Gulf joint security agreement for combating terrorism on 4 May 2004, which was considered an important step towards fighting terrorism, which had begun to spread extensively in the Gulf territory and Arab nations.⁴¹ In general, this created a greater and better mutual information exchange between the security organizations with a maximum speed, instead of the previously dominating administrative routine in this field.⁴²

This decision was preceded by the GCC's attitude, adopted by their foreign ministers, at their extraordinary meeting held in Jeddah on 23 September 2001, regarding terrorism⁴³ and its consequential significance that appeared thereafter with the American view of what lay beyond 11 September 2001, and its campaign against what it called terrorism.

³⁹Farouk Abu-El-Maati, Security of the Gulf Cooperation Council States between internal efforts and external challenges, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 39, fall 2004), p.152.

⁴⁰Ashraf Saad El-Eissawi, Gulf Cooperation Council States' view of the Gulf Security ... Basic remarks, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 37, spring 2004), p.86.

⁴¹Farouk Abu-El-Maati, p.157.

⁴²European Arab Studies Centre, Gulf security treaty for terrorism encountering, Paris, 29/6/2004.
<http://ceea.com/ar/index.php>

⁴³Salah Salem Zarnuqa, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram Establishment, no. 148, April 2002) p.58.

At the 25th Supreme Council Summit held in El-Manama, Bahrain from 20 to 21 December 2004, the leaders of the GCC countries succeeded in reaching an agreement on the enhancement of coordination, security cooperation, and combating terrorism in all its forms, and called for the necessity to distinguish between terrorism and people's legitimate right to resist occupation in virtue of international legitimacy resolutions.

4.4.b Problems of political and military cooperation

Observers identify the following problems facing political and military cooperation between GCC countries:⁴⁴

- i. The disparity of power and importance between GCC members, leading to the creation of a dominant competitive atmosphere in relations between nations in the region, which has resulted in a lack of confidence to find a joint collective security system for GCC countries.
- ii. Adherence to regional sovereignty and the absence of political will among GCC leaders, which hinders defensive policies unification.
- iii. The border problems among some GCC countries, and their inability to find solutions for most of these disputes.
- iv. Foreign interference in GCC affairs due to the international importance of the Gulf region.
- v. Lack of national human and technical cadres resulting from a lack of population density, and a resulting reliance on an imported labour force.
- vi. Relative weakness of GCC collective military forces, whether compared with Iran's or Iraq's military capabilities at the regional level.

⁴⁴Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, 21st Gulf Cooperation Council Summit: An Analytical Viewpoint, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 24, winter 2001), p.115.

vii. Differences between GCC countries in defining the foreign dangers that threaten their security, and disparity from one state to another; perhaps a basic part thereof may be attributed to the GCC countries disagreement about evaluating the regional security threat.⁴⁵

viii. Dissimilarity of armament systems, training, and organization methodologies among the armies of GCC countries.⁴⁶

Therefore, it may be said that the level of political coordination was less than predicted in confronting regional and international development. In order that every effort would be used in helping to support the GCC foreign policy movement, it would be necessary to develop a practical mechanism for collectively coordinating strands to serve the joint strategic concerns.⁴⁷

In other words, it is difficult to talk about a unified Gulf military front if there is no coherent political one, and in order for such a front to be effective and influential, observance should be given to unified policies, and Gulf leaders should not be content with issuing only non-enforceable statements, declarations, or resolutions.

The future of Gulf political and security cooperation will depend on many factors, the most important of which are: the enhancement of security, stability, and democracy; confidence building among GCC countries at the political, security, and military levels, as well as the agreement upon sources of internal and external threats; the future prospects for the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the potential form of future interactions between Arabs and Israelis, with or without a comprehensive settlement; and developments in the Iranian internal situation and their repercussions for Iranian foreign policy, in particular towards the US and the GCC countries.⁴⁸ Finally, it also depends on the

⁴⁵Abdullah El-Shaygi, (El-Rai El-Aam: 12-1-2001).

⁴⁶Turad bin-Said El-Amri, (Alshaq Alawst: 30-12-2001).

⁴⁷Ahmad Maher Taher, 21st Gulf Cooperation Council Summit – Issues, Dimensions and Results, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram Establishment, Issue no. 144, April 2001), p.154.

⁴⁸Sayed Awad Osman, Iranian-Gulf Relations Between Lessons of the Past and Anticipations of the Future, *Mokhtarat Iranneyh*,(Cairo: Strategic and Political Studies Centre, no.28, November2002).

development of the situation in Iraq after the death of Saddam Hussein, a new Iraqi regime came to exist, and the continuation of the American presence in both Iraq and the region.

Upon following up the Gulf security relations network before and after 11 September 2001, it was observed that they were concerned with four security concerns:⁴⁹

- i. The concerns related to GCC countries, which develop in its independent context, based essentially on military methodologies project unification, weapon purchases, the joint Gulf defence agreement, the Island Shield armed forces, joint manoeuvres between GCC armies, early warning projects, and secured communications, as well as the proposed project for launching a Gulf space satellite to provide intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities for GCC countries.
- ii. The second security concern comes with the US presence via the bilateral defence agreements between each country and the US, which actually existed before the second Gulf War, which supported such an existence. This correlation had not previously conflicted with GCC countries' first independent correlation, which was mentioned before, being in harmony with the first correlation because it was achieved under US supervision. It is notable that there has been a kind of merging between the two, and thus the US has been the connecting link between GCC countries' security correlation, although the independent and security structure of this Council's states started to develop in the late 1990s.
- iii. The third security concern relates to the Damascus Declaration project between the GCC countries, Egypt, and Syria. This is the project that met a stumbling block, failing to build an Arab structure for Gulf security. A form of military cooperation with Egypt had started in 2001.
- iv. The fourth security concern is connected to relations between GCC countries and Iran. This relationship was in some ways supporting the internal security of the Gulf

⁴⁹ *Gulf Strategic Report 2001-2002*, p.45-46.

States, and also supporting some aspects of military understanding and decreasing fears.

Before 11 September 2001, there were no problems between the GCC countries and the US that would create a crisis of confidence about future relationships. As such, the GCC intra-member states security correlation was an extension of its collective security correlation with the US. In addition, as the internal security understanding among GCC countries with Iran had their particularity, Iran, therefore, did not feel disparaged and the GCC states did not see their security understanding with Iran as a burden on their relations with the US. However, after the events of 11 September 2001, the general crisis of political confidence between the US, Saudi Arabia, and the GCC states led to another crisis of confidence between the collective security structure of the Council and the structure based on security relations between each of the GCC countries and the US. On the other hand, winning the war against terrorism (according to the American concept) had its reflections in Gulf-Iranian and American-Iranian relations, and all this imposed new challenges on the GCC countries.⁵⁰

4.5.a The dichotomy of the US and Iran, and the conflict of interests

After 11 September 2001, the American administration adopted a more flexible policy towards Tehran, focusing on talks about opening channels for dialogue between the two countries. Some American diplomats conducted a series of unprecedented discussions with Iranian officials, the first since the revolution in Iran in 1979, and this was performed without any exaggerated media clamour. However, there were events hindering this orientation, such as the detention by Israel of the ship *Karine A* on 3 January 2002. The ship was loaded with Katyusha missiles and explosives, which Tel Aviv claimed had been

⁵⁰ *Gulf Strategic Report 2001-2002*, p.47.

dispatched from Iran in cooperation with Hezbollah to the Palestinian Authority. This, in turn, had an impact on the American stance.⁵¹

On the other hand, the US and Iran successively launched accusations at each other. The US described Iran as one of the countries most active in attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction, placing it on the list of countries in its “axis of evil”. The Iranian reply was manifested in former President Hashemi Rafsanjani's speech on 30 January 2002:

Bush describes people of Palestine, Lebanon and resistance organizations as terrorists although he is the one who supports terrorism ...And that the day has come where the Islamic world possesses similar weapons to those in Israel's possession.⁵²

4.5.b Conflicting Iranian attitudes towards American interests

It had become obvious that there were various conflicting issues between Iran and the US, and these issues had, directly or indirectly, had a strong influence on the security of the Gulf region and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Edmond Ghareb wrote:

Iranian continuous opposition to the settlement process; its support of the Palestinian resistance and of Islamic Jihad and Hamas organizations; the Iranians supporting Hezbollah and providing it with sophisticated weapons and funds for continued pressure on Israel; the attempts of Iran to acquire mass destruction weapons and to develop its missiles and nuclear capabilities. Iran nurtures terrorism; it is considered by some circles in the American administration and others supporting Israel as the first terrorism keeper. Thus, the sanctions shouldn't be ended unless Iran changes its attitudes and language towards Israel. Reactions was continued to El-Khubar explosion on 1996, and Iran's role therein, a matter that raised and

⁵¹Edmond Gharib, in *The Gulf Strategic Report, USA and the Arab Gulf – 2002-2003*, (El Sharja: Dar El-Khalij for Printing and Publishing, 2003), p.139.

⁵²Edmond Gharib, p.140.

still raises questions within the American administration, which objects to any normalization with Iran or any lifting of sanctions before ascertaining its role in this process.⁵³

In addition to this, there is the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme. Iran's non-submission to the wishes of the international community, by its defiance of the UN Security Council's resolutions with regard to monitoring its nuclear programme and halting uranium enrichment, is a matter that constitutes a challenge to Gulf security and to Israeli security.

After the American emphasis on continuing the occupation of Iraq until the new American project's completion in the Middle East, the following question emerged: what system of regional Gulf relations would impose itself in the future? The answer to this depends on the new predicted variables in the region, and, of course, the most important of these concern future Iranian-American relations.

4.5.c Public opinion and the Palestinian question in the GCC countries

There are different definitions of public opinion. For example, it can be seen as "a set of individuals' opinions on a topic of public importance, which can influence the attitudes of persons, groups and governments' policies."⁵⁴ It is one of the effective political powers within the political entity in determining the nature of the relationships between the governors and the governed. In this framework, public opinion fulfils a number of fundamental functions⁵⁵ and it cannot carry out its expected role except under the umbrella of democratic regimes and in an atmosphere that gives the opportunity for expressing both the opinion of oneself and the other, thus aiming at achieving comprehensive social development. Under such regimes, public opinion has a direct influence on directing and

⁵³Edmond Gharib, pp.141-142.

⁵⁴Azmi Abd-El-Rahman, Public Opinion, Tribalism and Consultation: Critical Review, *Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, Issue no. 149), p.57.

⁵⁵Mohamed Mounir Hijab, Fundamentals of Public Opinion, (Cairo: Dar El-Fajr for Publishing and Distribution, 1998), pp.43-50.

specifying the political process, and in contributing therein, whether through mass media or via conferences and symposiums, or by means of direct free elections.⁵⁶

It is noteworthy that most regimes in GCC countries have not known the political multiplicity yet. Many considerations play an influential role in determining the degree of influence of public opinion in political affairs, such as the economic level and education of the population, which assumes a great role in specifying societal orientations, and the effect of public opinion on political decision makers. Furthermore, culture is concerned with the surrounding current events and therefore is acquainted with events occurring at the political level, while media and religion both play an important role in defining the size of the role played by individuals in directing the country's political affairs.

Meanwhile, the Gulf press has played a prominent role in the pressure to halt all normalization procedures with Israel and in closing the representative and commercial cooperation offices in some GCC countries, such as Qatar and Oman.

Moreover, before holding the Arab summit in Cairo, the Sultanate of Oman promptly closed the Israeli representational office in Muscat, and Qatar's response to the calls to close the association office in Doha came late and shortly before the Islamic summit in Doha.⁵⁷

Since its emergence, the Palestinian issue has gained overwhelming and ever-increasing Arab popular support and compassion. The Arabs and Palestinians had constantly complained about the lack of Western support, whether it is true or not, either from the Europeans or Americans, and at the governmental and popular levels.⁵⁸ However, this situation started to change, and European public support shifted in favour of the Palestinian

⁵⁶Abdullah Zalatah, *Public Opinion and Information Media*, (Cairo: Dar El-Fikr El-Arabi,2001), p.30.

⁵⁷Abd El-Malek Salman, *Palestinian Intifada in Gulf Press, Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 14, winter 2001), pp.6-7.

⁵⁸Note: the European Western vote made in favour of Israel in the UN General Assembly.

issue and people.⁵⁹ In the UK, for example, the support has increased to the rate of two to one in favour of the Palestinians.⁶⁰

Therefore, if this was the situation in Europe, then the increased public support for the Palestinian issue will be understood. Moreover, the support of Arab public opinion for the Palestinian issue reached its peak during the two Intifadas, especially after the extreme Israeli violence that accompanied the First Intifada.

Also, Ariel Sharon's visit to the Holy Sanctuary was, for the Arabs, like adding oil to fire and gave the Intifada a religious dimension in addition to a national one. This was reflected in the Arab public's support for the Second Intifada, and, therefore, the Gulf countries were not distant from such huge support, and the launch of the Arab satellite channels apparently contributed to the crystallization of Arab public support towards the Palestinian issue, through wide broadcasting coverage of the events occurring between the Palestinians and Israelis.⁶¹

In such coverage, the satellite channels were not alone; the press also contributed by providing analysis, information, and news related to the latest developments of the Palestinian issue. This contributed to increasing people's awareness of the Arab issue, albeit giving an unbalanced view, as the Arab press coverage was always for the Palestinian side, with little coverage of the Israeli viewpoint due, of course, to a set of understandable considerations.

Many findings indicate a specific shift in the attitude of the Gulf people and public opinion towards the Second Intifada in an unprecedented way, as people tended to condemn the Israeli massacres, calling for effective Arab support for Palestinian rights, confirming the Jerusalem issue of Arabism and Islamism, and calling on the Arab governments to cease all forms of normalization with Israel.

⁵⁹Greg Philo and Mike Berry, *Bad News from Israel*, (London: Plato Press, 2004), pp.258-259.

⁶⁰ibid.

⁶¹Role of the Local and Arabic Mass-Media in Presenting the Second Intifada, <http://www.sis.gov.ps/arabic/polls/archive/media.html>

In this respect, the following notes have to be taken into consideration:⁶²

- i. Unification of Gulf governmental political discourse with the popular view, which is relatively rare. Likewise, the Gulf popular view itself witnessed a high degree of coherence and harmony regarding issues, suggestions, and slogans, especially towards three causes (normalization, El-Aksa Mosque, and Israeli practices).
- ii. Demonstrations in the Gulf represented a qualitative change in political practice in the region, as traditional political systems view demonstrations, however peaceful, with suspicion. The fact that such demonstrations were permitted may be ascribed to the similarity between the official and popular attitudes.
- iii. Some Gulf capitals witnessed many demonstrations against the United States, so much so that Washington even closed some of its embassies for a time, indicating the start of a shift in Gulf-American relations at the popular level, when considering the defensive and security agreements with Washington. This can be explained by the Gulf people's dissatisfaction about relations with Washington in contrast to the previous periods of the early 1990s. However, this has not stopped some writers especially in the Kuwaiti press rejecting any assault against Washington, and reminding readers of its prominent role in the Kuwaiti liberation war. Moreover, the same press published articles calling for a reconsideration of relations with Washington.
- iv. In relation to the demonstrations and processions, it was noted that most of the demonstrators were in the age group of youths attending school or university. Also, women were present, particularly in Qatar and the UAE. This would help in creating a new, highly elevated public political awareness to work on changing the traditional perception of Gulf citizens.
- v. There was an emergence of convocations with practical characteristics concerning the endorsement of the Intifada, the most prominent of which was fighting and boycotting

⁶²Ramadan Ewis, Gulf and Intifada: Quality Shift of Political Practices, Islam Online website: <http://www.islam-online.com/Arabic/politics/2000/10/article3.shtml>

of American products, in addition to countries associated with Israel. This was surely a greatly different attitude than the formal one that expressly refused to utilize the oil weapon.

One may say that a large sector of the Gulf population was dissatisfied with the biased American political approach towards Israel, and that it is of benefit to the US and out of support for its interests in the Arab nation, in general, and in the Gulf area, in particular, to try to gain the confidence of Arab countries via recognition of the Palestinian population's rights through implementing its proposed Roadmap to establish the Palestinian State on the territories occupied since 1967.⁶³

In the same context, the US called for Palestinians to be given their rights, and the whole Gulf and Arab regimes were called upon to exert faithful efforts to support the Palestinian cause through intensive official communications and through conducting negotiations with the American side, in addition to other countries and institutions, such as the United Nations, Russia, and the European Union. The governments of Gulf states were also called upon to allocate a part of their budgets to various media channels, visual, audio, and print, together with convening conferences, symposiums, publishing books, and other means of confronting the Israeli publicity. Otherwise, the American stance towards the Palestinian cause will not change and the US will definitely remain the supporter of Israel.

When the events of 11 September 2001 occurred, the Arab countries were adopting peace as a strategic choice due to two factors. First, the Arab engagement in the peace process that started with the Madrid conference and what followed, and second, the limitation of other choices. In fact, they proceeded in the peace process, with only some support for the Palestinian resistance movements from certain radical regimes such as Syria and Iraq, which became a burden both for the rest of the Arab regimes and for Israel.⁶⁴

Then, 9/11 created a chance that Israel made use of i.e., the US listed the FATH's fighting

⁶³ Abd El-Kader El-Kahtani, (El-Sharq: 19-8-2004).

⁶⁴ Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky Op.cit., 2017, p.9.

group as the Force Seventeen besides Hamas and the El Jihad terrorist movement, this is meant to include one of the representatives of the National Authority's in the terrorist list as on the eve of the events of 11 September. The American Foreign Office terrorism lists included every voice using the armed resistance against Israeli occupation in the Palestinian arena, starting from the resistance organizations and ending with the PLO itself.⁶⁵ Hence, popular reaction was dominated by a deep disappointment with the American policy of duality, and was expressed in the popular response to the Israeli invasion of the Palestinian territories following 11 September. This was manifested in protest demonstrations and solidarity processions with the Palestinian population, as well as convening intellectual, celebratory, and solidarity symposiums to reinforce its endurance, in addition to collecting financial contributions and blood donations, and calling for a free jihad, and the total severing of diplomatic relations between Egypt, Jordan, and Qatar with regard to Israel, along with a complete boycott of American/Israeli products.

After the events of 11 September, a public opinion poll published by a Qatari newspaper⁶⁶ revealed that the majority of Qatari citizens rejected the foreign military presence in the Gulf area: 76% of the participants stated their rejection of the foreign presence, while 14% declared their approval, and the rest declared their total ignorance of the matter.

Moreover, another poll in Kuwait was conducted by a Kuwaiti newspaper,⁶⁷ which published its results showing that 61% believed that the American policy in the Middle East had caused these aggressions, while 31% opposed the idea, and 8% did not express a defined opinion.

In Saudi Arabia, an opinion poll found that only 16% of Saudis positively evaluated the US. The main reason for this was the abstention of the American administration from criticizing Israeli aggression against Palestine.

In Bahrain, the Ministry of Information developed a website to explore Bahrainis' opinions

⁶⁵ Mohsin, Awad, op.cit., p.144.

⁶⁶ (El-Sharq: 8-1-2001)

⁶⁷ (El-Qabas: 19-11-2001)

about the continuation of the Intifada. The questionnaire found that 97% of the participants believed that the Intifada should continue, 95% wished that the Arab leaders would sever all relations with Israel, 88% wanted to restore the Arab economic boycott, and 73% deemed that the stagnation in the situation may lead to a comprehensive war in the Middle East. Only 52% were proponents of the Saudi plan known as “Land in return for peace”, and 48% expected that the Arab Summit in Beirut would be of no consequence.⁶⁸

4.5.d Methods and aspects of popular Gulf interaction with the Intifada

Public opinion played an effective role in the Intifada of 2000. Voices exhorting people to fully boycott any Israeli products that could have penetrated the Gulf markets, in addition to American goods and stores in the Gulf area, increased. Such calls mobilized Gulf public opinion against American stores, goods, and restaurants in the region, synchronizing with the issuance of religious opinions (Fatwa) by popular Islamic scholars such as Sheikh El-Qardawi, who encouraged the boycott.⁶⁹

The Second Intifada helped in demolishing any indifference in the attitude of the Kuwaiti population towards the Palestinian issue. Also, Kuwaiti newspapers positively reacted to cover the events and developments of the Intifada, confirming that the Kuwaiti stance regarding the Palestinian issue was firm.

Moreover, Kuwaiti people sympathized with the Intifada to the point that some took part in demonstrations that marched towards the Nation's Assembly (Parliament), in addition to other manifestations and oratorical gatherings inside Gulf universities. Finally, this was reflected in the official Kuwaiti stance, which resulted in Kuwait offering US\$150 million as a subsidy to both the Intifada and Jerusalem funds.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Ministry of Information surveying opinions about the Palestinian Intifada: Bahrain brief website, Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, vol. 2, Issue no. 4, April 2002.
<http://www.bahrainbrief.com.bh/arabic/april-2002.htm#7>

⁶⁹Abd El-Malek Salman, *Palestinian Intifada in Gulf Press*, p.76.

⁷⁰Abd El-Malek Salman, *op.cit*, p.78.

4.5.e Formation of anti-Israeli popular movements

The popular Gulf movement against normalization with Israel, and carrying into effect boycott of Israel on all political, economic, and cultural levels, showed how strong the popular Gulf rejection of this affair was, as the GCC countries witnessed the appearance of many anti-normalization movements, such as:

- i. “The Popular Conference for Resisting Normalization with the Zionist Being in the Gulf”, which was established in Kuwait in April 2000 and has formed, since its beginning, informational, cultural, and political committees in addition to a centre for collecting data about Israeli activity in the Gulf and means of confrontation. Also, Kuwait sponsors “The Normalization Resistance Committee”, which is an organized committee formed by Kuwait from the political currents for the purpose of intensifying anti-normalization activity with Israel on all levels.
- ii. The “Emirati Committee for Normalization Resistance” was founded in the United Arab Emirates in February 2001.⁷¹ According to its by-laws, the committee’s objective is resisting normalization with the Israeli enemy by all pacific forms and means.
- iii. “The Bahraini Association for Resisting Normalization with the Zionist Enemy” was established in May 2001⁷² as a national open association for all Bahrainis and Arab residents who support the rights of the Palestinian people.

The most important conferences are:⁷³

- i. The Popular Conference on Normalization Resistance, which held several meetings on 8 April 2000 and on 31 May 2001 in Kuwait. These meetings were attended by delegations from several Arab countries.
- ii. Bahrain hosted the third popular conference for normalization resistance on 30-31 May 2001, a conference that called for the forming of an Arab mechanism between the

⁷¹<http://www.islam-online.net/Arabic/news/2001-05/05/article27.shtml>

⁷²The association's website: <http://bahrainrb.8m.com/>

⁷³Foutouh Abu-Dahab Haykal, *Gulf-American Political Relationships, Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue, no. 38, summer 2004),p.71.

working Arab committees in all domains related to the Palestinian issue, such as supporting the Intifada, normalization resistance, and boycotting American and Israeli goods.

- iii. Doha, the Qatari capital, hosted the fourth popular conference on resisting normalization with the Zionist entity in the Gulf, on 4 January 2005.
- iv. The United Arab Emirates hosted the agenda of the first popular conference on the boycott on 13-14 May 2002, organized by the Emirate National Committee for Boycotting American Goods. This conference was attended by nine Arab committees for boycott action.

It is worth mentioning that these associations and popular conferences played an important role in leading the popular action, refusing all aspects of normalization through their organized symposiums, publications, and data, besides other means and mechanisms. Such conferences reveal the popular awareness of resisting normalization with Israel by those in the Gulf. This means that there is a Gulf perception of how dangerous Israeli expansion in the GCC countries would be.⁷⁴

The Second Intifada led to an unprecedented popular solidarity with the Palestinian population, to the extent that Palestinian flags were flown in Kuwait for the first time since the Iraqi invasion. Furthermore, popular movements for boycotting American and Israeli goods have also been stimulated, besides the contributions campaign offered by Kuwaiti citizens to Palestinians, with many flights taking foodstuffs, medicines, and humanitarian aid from GCC countries to Palestine. This campaign expanded to reach Gulf princes and leaders, who offered millions of dollars to support the reinforcement and endurance of Palestinian people.⁷⁵

Despite the fact that it faded quickly, Gulf public opinion proved to be an important factor in formulating the relationship of the Gulf countries with Israel, as the Gulf States felt

⁷⁴Khaled El-Dakhil, (El-Hayat: 23-4-2000).

⁷⁵Omar El-Hassan, (El-Bayan, 29-12-2000).

helpless in facing the popular rage resulting from the ever-expanding Israeli attacks to suppress the Palestinian Intifada. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf countries depended on diplomacy to exercise pressure on their powerful ally, Washington, to contain Israel instead of resorting to severe procedures, such as imposing a petroleum embargo.⁷⁶

It is noteworthy that there is an element of Gulf public opinion in favour of normalization, involving some liberals, business people, daily newspaper journalists, cultured people, and the intelligentsia, whose viewpoints may be summarized as follows.⁷⁷

The Palestinian population agreed the peace treaty with Israel. Therefore, as they are the group concerned, why would we differ from them?. Nowadays, wars are extremely expensive and the Gulf countries spent too much supporting the Palestinian resistance, but no tangible results were obtained. The United States, the sponsor of the peace process, the ally of the GCC countries, and defender of Gulf security, stated it would be unreasonable, as it reiterated that these countries oppose the US.

Some of them believe that it would benefit the Gulf countries to form a new, different regional regime than the one existing before the Kuwait liberation war, under the auspices of a greater American role coupled with the marginalization of Iraqi and Iranian roles, and the penetration of new forces into the regional regime, namely Turkey and Israel.

4.6 The Palestinian Leadership and the GCC policy towards the Palestinian cause after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) attitude towards the Kuwaiti occupation, then the Kuwait liberation, was confusing. Although the PLO appeared to support Iraq on the surface, its leader Yasser Arafat's declarations, contradictions, and inconsistency in information, together with a divergence in Palestinian perceptions, had a negative impact

⁷⁶The Gulf exerts diplomatic pressure on America, CNN Arabic website, 25/4/2002: <http://www.arabic.cnn.com>.

⁷⁷Shamlan Youssef El-Eissa, Gulf Cooperation Council and the Peace Process in the Middle East, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram Establishment, no.122, October 1995), pp.164-165.

on Palestinian residents in the occupied lands and those living in GCC countries or in other Arab nations.

Based on a brief overview, we can have an overall look at the different Palestinian attitudes, hoping that this could lead us to the governing factors that helped to shape those attitudes.

4.6.a Various Palestinian attitudes⁷⁸

There are many Palestinian groups that engage in the resistance movements, and they had differing stances towards the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. These stances can be summarized as follows:

A- Attitude of the PLO

- i. The first reaction to the invasion was the reserved attitude of the Palestinian State, expressed in the Arab League meeting in Cairo regarding the decision to condemn Iraq and demand its immediate withdrawal from Kuwait. The Palestinian justification for such reservation was that this condemnation could open the door for foreign interference in the region.
- ii. The Palestinian view was repeated during the Arab Summit in Cairo on 10 August 1990, when it voted against the summit's resolution that condemned the invasion. The PLO declared afterwards that it did not object to the resolution but only abstained from voting in order to calm the situation and until the adoption of acceptable resolutions by all the Arab parties.
- iii. Yasser Arafat suggested the constitution of an Arab committee assigned to travel to Baghdad to reach an understanding with the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, but this suggestion was rejected by all Arab parties.

⁷⁸A Research Symposium on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, Premises – Facts and Reactions - Consequences, *Alam El-Marifah*, (Kuwait: the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Issue no. 195, March 1995), pp.352-355.

iv. Then there was the Palestinian stumbling block and its submission to waves of contradictions and biddings, in addition to the disparity of PLO attitudes according to the geographical location of the Palestinian leadership, keeping in mind that some of them strove also to rectify the path and improve the image of the PLO's image at the Arabic level.

B. Other Palestinian organizations

- i. The Popular Front, the Democratic Front, the General Commandment, the Popular Struggle Front, and the Palestinian Liberation Front had opposed the presence of foreign forces in the area and issued statements inciting the public to confront such forces. On the other side, from their location in Damascus, the opposition movements of FATH solely criticized both the United States and Yasser Arafat.
- ii. The General Secretary of the Palestinian Liberation Front, Abu Abbas, had commanded the cadres, members, fighters, and partisans of the PLO to fight the American interests and Arab nations' traitors.

It is worth mentioning that the GCC granted Kuwait the opportunity to move more freely in confronting several issues, as it completely backed Kuwait's attitude towards Iraq and all the countries that also supported Iraq. This would spare Kuwait, and any other GCC country, the consequences of adopting individual stands that may have appeared intransigent. Kuwait issued statements clearly outlining its Arab policy: "Those countries who sided with us, we shall stand by them and we shall deal otherwise with those who supported the occupation the opponent countries but our relations with the Arab world shall stay the same."⁷⁹ Therefore, Kuwait would treat the supporting countries with equal value regarding such support, while dealing with countries and organizations that stood by Iraq, including the PLO, in a different way than before.

Thereupon, the GCC contributed to peace efforts sustained by the United States in the

⁷⁹(El-Hayah: 15-4-1991)

Madrid conference the regional conference – as a supervisor, represented by the General Secretary of the Council, and without offering any support to the Palestinians in the negotiations due to its tense relations with the PLO following the Gulf crisis.⁸⁰

After the liberation of Kuwait, the relations between the PLO and the GCC countries remained generally positive at the common levels, marked by pushes and pulls concerning different aspects of the organization's financing. This has been an ongoing issue with some countries, in particular Kuwait, whose policy used to be continuously dissatisfying to the PLO leadership, contrary to the policies of other Gulf countries, such as those of Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Also, Kuwait was the sole country having great numbers of Palestinians and did not approve of the transfer of 5% of the salaries of Palestinian workers to the PLO, which led to significant damage to the Gaza and West Bank economy as a result of severing the Kuwaiti, or perhaps the Gulf, support to some service institutions depending on such aid. This imposed a new financial responsibility on the PLO to compensate some institutions for their losses. The first indications of this financial crisis for the PLO appeared in its leadership procedures to cut down its general expenditure by 30%.⁸¹

The Palestinian community in the Gulf countries, particularly in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, used to contribute financially to supporting the Palestinian cause through diverse methods.

The Palestinian population in Kuwait was 400,000, but suddenly they were attacked and their sons were deported in 1991 in the wake of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The economic disaster that was inflicted on these Palestinians was catastrophic.⁸²

Via agreements between the PLO and GCC countries, Palestinians were permitted to

⁸⁰Essam Mohammad Abd El-Qadir Salem, *Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations after Oslo*, unpublished master's thesis, (Cairo: Arab Studies and Researches Institute, 2003), p.213.

⁸¹Malek Gaber Fahd El-Sabah, *op.cit*, p.39.

⁸²Samih Farsoun, *Palestine and Palestinians*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 2003), p.238.

participate in organized celebrations and meetings, and allocated for collecting funds and the like, in support of the Palestinian political movement. However, because of the doubtful and unconfident view regarding this community, the Palestinian political activity in Kuwait, which had been so strong before the Gulf War, was exposed to extreme restrictions.⁸³

After Yasser Arafat's demise, Mahmoud Abbas declared to a Kuwaiti newspaper that "The attitude adopted by PLO towards Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion was wrong and we must opt for another one", thus rejecting Farouk El-Kodoumy's announcements that Kuwait had unduly confiscated the Palestinians' funds, as "this offended us – the Palestinians – prior to the others."⁸⁴

Also, it may be stated that the first step to building a path for resuming Kuwaiti-Palestinian relations would be the right move given the situation. In light of this, the PLO had been mistaken and biased in its attitude towards the Iraqi invasion and did not exert any effort, as some had said. The consent upon the previous fact was the important and frank requisites necessary for conciliation. Moreover, the recurrence of Kuwaiti relations with each of Jordan, Tunisia, Yemen, and Sudan delivered many beneficial lessons for the Palestinian side. The most important of these was the high-level movement undertaken by these countries to eliminate the effects of their attitudes and to prove their good intentions within the frame of a strategic orientation; therefore they disregarded all formalities. Then, there was the reporting of the declaration of Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Executive Committee of the PLO, in Kuwait on 12 December 2004, concerning the organization's apology to the Kuwaiti population for its attitude towards the Iraqi occupation of the Kuwaiti state in 1990.⁸⁵

Thereupon, the Kuwaiti Government decided to resume Kuwaiti-Palestinian relations, relying on three steps: first, to reopen the Palestinian Embassy in Kuwait; then to permit

⁸³Samih Farsoun, p.234.

⁸⁴(El-Rai El-Aam: 12-5-2004)

⁸⁵(El-watan: 13-12-2004)

the Palestinian qualified labour to, gradually, work inside Kuwait; and finally, to contribute to activating the Palestinian economy through purchasing Palestinian goods and helping the Palestinian population in restoring its infrastructure.

This was deemed a step forward in returning Kuwaiti-Palestinian relations to their normal form. The implementation of these steps began immediately after the Palestinian presidential elections.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown a number of results related to the effect of the internal determinants on the foreign policy decision-making process for GCC states with regard to the peace process and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The GCC states had different foreign policy approaches when it came to relations with Iran. GCC states also differ in their degree of democratization. However, and despite these differences, the GCC states maintained a minimum degree of foreign policy agreement when it came to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Middle East peace process, from the onset.

The chapter has shown that the GCC states were confronted with a security dilemma after the first Gulf War and the invasion of Kuwait. Despite attempts to enter into joint security pacts within the GCC, the agreements failed to resolve the security problem and, therefore, GCC states again turned to Western powers to execute security agreements that restored the security balance in the region, agreements that brought with them a heavy Western military presence, and especially an American presence, in the region.

The tensions in relations between the US and Iran affected the GCC region in two ways. First, the US military presence gave the GCC relative security against military threats from Iran and Iraq. At the same time, this military presence increased tensions with Iran, which saw the US military as a threat to its security. The increased US military presence in the

GCC also increased US political influence in the region in its capacity as the main protector.

Public opinion in the GCC constituted a form of pressure on foreign policy makers, with public opinion always pushing for GCC support of the Arab side in conflict with Israel and the Middle East peace process. However, these pressures were transient and were linked to one specific condition, namely the Palestinian Intifada, as well as other occasions and events of lesser importance.

Public opinion also played a specific role in shaping GCC foreign policy approaches with respect to the Middle East peace process after the launch of this process.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the pro-Iraq stance adopted by PLO leaders, and the calls to resolve the situation within the pan-Arab circle without Western interference created a state of rage against the PLO leadership in GCC states that even escalated into state-sponsored retaliatory measures against the PLO and the Palestinians living in GCC states.

Nevertheless, this rage, and the measures adopted by some GCC states, were very limited and did not last for any considerable length of time before GCC states resumed support of the PLO and the Arabs in conflict with Israel. These determinants pushed GCC states to call on the US to start more serious efforts to launch the Middle East peace process and defuse the tensions in the region, especially after the emergence of sub-regional security threats in the GCC, which were closer than the threat from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The next chapter will discuss the external factors that influenced the decision making of the foreign policy of the GCC states towards the peace process after Madrid until 2005. This set of factors will include a wide range of elements, such as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, American-Iranian relations, and the Israeli approach to the Gulf region.

CHAPTER FIVE

The External Determinants of the Foreign Policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council between 1991 and 2005

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the external determinants that shaped the foreign policy of GCC states on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process from the Madrid Conference until 2005. Such external determinants include the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991, which intensified the security dilemma faced by GCC states and culminated in the direct US military presence in the region. The research explores US-GCC relations following these developments, and how the increased US influence in the region intensified tensions with Iran, which already had a complex relationship with the US. It also explores how the 11 September attacks further increased US influence in the region and how the US and GCC were split over the US vision of the war on terror and the GCC vision regarding the definition of terrorism.

In addition, this chapter discusses relations between Israel and GCC states, and the diverging GCC stances on the relationship with Israel. The chapter also examines the impact of the 11 September attacks on the US political drive to introduce changes in the Middle East through two US initiatives launched to reshape the Middle East socially, culturally, and politically, and which were received with cautious reserve by GCC states except for Qatar, which welcomed the US initiatives.

Finally, this chapter aims to put all these factors together to examine the impact of the external determinants on GCC foreign policy and the peace process, and how these determinants contributed to formulating certain policies on the peace process.

Similarly to the previous chapter, this chapter relies on primary sources, such as closing

declarations announced after GCC summit meetings, GCC ministerial meetings, and official diplomatic statements, and secondary sources, including academic journals and papers, and media news articles.

5.2.a Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait came as a great challenge to GCC countries, constituting an unprecedented security threat¹ for them. Likewise, the crisis had revealed how vulnerable the security measures were in these states, and put an end to the Saudi assertion that Gulf security depended on its own countries, as it was forced to call upon Western forces to help in warding off the aggression and liberating Kuwait.² However, such a situation did not prevent the Council from establishing a unified attitude, at least on the outlines. Other than that, the GCC, on the collective level, moved forward, politically at the regional and international levels, in order to maintain the international mobilization and unanimity against the Iraqi invasion.³

The GCC made use of all its financial and military capabilities to liberate Kuwait, and agreed on completing the security and defence arrangements of the GCC countries, which guaranteed the protection of the national and regional security of each of the six GCC countries, while increasing coordination between them in the internal, regional, Arab, and international domains.

The first collective reaction by GCC countries towards the crisis was in the statement issued by the GCC Ministerial Council meeting in Cairo on 3 August 1990.

The GCC attitude was being formulated in different strategies. First, there was the warding off of Iraqi aggression and the attempt to prevent it expanding to other countries. Second,

¹Tareq Moustafa Ahmad Nouri, *Gulf Crisis 1990-1991 and its Repercussions on the Arab-Arab Relationships*, master's thesis, (Cairo: Arab Studies and Researches Institute, 1996), pp.5-92.

²Mohammad El-Sayed Selim, in Abd El-Moneim Saed, (ed.), *Gulf Security: A Study on Perception and Politics*, (Cairo: Centre for Political Researches and Studies, Faculty of Economy and Political Sciences, Cairo University, 1994), p.57.

³Hanie Raslan, *Gulf Action to Face the Crisis, As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram Establishment, no. 118, October 1994), p.68.

there was the evacuation of the occupying forces from Kuwaiti territories, liberating it and restoring legitimate rule. Third, the existence of foreign forces in the region was temporary, and they were not occupational forces as Iraqi leadership claimed, but these were forces to support the Gulf countries and protect their lands, contending that the original problem was the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.⁴ Finally, there was the assertion that Iraq had to engage in implementing all the UN Security Council resolutions concerning the crisis before lifting the siege.⁵

Furthermore, the GCC expressed its support and consideration for all efforts and procedures adopted by the international alliance countries so as to guarantee that Iraq would totally and accurately comply with UN Security Council resolutions.⁶

It was noteworthy that the Iraqi invasion left a number of negative impacts on GCC countries. The most important of these were, first, the emergence of new foreign alliances and political differences among GCC members, which influenced the Council's role in coordinating the Gulf policies. Second, the Gulf security problem appeared from a different perspective in the light of the new sources of threats, as the military liaisons with the United States and Damascus Declaration both constituted repercussions of the new pattern of relationship with the US and Egypt and Syria. Third, there was the emergence of a new Iran, challenging regional politics after withdrawing from the war against Iraq, particularly after the Iraqi regime's disappearance from the regional political arena. Fourth, there was the commencement of a new armament race in this region. Fifth, GCC countries tended to turn towards peace with Israel, through supporting the Madrid Conference and participating therein as observing members,⁷ so there was retrogression of both Arab and Gulf collective

⁴Ibrahim Mohammad Hassan, *International conflict in the Arabian Gulf: the Iraqi aggression on Kuwait, the Arab and international dimensions and consequences*, (Kuwait: Alshoraa estabshment, 1996), p.105.

⁵Abdullah El-Ashaal, *The evolve of the GCC states International relations in the light of Regional and International changes*, (Cairo: Gulf centre for strategic studies, 1999), pp.59-62.

⁶Anthony Cordesman, *The Gulf and the West*, (London: Westview Press, 1991), pp.89-124.

⁷Abd El-Khaliq Abdullah, "Tensions of the Gulf Regional System, *El-Siyasa El-Dawliya*, (Cairo:El-Ahram Establishment, no. 132, April 1998), p.40.

security.⁸ Finally, there was the reshaping of the political map in the region, reformulating the essential issues and calling upon the GCC to choose new paths at the territorial, Arab, regional, and international levels.⁹

An intense disagreement between the Arab states resulted from the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, which also led to further deterioration in inter-Arab relations. This disagreement caused more receding of the general Arab causes in which the Arab countries used to share interest and, in particular, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue.

The second Gulf War had a negative impact on the Palestinian cause. Before the crisis, the Palestinian cause enjoyed financial and moral support in the GCC, along with the Arab world. This strong support had enabled the Palestinian cause to be relatively recognized at the international level.¹⁰ The invasion led, consequently, to a reduction in the priority of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the agenda of the GCC and the Arab world.

Soon after the situation became relatively stable following the crisis, a new GCC political orientation was crystallized that aimed at maintaining a reduced level of association with the rest of the Arab world.¹¹ Such a change resulted from two types of factors: internal factors from inside the GCC, and external ones represented in the United States and its complicated relations with regional powers.

It is worth mentioning that the US had, with many other elements, contributed in separating the Council from the Arabs' joint security arrangements. It also seemed that the US exerted effort to prevent the execution of the Damascus Declaration.

The Doha Summit (22-25 September 1990), which was the first Gulf Summit after the Iraqi

⁸Shamah Bint-Mohammad Bin-Khalid Al Nahyan, Consequences of the 2nd Gulf War on the Political and Social Security Issues Inside the Gulf Cooperation Council States, *Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, no. 246, August 1999), p.53.

⁹Rubin Wright, Unexplored Realities of Persian Gulf Crisis, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 45, no. 1, winter 1991, p.26.
Herman F. Elits, The Persian Gulf Crisis: Perspectives and Prospects *Middle East Journal*, vol. 45, no. 1, winter 1991, pp.8-22.

¹⁰Reda Fouda, Gulf Crisis and its Impact on the Arab National Security, (Cairo: Cairo University, Political Studies and Researches Centre, Faculty of Economy and Political Sciences, 1999), pp.32-33.

¹¹Hoda Mitkis, op.cit, p.93.

invasion of Kuwait, reflected the beginning of the disintegration of the Arab-Gulf agreement with regard to the security arrangements. GCC countries started in establishing a perception of non-Arab security measures that did not exclude the participation of Western and Islamic parties, and approbated the regional role of Iran. Thus, GCC countries preferred to conclude bilateral security agreements with some Western countries, namely the United States, Great Britain, France, and Russia.

In this summit, the Gulf states stressed the necessity to coordinate strategies among GCC countries. A document was signed, recognizing the exigency to build up the joint military force, to develop the joint marine and air forces, to unify the joint air defence systems, to establish joint martial industries, to change the weaponry system, and to diversify its sources.¹² Afterwards, the members of the GCC participated effectively, whether by offering all military facilities, or by receiving military alliance forces granting them military bases to centralize and take action for the liberation of Kuwait. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates participated in financing the international military mobilization and in compensating some damaged countries, while others, such as Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman, became involved by sending some symbolic troops to stand by the alliance forces in the war.¹³

5.2.b The consequences of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait for the Arab-Israeli conflict

Some results of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait at the Arab level were as follows: the regionalism concept appeared in Arab political life on account of the Arab joint interest; the recurrence of the Arab cold war and the formation of side blocs and alliances that could include some non-Arab parties; there was an increase of severe political and social instability, and the diminution of Arab national feeling and the unified Arab work.¹⁴

In addition, there were some deficiencies in the Arab League Charter, with regard to the

¹²Amin ElSaati, *Gulf Cooperation Council and its future*, (Cairo: Dar Alfekr AlArabi, 1997), p.131.

¹³Rabbah Kamar Miz'il, *GCC: Analytical Study for its Present and Future*, master's dissertation (Cairo: Institute for Arab Research and Studies, 2005), p.205.

¹⁴Attallah Rawabdah, *American Intervention in the Arab Gulf States in the 1990s*, Unpublished master's thesis, (Cairo: Institute for Arab Research and Studies, 2003), pp.214-218.

legality of taking decisions, and the non-compliance of members with the resolutions adopted by the League, contrary to what happened with the United Nations and the Security Council.¹⁵ Finally, there was a reduction in the priority of Israel as one of the expected sources of threat to the regional and sub-regional system in favour of Iraq which was seen as a new and more imminent source of threat.¹⁶

Hence, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was followed by the second Gulf War, and both had the effect of complicating the possibilities of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹⁷

Likewise, the Gulf crisis, with the deterioration in relationships it brought about, assured the international public of the importance and necessity of reaching a just settlement for the Arab-Israeli and the Palestinian issue,¹⁸ and that Middle East political stability had no future without achieving equitable solutions for all problems of the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially the Palestinian issue.

In such a sequence, one may say that the Gulf crisis had a double effect on the Arab-Israeli conflict, which could be considered positive on one side from the Arab perspective and which includes international unanimity on the importance and urgency of reaching a peaceful settlement for all the problems of the Middle East. The most crucial of these problems was the Palestinian cause and the interest of different influential international parties, particularly the United States, in making serious attempts to prepare an appropriate atmosphere for the international movement to establish a peaceful solution.¹⁹

It was agreed to hold a Middle East Peace Conference, and Madrid was chosen as the host. However, in spite of the favourable circumstances for the success of the peace negotiations, and Madrid represented a breakthrough on the wall of hostility between the Arabs and

¹⁵Ali El-Awir, *The Impact of the Regional and International Transformation on the GCC, 1990-1999*. Unpublished master's dissertation, (Cairo: Cairo University School of Economy and Political Sciences, Cairo, 2002), p.121.

¹⁶Talaat Ahmad Muslim, *Gulf War and the National Security*, (Nicosia: Dar AlMoltaka, 1992), pp.67-70.

¹⁷Mourad Ibrahim El-Dusuki, *Gulf Security between Arab and Foreign Orientations*, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: alAhram Establishment, no. 105, October 1991), p.90.

¹⁸Boutros Boutros Ghali, *Gulf crisis and post-crisis*, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: AlAhram Establishment, issue no: 105, October, 1991), p. 10.

¹⁹ Meaning the Madrid Conference.

Israel, the Conference achieved limited outcomes. However, even these limited outcomes were considered to be a good base that could be built on later. Then, suddenly, the Gaza-Jericho Agreement was declared and signed in Oslo on 20 August 1993, and was celebrated in Washington on 13 September 1993.

After the Gulf War ended, the Middle East region started a new stage of its history with regards to the Arab-Israeli conflict and Palestinian issue. The American suggestions for solving this conflict and convening a regional conference for peace were brought up. Therefore, the Palestinians did not have any choice but to interact with these suggestions. Meanwhile, the attitude in the Gulf was demonstrated by Youssef Bin Alawy, the Omani Minister of Foreign Affairs, who said that:

It is for the interest of the Arab countries, including those in the Gulf, to reinforce the American attitude as it conforms with the Arab states and population's wish to terminate the conflict status with Israel, reclaim the Arab lands and consider a better future for the relationship between Israel and the Arabs.²⁰

The United States tried on many occasions to convince the GCC countries to participate in the regional conference. As a result, the Gulf States agreed to participate as an observer of the conference and were represented by its General Secretary. Moreover, these countries participated efficiently in the sub-committee's work concerning water and security problems and economic issues. Although there are no common borders between Israel and the Gulf countries, considering that the negotiations would continue in two separate yet unlinked lines this could lead to a complete normalization of relations between the Arab countries and Israel without establishing a settlement for the Palestinian cause, or even controlling the armaments in the region.²¹

²⁰Youssef Bin-Alawi, Review the Press Release of the Omani Minister of Foreign Affairs, *Derasat Falsteneah*, (Beirut: Palestinian Studies Foundation, no. 7, summer 1991), p.167.

²¹ Badr A Aati, The Palestinian cause and the prospects for a settlement, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: AlAhram Establishment, issue no: 105, October,1991), p.166.

The Arabs approbated what the US asked the GCC countries with regard to their relationship with Israel, and as a result of this participation, some Gulf countries established relations with Israel. Thus, the United States purposely worked to invest in the psychological status of the governments of these countries, expressing their gratitude to the US regarding their efforts in the war against Iraq. This was for the sake of realizing the normalization of Arab relations with Israel and nullifying the economic boycott, without stipulating any settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue, the essence of the conflict in the region.²²

In fact, the GCC countries officially nullified the Israeli boycott of the third and second degree; some of them even made a significant step towards Israel and received and sent official delegations.²³ GCC countries issued a statement on 1 October 1994, which marked the end of the indirect boycott of Israel. Such a boycott of the second and third degrees was imposed on the companies dealing with Israel and on their branches, assuring the continuity of their direct boycott with Israel.

The statement reported the justifications of such an attitude by saying:

The GCC approved the peace process in the Middle East since its launch at the Madrid Conference and it perceived the importance of the lessening of tension, particularly on the Palestinian and Jordanian sides, which includes agreements covering the economic cooperation aspects between Israel and both Jordan and Palestine. The Council considers with interest the issue of revising the rules of the Arab boycott of Israel taking into consideration the realized progress and the objective requirements of the peace process.²⁴

The Gulf attitude continued to be confused in handling the Iraqi issue in the light of the

²²Badr Ahmad Abd El-Ati, Palestinian Cause and the prospects for a settlement, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al Ahram Establishment, no. 105, October 1991),p.166.

²³Akram Abd E -Malik El-Aghbari, Yemen and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, (Alexandria: Almakteb Algamee Alhadeeth, 1999), p.171.

²⁴Ashraf Radi, Moroccan and Gulf-Israeli Relations, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al Ahram Establishment, no. 125, July 1996),p105.

American role of escalation and stabilization of its presence in the region. This was obvious in the US agreement with the State of Qatar at the end of 2000, which stipulated that the US was to remain on its lands for 20 years, an issue that would realize America's interests and that represents a threat to the region on one hand, and a maintenance of its security on the other.

The 1990s were loaded with many variables that directly affected the American view. The Madrid Conference and Shimon Peres project represented two main indications of the American strategy in the region. Moreover, the Oslo agreement and its different derivatives, the outbreak of the Intifada, the events of 11 September, the Afghan war, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and its occupation all had their severe effects on formulating the American strategy, which considered a merging of Israel and Turkey therein and excluded Iran.

5.3.a Plans towards democracy in the Middle East

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the events of 11 September had a significant impact on the US, leading it to reconsider its goals and priorities in the Middle East. It started to think that the introduction of democracy to the Middle East and connecting the region to the global economy could be a way of calming conflicts; thus it proposed several plans to implement these goals and made them targets of US foreign policy in the Middle East.

5.3.b New Middle East peace plan 1991

The Foreign Policy Institute in Washington published a report entitled “Peace Follow-Up – An American strategy for the Israeli-Arab Peace Process”, which stressed the following:²⁵

- 1- Obtaining petroleum with appropriate prices and free trade between countries.
- 2- Adherence to Israeli security and supremacy.

²⁵Ahmad Sedki EL-Dajani, Facing the Middle East System, (Cairo: Dar El-Moustakbal El-Arabi, 1994), pp.28-29.

- 3- Maintaining the security of the Arab countries' friends and working on regional stability.
- 4- Settlement of regional conflicts.

Besides these, the Strategic and International Studies Institute in Washington issued its first report, entitled "The United States and the New Middle East". The editors of the report concentrated on the corroboration of the former Secretary of State James Baker for:²⁶

- 1- Establishing a multinational bank for development in the Middle East.
- 2- Concentrating on the issues of armament limitation.
- 3- Issues of democracy and peace talks.
- 4- American compliance with Israel's security.

These points were manifested afterwards, in the conferences on economic cooperation for the Middle East and North Africa.

Also, the United States was concerned to establish a new system of security arrangements after the second Gulf War, for the purpose of ensuring the region's stability and protecting US economic and strategic interests. It was notable that reaching a settlement for the Middle East conflict would serve US strategy in the region and pave the way for the United States to move forward in implementing its security plan in the area.²⁷

This point was clear in two paragraphs of the speech by the American President George H.W. Bush, in the inaugurating session of the Madrid Conference,²⁸ as he stressed the essence of American policy, which was not confined to solving the Arab-Israeli conflict, but also was focused on working on the normalization of relations between the two parties

²⁶Report on the USA and the New Middle East, *Al Nedal AlArabi*, (Beirut, March 1992), p.11.

²⁷Ziyad Abou-Omar, American Approach with Regard to the Palestinian Cause, *Derasat Falsteneah*, (Beirut: Palestinian Studies Foundation, no. 8, fall 1991), p.20.

²⁸President Bush's speech in: *Derasat Falsteneah*, (Beirut: Palestinian Studies Foundation, no. 8, fall 1991), pp.186-189.

in all domains in order to reach bilateral and regional relationships that allowed the restructuring of the Middle East. The American administration started to set up new perceptions for establishing the “Middle Eastern regime”, depending on the multilateral negotiations and on the summit conferences of economic development in the Middle East and North Africa, in which GCC countries participated and hosted one of their committees in addition to Qatar, which hosted one of these conferences.

5.3.c Broad Middle East initiative: March 2004

The 11 September events were an opportunity to expose the US plans for reformulating the Middle East; as the American targets were demonstrated throughout “the cosmic strategy”, which the American President declared on 20 September 2002 in memory of the first anniversary of the 11 September events. He said that:

The United States used to agree upon and adapt with the disorder in the Middle East region and that its first and last concern focused only on the petroleum and Israel security as the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict was deemed non-threatening to the strategic balances. Moreover, the non-stability used to serve the United States to put all under its influence in the region.²⁹

Therefore, the eight superpowers summit held in Georgia, USA, at the beginning of January 2004, under the title of “Partnership for progress and a common future with the Great Middle East and North Africa region”, adopted the plan, after introducing several important amendments. Even though the GCC countries confirmed the necessity of the political and democratic reform steps as being the basis for realizing security and social stability, and then supporting these countries’ capability to confront challenges that obstructed them, they refused the externally imposed reform projects, stating that they would pursue any efforts or movements to effect reform from inside, which, in turn, had to

²⁹Zakaria Hussein, The Arabs a Year after the Occupation of Iraq ... Path to Re-formulate the Middle East, El-Muslim website, 16/2/2005.

respect the characteristics and circumstances of such countries from political, economic, cultural, and religious sides.³⁰

It is evident that Bush named most of the GCC countries in his speech on “democracy in the Middle East”, given in November 2003.

It is important to mention the Saudi attitude here, as it was obvious that the Kingdom’s refusal of the American initiative was due to it being considered as a project that would be imposed on the Arab countries from abroad and that would fail to observe the particularities, values, cultures, and social situations of such states, in addition to ignoring the Palestinian issue.

But, as regards the Kuwaiti attitude, Prince Sabah El-Ahmed El-Gabber, when he was the Prime Minister, called for an understanding of the claims requiring reform, saying that “We must be cautious of refusing matters and sticking to old stuff just because one party mentioned that he wishes to change them.”³¹

Other than that, the Bahraini attitude confirmed the importance of interaction between the United States and the Arab countries in respect of the reform initiative until it achieved the hoped for targets.³²

Therefore, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait sent their apologies for not attending the Summit of the Eight, while Bahrain participated therein to explain the Gulf attitude, which accepted the reforms originating from inside and not imposed from abroad.

The attitude of the GCC countries towards the Great Middle East initiative was clear in the rejection by its General Secretary, Abd El-Rahman El-Atteya, of the democratic reform initiatives imposed from abroad. He emphasized that reform should come from inside and must comply with the Arab customs and traditions, as well as with cultural, social, and

³⁰http://www.gulfinthemedial.com/gulf_media/gulf_diary/modules/arabic.php?year=2004&month=12&date_val=2004-12-22

³¹(El-Bayan: 30-3-2004)

³²(El-Bayan: 30-3-2004) the file of the Greater Middle East on El-Ahrar website: <http://www/ala7rar.net>

national heritage.

Yet, El-Atteya requested that we should not negatively judge the American initiative or other initiatives, and said that it had to be understood in depth. He also called to open the dialogue between the Arab countries and the other parties, confirming the necessity of not disregarding the Arab-Israeli conflict so as to establish the region's stability. Furthermore, he indicated the reform steps in the Gulf region via installing numerous mechanisms for popular participation and the advancement of education and social and economic conditions.³³

5.4.a Gulf-American relations

The political relations between the GCC countries and the US have been characterized for a long period by strength and solidity and were described by "A Strategic" in view of the volume and weight of mutual interests, which represented firm ground for the development of the relationship between them since the British withdrawal from the region in the 1970s. This cooperation reached its peak in the second Gulf War in 1990, after which the United States concluded a series of security treaties with the GCC countries. However, this did not prevent the occurrence of some differences and tensions between them as a result of the disparity in their attitudes towards some issues. This became more acute after 11 September 2001, which, in turn, constituted a turning point in the American policy regarding the region as a whole.³⁴

5.4.b The second Gulf War and its impact on Gulf-American relations:

The American role expanded during the era of the American President George Bush senior, who, immediately after the end of Kuwait liberation war, in his famous speech on 16 March 1991, declared his project for the new Middle East, which included as one of its elements the establishment of security arrangements in the Gulf that would help the United

³³Mohammad Fathi, Arab and Regional Orientations towards Foreign Initiatives, *Awrak AL Sharq al awsat* (Cairo: The National Centre for Middle East Studies, no. 33, August 2004), p.88.

³⁴Foutouh Abu-Dahab Haykal, op.cit, p.68.

States in performing military training with the region's countries and permit its permanent marine existence therein.³⁵ Through this, Washington aimed at holding back Iraq and preventing its appearance as a regional force capable of threatening the region's stability, in addition to protecting the security of the region's countries against any threats.³⁶

Then, the GCC countries made it clear about their inclination not to join the collective alliance with the United States and their preference for a bilateral type of agreement, which Washington encouraged. In fact, the GCC countries signed a series of defence cooperation treaties with the United States, as with a number of allied countries, such as the UK and France. These treaties stipulated the engagement of GCC countries in the following: the prior storage of military equipment to be used for defending the GCC countries that signed the treaty; performing joint periodical manoeuvres and training; and finally, offering other aid to be agreed upon by the concerned parties.³⁷

5.4.c The American military existence in the Gulf region

The United States greatly succeeded in making use of the Gulf War to realize its interests. The effects of the second Gulf War led to a change in the formula of the US appearance in the Gulf countries, which turned out to be required after previously being undesirable, in addition to a great alteration in the form of the military presence in the Middle East and the Gulf region, particularly in two directions.³⁸ First there was the expansion of the military facilities given to American forces on bases, stations, ports, airports, camps, and centres of the majority of the region's countries that have relations with the United States, or even some of the other countries that did not hold strong political relations with it. Such facilities include the right to use the airfields, the ports, military airports, air transportation operations, advanced deployment, fuel services, and maintenance and weapons storage in

³⁵Mainuddin Roling, Joseph R.A. Aisher, and Jeffery Mielliot, *From Alliance to Collective Security: Rethinking the GCC, Middle East Policy*, (March 1996, no. 31), p.390.

³⁶Mohammad Shahat Abd El-Ghani, *Gulf and New American Administration, After Nine Months of Bush's Rule, Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, no. 27, fall 2001), p.26.

³⁷(*Alraae alaam*: 20-12-1997:6).

³⁸Arab Strategic Report 2004-2005, (Cairo: Strategic Studies and Researches Centre, June 2005), p.185.

addition to joint military manoeuvres.³⁹ Moreover, there was an unprecedented increase in the main military bases to reach a total of five in the Gulf countries alone. The importance of such bases is attributed to the fact that they constitute quasi-complete and fundamental military operations centres that benefit from a relative independence and a general capability to support air, land, or marine fighting operations, whether through the actual centralization of such forces therein, or via preparing the base for their deployment whenever needed. These troops are managed by virtue of military treaties with their hosting countries, thus enabling the American forces to rapidly conduct basic military operations in different directions with no need for large mobilization plans or requirement that they be completed in a short time.⁴⁰

Then, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries stopped opposing the direct American military presence in the region. They all started to carry out joint military manoeuvres with the United States and to host units of the marines and American air force regiments. Moreover, these countries permitted the American administration this presence. The former Secretary of Defence, William Cohen, declared in 1995 that “Our existence in the Middle East region has tremendously increased.”⁴¹

5.4.d The security and defence agreements between GCC countries and the United States

Between 1991 and 1995, no GCC country was excluded from signing security agreements with the United States, following which the American presence in the region has been intensified. Such treaties were characterized by being individually and bilaterally concluded between the United States and each of the GCC countries separately. Thus, the GCC countries found themselves obliged to rely on foreign countries in the security and protection fields, due to their weak individual military capability in general, and the weak

³⁹American Presence in the Gulf: History and Significances, UAE's forum on the information network: <http://www.aluae.net/vb/showthread.php?t=492>

⁴⁰Yassin Soayed, *Foreign Military Presence in the Gulf, Reality and Options: A Call for Islamic Arab Security in the Gulf*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 2004), p.117.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

security arrangements between each other.⁴²

The presence of foreign military in any country will influence the policies, sovereignty, and free decisions of the host country, and the influence of foreign power may even extend beyond the host country to the neighbouring countries, regionally and nationally. While this discussion concerns the American military presence in the Gulf region, the fact of this presence affects the rulers' decisions and consequently limits their freedom in making decisions, meaning, practically, that it restrains state sovereignty and independence.

These agreements engendered Arab reactions. Some Arabs understood the US motives but others viewed it as an indirect occupation of the GCC countries and an influence on the sovereignty of the Gulf states. As General Yassin Soayed said, "The American military existence over here is no less than a camouflaged occupation according to the signed agreements, with which the United States did not comply, stipulating that the signatory GCC countries do not have the right to sign military treaties with other countries."⁴³ It is this fact that has hindered the Damascus Declaration, signed directly after the war between the six GCC countries, Egypt, and Syria, deeming that Gulf security was exclusively a US responsibility, with no participation by any other country.

In the light of the aspiration of the United States for the neighbouring countries to the Gulf, such as Iraq, which had been subject to an American forces assault and occupation launched from Gulf territories in March 2003, this military existence continued to threaten other countries such as Iran, Syria, and Lebanon.

The most important objectives of the US in the Gulf region can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Keeping a continuous oil supply from the Arab countries, particularly those in the Gulf, as well as providing the allied industrial countries with the quantities required

⁴²Abd El-Raziq El-Faris, *Gulf Crisis: Power Crisis and the Oil Weapon*, *Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, no. 145, March 1991), p.18.

⁴³Yassin Soayed, *op.cit*, p.114.

for the economies of these states, their communities and military needs during peace and wartime.⁴⁴

- 2- Providing Israel with comprehensive protection at the political, economic, and military levels, and offering assistance that realizes this objective.⁴⁵
- 3- Supporting the moderate Arab regimes that help in realizing the first and second objectives.⁴⁶
- 4- Establishing regional economic cooperation among all the Middle East countries, including Israel, and working on creating a joint market among these countries.⁴⁷

The US conducted many attempts to persuade the Gulf capitals that the peace they were enjoying was due to the huge military presence in the region, which began in 1986 to protect the petroleum tankers.⁴⁸ To a great extent, it is true that the policy of containing Iraq and Iran has succeeded, and that it managed to ward off these two enemies, as from an American viewpoint, at the present stage they were considered a source of threat. There is also the other part of the view of the US, which it tries to promote, which stresses that the establishing of stability in the region in the long term requires a continuous American military presence in the area.⁴⁹

5.4.e Post-Gulf War American-GCC relations

As a direct result of the second Gulf War, the American administration adopted what Martin Indyk revealed in May 1993, in his lecture about the intention of the administration of the American President Bill Clinton as the “double containment” strategy of both Iraq

⁴⁴Yassin Soayed, *op.cit*, p.114.

⁴⁵Dan Chirji, *America and Peace in the Middle East*, (Cairo: Dar El-Shourouq, 1993), p.21.

⁴⁶Ghassan Bin-Jidu, *Actual Arab-American Relationships*, El-Jazeera website on the information network, on 28/4/2001 (www.aljazeera.net).

⁴⁷Bakr Mosbah Tanirah, *New Tendencies of the American Policy in the Arab World*, *Shoa'uon Arabia* (Cairo, no. 100, June 2001), p.85.

⁴⁸American Presence in the Gulf: History and Significances, <http://www.aluae.net/vb/showthread.php?t=492>

⁴⁹Fouad Shihab, *Characteristics of the Gulf-American Relationships in the Actual Phase*, *Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, no. 247, September 1999), p.102.

and Iran.⁵⁰ This policy aimed at enabling the US to push forward the peace process between Israel and the Arabs, blockading the military ambitions of Iraq and Iran, especially with regard to weapons of mass destruction, with the exclusion of Israel from this matter, ensuring the flow of the oil in wartime and a low-priced flow in peacetime. Finally, it aimed at supporting a more democratic and prosperous Gulf region.

These security relations between the United States and the GCC Arab countries serve two important and interwoven interests from the American viewpoint, one of which is⁵¹ to create a military base for operations in the expectation that any adversary of the Middle East peace process could launch an aggression against any participant in this process. The other motive is to prevent Iran and Iraq from realizing military and political domination in this strategically important region.

The double containment policy of Iraq and Iran came to exist and developed, and could not be understood without referring to the ever increasing anxiety of the US about Israeli security, when there was no peace between Israelis and Arabs.⁵² Therefore, Gulf security has been separated from the peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

Also, the United States appeared as a main player for all policies and relations in the Gulf, whereas many contradictions in interests and views among Gulf countries themselves exist regarding differences in Gulf foreign policy, as well as in the concerned strategic perspective. At that time, it was not possible to talk about one Gulf bloc, and that is in the United States favour, which shows the US as a strong dominating party while the Gulf countries represent the weaker side. Peace in the Middle East is a strategic target for the United States, as it is for all parties including Israel, and negotiations are the way to reach solutions for the problems resulting from the Arab-Israeli conflict. The United States exerts constant efforts in the ongoing peace process, and the success of such efforts in realizing an

⁵⁰Martin Indyk, *Asia Affairs*, (Washington: Washington Institute, 18 May 1993).

⁵¹Joseph Mouinihan, *Arab GCC and USA, Common and Uncommon Security Interest: Gulf Security in the 21st Century*, (Abu Dhabi: UAE Centre for Strategic Studies and Researches, 1998), p.105.

⁵²Shebly Talhumi, *American Policy in the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (Abu Dhabi: UAE Centre for Strategic Studies and Researches, 1997), p.14.

international legitimate peace would have its impact on Arab-American relations in the near and far future.⁵³ However, the Israeli refusal to implement its part of the agreed peace plan stands in the way of achieving any progress in solving the conflict's main issues.

The United States strives to develop its relationships with GCC countries to serve the peace process, particularly in respect of normalization with Israel when there is no clear Gulf stand regarding the settlement process and confronting the United States with the determined attitude of GCC states,⁵⁴ As for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has played an important and main role in serving the American strategy in the Arab region whenever it met with Saudi national interests, one of the long-range American targets in this respect is the continuous support from the Kingdom for the role of the United States in searching for a peaceful solution for the Palestinian issue, and the Kingdom enjoys the security protection that the American umbrella provides in the region.

5-4-f The events of 11 September and their impact on Gulf-American relations

The 11 September events occurred, and they were exploited intelligently to make use of the Saudi weight to exert pressure in the direction of a comprehensive solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict, through cooperation with regional partners such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which offered an initiative, similar to what had happened at the Arab Summit in Beirut at the end of March 2002.⁵⁵

Basically, the GCC countries followed the same course as the Arab countries regarding the condemnation of the 11 September attacks. In Jeddah on 28 September 2001, an extraordinary meeting for the GCC ministers of foreign affairs was held, which confirmed the main aspects of the Council's attitude towards according full support to the United States in its war against "terrorism". It also adopted the necessary arrangements in this

⁵³Warren Christopher, *In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp.252-253.

⁵⁴Gamal Moustafa El-Sultan, *American Strategy in the Middle East, 1979-200*, (Amman: Dar Wael for Publishing, 2002), p.343.

⁵⁵Jasim Khalid El-Saadoun, *9/11 Events and their Repercussions in the Gulf Area*, *Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, no. 285, November 2002), p.44.

respect, provided that the movement against “terrorism” had defined targets to be implemented under an international cover, and was not invested in offending the reputation of Arabs and Islam.⁵⁶

Generally speaking, the Gulf view of terrorism and the war against it have been characterized by rationalism and balance, both before and after 11 September. Also, the Gulf side seemed to be keen to keep the Arab and Islamic regional dimension together with the international dimension for combating terrorism, based on a set of principles:⁵⁷

Condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, a distinction between terrorism and resistance, rejection of the idea of connecting Islam with terrorism and terrorism confrontation is a joint international responsibility, not to be assumed solely by a country with the exclusion of others.

It is worth mentioning that the GCC countries had previously approved the International Treaty for Combating Terrorism adopted by the United Nations in 1999. Moreover, the official Saudi declarations confirmed the connection between terrorism and the unbalanced American policy in addition to the ignorance of the Palestinian issue, expressing through such statements the disappointment of GCC leaders regarding the mode of treatment that Washington was following in relation to the Palestinian cause.⁵⁸

On the other hand, Saudi-American contradictions appeared and were manifested in the stringent speech of the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah against the American policy towards the Palestinian issue. His address reached the point of public rejection of the invitation to visit the White House in June 2001.⁵⁹ Moreover, the Saudi prince complained of the slackness of the American role regarding the aggressive policy of the Israeli government. He went as far as sending a letter in August 2001 to the United States. The content of this

⁵⁶(El-Hayat: 28-9-2001 :1), (El-Hayat: 29-9-2001 :1)

⁵⁷Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, Arab Procedures to Encounter Terrorism: an Analytical Study, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies,2002),p.4-5.

⁵⁸Saad Hamid, Effects of El-Aksa Intifada on the Relations between the GCC and USA, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, issue no.27, fall 2001), p.164.

⁵⁹Wahid Abd El-Megid, Dimensions of Concealed Tensions between Saudi Arabia and the USA, *Malfat Estarategieh*, (Cairo: Strategic and Political Studies Centre, no. 86, February 2002), pp.15-16.

letter was disclosed in October of the same year for the purpose of denouncing the American policy with respect to the Palestinian issue, and warning the United States that the Kingdom may re-evaluate their joint relations, as the letter included the point that “There is a time may come where people and countries break off.”⁶⁰

Two days before the 11 September attacks, responsible Saudi sources ascertained that postponing the joint high military committee meeting, due to be held at the end of August 2001, stood as an expression of the Kingdom’s disappointment with the American policy in the Middle East.⁶¹ Also, the noticeable change in Gulf-American relations since the Second Intifada was revealed by studying the official and popular Gulf attitudes towards the Intifada and Israel.⁶²

On the other side, Saudi Arabia declared that it was taking strict measures to control what was described as “illegitimate remittance” and froze the accounts of the persons and associations suspected to be linked to funding terrorism. Meanwhile, Kuwait reinforced the supervision of various Islamic charity organizations and the function of these organizations was submitted to a high committee dependent on the Minister of Social Affairs. However, in the United Arab Emirates, where the national associations had been subject to the control of the Ministry of Social Affairs since 1993, a statute was promulgated to put a ceiling of 1,000 dirham for their money transfers abroad. At the same time, in Bahrain the Bahrain Monetary Organization investigated the bank accounts suspected to be dealing with financing terrorism.⁶³

Moreover, after the 11 September events, the American objectives in the Arab Gulf region and the Middle East were exceeded by two more objectives, which can be summarized as working on a reformulation of the security arrangements in the Gulf area via establishing a pro-American regime in Iraq, and working on bringing Israel within the Gulf Security

⁶⁰Ibid,pp.15-16.

⁶¹The Arab Strategic Report 2002-2003, op.cit.p.325.

⁶²Nashwa Nashaat, El-Aksa Intifada and Future of the Gulf-American Relations, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 24, winter 2001), p.67.

⁶³The Arab Strategic Report 2001-2002, op.cit, pp. 326-327.

equation after resuming the peace process in the region, and putting political, informational, economic, and security pressures on Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia as well as the effectiveness of the role of the close Arab countries to the United States regarding the Iraqi crisis, such as Jordan, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait.⁶⁴

The defence agreements concluded by the GCC countries with the United States after the second Gulf War gained more importance after the events of 11 September. The American war in Afghanistan gave these agreements new dimensions that drove them out of their targets, in which GCC countries used to believe once they were concluded. Their main concern was the Gulf security challenges that were encountered by regional powers such as Iraq and Iran. The GCC states found themselves providing facilities to the United States in its war against “terrorism”, rather than the main concern of the GCC states. In this respect, the positions of the Council's states were not unified; while both Bahrain and Kuwait approved these facilities, the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates were hesitating. Saudi Arabia maintained a reserved attitude and clearly refused to grant military facilities to the United States in its campaign in Afghanistan.⁶⁵

Therefore, the United States bitterly criticized Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries under the pretext that they did not completely cooperate with the American military campaign in Afghanistan. Thus, the American military presence, intended to be for the purpose of consolidating Saudi security, became a double burden in terms of its safety for the following two reasons.⁶⁶ First, the US military presence, which is intended to enhance the security of Saudi Arabia become a burden on the two states security. Second, the US reached a stage of imposing additional responsibilities on the Kingdom for providing its security.

⁶⁴American Objectives in the Arab Gulf and the Middle East, *Mokhtarat Irannyah*, (Cairo: Political and Strategic Studies Centre, no. 45, April 2004), p.47.

⁶⁵Emad Gad, Gulf-American Relations after 9/11 Events, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*,(Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, no. 29, spring 2002), pp.12-13.

⁶⁶Ashraf Saad El-Eissawi, Effects of Regional and International Environment on the GCC Security, 1990-2004, unpublished master's thesis,(Cairo: Arab Institute for Studies and Researches, 2005), p.215.

5.4.g The Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian issue, and the 11 September attacks

During the previous American administration, and throughout the eight years of Bill Clinton's presidency from 1993 to 2000, the United States worked on completing the Arab-Israeli conflict settlement, especially regarding reaching an agreement in respect of the four key issues, which were: the land, the settlements, the refugees, and Jerusalem.

Also, in the course of the second Camp David negotiations in July 2000, President Clinton tried to reach a final settlement before leaving office. Clinton's failure, occurring at the same time as the Intifada and the deviation of Israeli public opinion in the direction of rightism and extremism, then the election of Sharon as Israel's Prime Minister, led to a hesitating attitude from the new administration concerning any interference in the conflict after George W. Bush assumed power on 20 January 2001, after three months of the Second Intifada.⁶⁷

Other than that, if the 11 September attacks had crystallized what may have been similar to a crisis in the relations of some GCC countries with the United States, particularly in Saudi-American relations, this was partially attributable to the biased American attitude in respect of the region's problems, and especially with regard to both Palestinian and Iraqi issues.

As for the Palestinian cause, after 11 September, the US started looking at the Arab conflict with Israel as a war between Israel and terrorism.⁶⁸ Consequently, the Palestinian cause remained in the background, as Israel endeavoured to make use of the crisis, comparing the Palestinian Intifada with "terrorism", and "Arafat" with "Bin Laden". They set up its publicity on what it called "its right to defend itself against Palestinian terrorism similar to the method followed by the United States in Afghanistan". Simultaneously, the Palestinian official response was to reject any terrorist attacks against the United States and Bin

⁶⁷The Gulf Strategic Report 2001-2002, p. 321.

⁶⁸Ashraf Saad El-Eissawi, *External Threats to the Arab National Security in the First Quarter of 2002*, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies no. 30, summer 2002), p.104.

Laden's declarations, which hinted at these attacks being retaliation for the American policy towards the Palestinian cause.⁶⁹

During the first stages of the crisis, it appeared that the international arena was prepared for great transformations in the Palestinian issue, similar to those which occurred after the second Gulf War, as the Madrid Conference for Peace was held followed by the Oslo operation.

Furthermore, in October 2001, nearly a month after the 11 September attacks, President Bush declared that "the Palestinian State has been always a part of the American perception for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict." His statement was followed by a statement from the Secretary of Defence, Colin Powell, at Lewisville University in Kentucky on 19 November 2001, in which he defined the main aspects of the United States plan for settling the conflict in the region.

Powell's viewpoint regarding the Pacific Settlement in the Middle East was manifested in: the recuperation of Madrid's spirit, the establishment of two states willing to survive, the termination of the "occupation", the cessation of all violent actions, the exchange of land for peace according to the UN resolutions 242 and 338, and the implementation of Mitchell's recommendations and Tenet's plan.⁷⁰

The future of the relations between the two parties will depend, in the first degree, on a unified Gulf attitude, as the GCC countries' positions of contradictions and disparities, regarding the way of dealing with the American policies, weaken the Gulf attitude supporting the Palestinian cause, and accord Washington the opportunity to realize its interests and target, whereas the coordination and the unification of Gulf attitudes will consolidate their interests when confronting foreign pressures.

⁶⁹The Gulf Strategic Report 2001-2002, p.322.

⁷⁰The Gulf Strategic Report 2001-2002, p.322.

5.5.a Gulf-Israeli relations

The Gulf region is of central importance in the Israeli strategic conception. In general, it could be said that Israelis' concern about the Gulf region is based on three fundamental considerations, the most important of which are⁷¹ first, the significant strategic location of the Gulf and its control over some important water passages in the world, such as the Hormuz Strait; second, the wish to open large consumer markets for its economic products in the region; and finally, if Israeli has a foothold in the Gulf it would make it near Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan, as it strives to observe their movements.

Also, there are two factors that could have given Israel hope that Gulf countries would open up for them. The existence of the US in the Gulf would help in bringing the Arabs and the Israelis closer, and help them to establish normal relations when the peace process progressed. The Israelis view the Gulf communities from the perspective of a generation of conflict and they believe that the younger generation who did not live in the days of the armed conflict, and are more open to the Western lifestyle and ideas, may be more capable of accepting the idea of the Israeli presence.⁷²

In fact, Israel basically aspires to stabilizing its economic role in the Arab region, as one of its main targets has been to become one of the players in the area. From an Israeli viewpoint, this means that peace with the Arabs implies, in the first place, the establishment of mutual economic relations with neighbouring countries for the purpose of taking advantage of the region's natural resources. In other words, this would be the peace of achieving economic integration for the Middle East, relying on what would be Israel's industrial base, and the Arab nations would be the supplier of the raw materials plus a market to merchandize the industrial products. Hence, it would be a peace imposed by force, where Israel would not strive to reach an official pacific status with the Arab

⁷¹Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, *Anti-Normalization Movements in the Gulf: Importance and Significance*, Shoa'uon Khalejeh, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, no. 26, summer 2001), p.134.

⁷²Mohammad Moseh, *Peace Process and Israel's Ambitions in the Gulf*, *Selselt Mohadrat* (Abu Dhabi: UAE's Centre for Strategic Studies and Researches, no.7, 1997), pp.19-20.

countries. What would significantly contribute to this is the Gulf economic policy, which stands as an inducing factor to more cooperation with Israel in the future.⁷³

5.5.b The nature of the Israeli approach towards GCC countries: An overview

One can perceive an important fact that some of the Israeli objectives maintain the factor of continuity regarding the regional and international political reactions, yet also throughout the Arab-Israeli conflict demarche.

The most noticeable political dimensions of the Israeli move towards GCC countries are ensuring the continuation of moderate Arab countries and governments, herein meaning the GCC countries, at the head of which is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Following the second Gulf War, Washington started a diplomatic campaign for establishing a strategic base in the Arabian Peninsula, and inciting Gulf people to assume a more effective role in a regional peace process aimed at founding Arab-Israeli relations⁷⁴ and the Israeli adoption of a policy that creates a regional security fence, meaning that it considers all the GCC countries as being a regional security barrier, which surrounds the Arab regional regime; and this would constitute a protection wall for confronting any direct threat to it or to its allies.⁷⁵

On the other hand, the most notable elements of the Israeli economic movement, specifically in the mid-1990s, can be indicated as follows: first, there was the establishment of commercial relations via opening commercial representation offices in Qatar and encouraging cooperation with companies in the Sultanate of Oman. Moreover, an Israeli researcher saw that under the wing of peace, some natural commercial relations would be established, and he suggested the possibility of spreading international cooperatives between the Arabs and Israel.⁷⁶

⁷³Glenn E. Robinson, The Greater Middle East, co-prosperity sphere: The Arab Israeli problem and the security of the Gulf, in, David long and Christian Roch,(eds.), The security of the Gulf in the twenty first century,(London: I.B.Tauris,1997),p.261.

⁷⁴Elmer Berger, A tangled web: Israel and the Gulf, *Journal of Development Alternatives*, (Sweden: vol. 13, no. 1 & 2, winter-spring 1991), p.95.

⁷⁵Jasim Younis El-Hariri, Israeli Policy towards the Arab GCC States after the Cold War, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, 2006,), p.123.

⁷⁶(Maarif: 29-10-1991).

Another economic dimension was the participation in the economic conferences in GCC countries, such as the Doha Economic Conference in 1997, and engaging in joint committees with these states for the purpose of cooperating in common economic projects in the fields of water desalination, petroleum and gas transportation, and thus being in favour of creating economic correlations with the Gulf private sector.⁷⁷ Third, there was the need to approach the Gulf markets economically, as it seemed that Israel had implemented the GCC resolution in 1994 by ending the boycott of second and third degrees on any indirect goods and purchases, with the aim of engendering more means of penetrating the Gulf markets. For example, US companies had been completely exempted from submitting the certificate of origin, and some companies, such as Coca Cola, work freely in the Gulf, regardless of their large investments, affiliates, and businesses in Israel.⁷⁸

With the hope of reaching a comprehensive peace, in 1997 Israel issued a comprehensive plan for the 21st century entitled “Israel in 2020”, comprehending a number of future probabilities or options. The most important of these is related to Israel’s economic future and it can be summarized, in reaching what is called peace with the Arab countries within the frame of open boundaries, which will be positively reflected in transferring Israel from an isolated island in an Arab sea to a great economic intersection point in the Middle East. This reveals that Israel, later with the help of the US, seeks to bind the wheel of GCC economies to that of the global economies, including the Israeli economy.⁷⁹

5.5.c The Israeli methods to approach the GCC countries

The Israeli methods, which aimed to open new channels with GCC countries, were various, according to several considerations. The most apparent of these methods could be the international and regional political atmosphere that extended through most of the world, in

⁷⁷Alaa Salem, Dimensions and Dangers Resulting from the Economic Cooperation between the Arab Countries and Israel, *Nashert Dersat*,(Cairo: El-Dar El-Arabia for Studies, Publication and Translation, no. 86, January 1995) p.67.

⁷⁸Abd El-Moneim Ali Hassan, GCC Decision and Fate of Arab Boycott to Israel, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram, no. 119, January 1995), p.171.

⁷⁹Adnan Nour El-Din Basiso, Towards a Unified Economic Strategy for the GCC Countries, *Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies,no. 244, October 1997), p.95.

general, and the region, in particular, during the 1990s. The Israeli methods of movement focused on:

i. Political methods and its dimensions

The political methods can be demonstrated in four methods. First, there were the bilateral meetings in April 1994; the Sultanate of Oman was the first Arab Gulf country to officially hold Israel responsible in the frame of multilateral negotiations concerning the water resources in the Middle East. Also, on 6 November 1994, the Israeli Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Youssef Beline, paid a short visit to Muscat and spoke about opening two departments to protect interests in both Muscat and Tel Aviv. In addition, on 23 September 1995, Omani and Israeli experts, besides other counterparts from the European Union and Japan, concluded meetings in Muscat to agree upon establishing the Middle East Centre for water desalination research.⁸⁰ Furthermore, in July 1996 Duri Gold, the counsellor of the former Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, conducted talks in Doha, discussing the means of pushing forward the normalization process.⁸¹ Second, there were the meetings in international circles and bilaterally between Qatari officials and their counterpart, Hamad Bin Jassem and Barrack, on 10 January 1996 in Paris. The talks between these parties dealt with the methods of encouraging economic development in the region.⁸² Moreover, Hamad Bin Jassem met with Silvan Shalom, the former Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the margins of the UN General Assembly periodical meetings in September 2005.⁸³ This point will be discussed in more detail in chapter nine. Third, there were secret and official visits. Israeli sources mentioned that the former Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, in the middle of an atmosphere of extreme concern about the peace process, paid a visit to the Sultanate of Oman, without defining the visit's details.⁸⁴ In addition, at the peace conference at Sharm el-Sheikh held on 13 March 1996, representatives of GCC countries were attending, and

⁸⁰Arabic Broadcasting Radio of Monte Carlo , 23/9/1995.

⁸¹(El-Safeer 23-7-1996)

⁸²El-Nahar 10/1/1996.

⁸³Ashraf Saad El-Eissawi, Gulf-Israel Normalization ... Aspects and Significances, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram establishment, no. 163, January 2006),p.165.

⁸⁴Jacob Abadi, Israel's Relations with Oman and the Persian Gulf States, *Journal of South Asian and Middle East Studies*, vol. XX, no. 1, fall 1996, p.50.

the Qatari representative, in his address, invited Peres to visit his country.⁸⁵ In addition, on 31 January 1997, an Israeli Qatari newspaper confirmed that two of Netanyahu's assistants visited Qatar,⁸⁶ as will be discussed in Chapter Ten.

The fourth and final method was the inauguration of offices of commercial representation and interest protection. In October 1995, the Sultanate of Oman became the first GCC country to establish official relations with Israel via exchanging their commercial representatives. Other than that, Qatar agreed upon inaugurating an Israeli commercial representation office; this opening was consequent to Peres's visit to Qatar, on 2 March 1996, in which they signed an agreement implying the establishment of two similar offices.⁸⁷ Of note is the fact that in January 2005, Israel reopened its commercial representation offices in both Oman and Qatar that had been closed previously as a result of the Israeli policy towards the Palestinians.

ii. Economic approaches :

The economic methods, which Israel had followed in targeting GCC countries, had several forms, part of which was, first, goods and merchandise exchange. Israel is convinced that GCC countries could offer a sizeable capital to be invested in joint projects, and also that they are in need of Israeli technology, particularly in the domains of water preservation, irrigation, agriculture, and energy, and perhaps, in the field of weapons transactions if necessary in the future. Also GCC countries are considered as the biggest consumer markets in the world. These are markets that care about products of quality and advanced technology, such as those sold by Israel.⁸⁸

Second, there is participation in economic summits and conferences. Israel and GCC countries participated in several economic conferences and summits, including the

⁸⁵Ghazi Hussein, *Summits, Security and Economic Conferences, from Normalization to Hegemony*, (Damascus: Arab Writers Union Printing House, 1998), pp.104-108.

⁸⁶(Maarif: 31-1-1997).

⁸⁷Dalia Dssa Kaye, *Madrid Forgotten Forum: The Middle East Multi Laterals*, *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 1. winter 1997, p.20.

⁸⁸Emma Murphy, *GCC Economic Relations in the Light of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process*, in: Emma Murphy et al., *Arab Gulf Security in the Shade of the New International System*, *Selselt Dersat*, (Amman: Middle East Studies Centre, no. 25 1997), pp.124-125.

Casablanca summit held under the title of “The Economic Summit Conference for Development in the Middle East and North Africa” on 30 November 1994, in addition to the Oman Economic Summit, held as the second economic gathering for development in the Middle East and North Africa from 29 to 31 October 1995. In this summit, it was reported that the Israeli delegation had submitted a document in which one could perceive its orientation towards the Gulf countries. This document confirmed that the main Israeli goal was to establish a common market similar to that of the European market.⁸⁹ Also, there was the Cairo Economic Summit, which was held from 12 to 14 November 1996, after the Oslo agreement trajectory became complicated the Arabs blamed the Israeli government for being the reason behind this complications. In addition, Israel submitted a paper entitled “Programs for Regional Cooperation”, which focused on Jordan, particularly the Jordan valley and Akaba areas, and stressed the idea of making Jordan a gateway for Israel to GCC countries.⁹⁰ Furthermore, there was the Doha Economic Conference, held on 16 November 1997, which was convened as a result of American pressures, under the pretext that such matters represented an international obligation that must be put into effect. However, the KSA, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates refrained from attending it, as did Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, and others.⁹¹ It was noteworthy that this attitude led to media contention between Egypt and Qatar, where the two countries both put obstacles to the free movement of diplomats and individuals. Hence, it seems that the prominent objective of all these convened conferences focused on creating relations, and ending the Arabic boycott prior to engaging with settlement negotiations on various levels.

5.5.d The reactions of GCC countries towards the Israeli policy (1991-2005)

Some indications were manifested inside GCC countries since the beginning of the 1990s, thus representing an official and popular reaction regarding the Israeli movement towards them. In this respect, a crucial problem was raised, meaning that part of the official view in the GCC was characterized by an obvious diversity, as some of the Council's countries

⁸⁹(El-Hayah 31-10-1995).

⁹⁰(El-Hayah:15-11-1996)

⁹¹ Ghazi Hussein, op.cit.p.84.

strove to create a connection between their officials and those of Israel. For pragmatic reasons, some of the Gulf states were willing to open communication channels with Israel, and to create structural, institutional, and popular relations to facilitate the cooperation with Israel.⁹² However, other countries refused the idea of beginning communications with Israel.

Some of the GCC governments justified establishing relations with Israel on the basis of two different kinds of logic. First, GCC countries saw no justification for the political norms related to the Arab-Israeli conflict affecting the establishment of economic relations with Israel. Second, there was no probability that they could be invaded by struggle or instability from their western side, as the security issues that preoccupied these countries according to their governments' perception were restricted to normal phenomena, such as the regional power balance in the Gulf. Another logic was adopting the opinion that some of the Arab Gulf governments, which precipitated the normalization of their relations with Israel, were pushed in this direction by fear or self-interest. Qatar and Oman rushed to sign agreements with Israel after reaching agreements with both the Palestinians and Jordanians, for different sets of reasons. One reason was to secure political position for the two states in any future arrangements in the region, and the other reason could be attributed to the strategy of balances with different regional and international pressure,⁹³ that after attaining a comprehensive settlement on the Syrian and Lebanese paths. However, concerning the beneficial side of the attitudes of some Gulf governments, these countries were convinced that they would achieve direct and fruitful economic and commercial results.⁹⁴

Likewise, there was another official Gulf opinion that feared the rapprochement and normalization with Israel, based on several arguments. First, the argument that the GCC countries feared becoming the big financier of Tel Aviv's political and economic projects in the region. Second, the argument concerning the hesitation of GCC countries, which is due

⁹²Yoel Guzansky, Israel and the Arab Gulf states: From Tacit Cooperation to Reconciliation? *Israel Affairs*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2015, pp.134-137.

⁹³Elisheva Rosman-Stollman, Balancing Acts: The Gulf States and Israel, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.40, no.4, July 2004, pp.185-208.

⁹⁴Glenn Robinson, op.cit.p.242.

to the extreme rapidity in the course of the normalization, before a comprehensive settlement of the conflict has been reached.⁹⁵

The other opinion claims that some of the GCC countries were fearful that some Israeli plans could endanger Gulf projects, with other parties having the same objectives in the future.

It is noticeable that there was no unified Gulf policy in respect of dealing with Israel, and that Gulf relations in this regard still relied, to a great extent, upon the initiatives of individual states.

The attitudes of GCC countries towards the normalization process differ from one country to another, according to each country's benefits and their own interpretation of their national interests,⁹⁶ although, as is shown in its issued statements, the Council as a whole actually opposed the direct establishment of relations with Israel before reaching a comprehensive and equitable peace in the region, or at least striking agreements at the Syrian and Lebanese levels.

Akram El-Aghbari⁹⁷ argues that, based on his understanding of the Saudi Arabia Peace initiative articles, Saudi Arabia stipulated the settlement of Jerusalem's situation as a condition for receiving Israeli officials in the future, as well as the Israeli commitment to the non-execution of any changes in the demographic and geographic characteristics that had disrupted Jerusalem since 1967. Furthermore, countries such as the UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait correlate their relations with Israel with the act of concluding agreements on the two paths,⁹⁸ while Israel strives to entangle the Gulf countries, collectively or separately, in direct and indirect relations relying on its geopolitical interests in the region and its strategic views aimed at reformulating the Arab region's aspects, so as to guarantee the realization of Israeli objectives therein.⁹⁹

⁹⁵Ghazi Hussein, *op.cit.*p.19.

⁹⁶ (El-Siyasa: 11:1: 1995)

⁹⁷ Akram El-Aghbari,*op.cit.*p.175.

⁹⁸ Ashraf Radi, *op.cit.* p.105.

⁹⁹ Akram El-Aghbari, *op.cit.*p.172.

Guzansky raises a counterargument that the Arab Gulf states and Israel were willing to establish a kind of reciprocal understanding and cooperation security towards the nuclear threat that the region faces from Iran. However, some of the Arab Gulf states stipulated to Israel that a remarkable progress needed take place first on the peace process, especially on the Israeli-Palestinian track, before taking the cooperation to a higher level.¹⁰⁰

On the other side, the argument of countries undertaking relations with Israel¹⁰¹ is based on the fact that normalization with Israel aims at supporting the peace process and the bilateral negotiations on different paths in addition to the multilateral negotiations.

The justifications in such countries are based on idea that the normalization of relations with Israel is, in fact, connected to the amount of progress realized in the negotiations. This contradicted the view opposing normalization, which, in turn, sees that these relations would grant Israel gratuitous advantages other than encouraging it to adopt intransigent attitudes in the talks.

Aside from that, Israeli interests in the Gulf were consolidated during the years following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, as well as the start of the peaceful settlement, along with the attempt at getting involved, in one way or another, in the Gulf security situation. Also, endeavoured to use an economic approach as a gateway to build security regime.¹⁰²

In this context, Israel had submitted the project of the “Middle Eastern” market, to which Shimon Peres referred in 1993, in his famous book, *The New Middle East*.

The reference of Peres can be summarized in establishing a regional economic group, including the Arab states and other countries of the Middle East plus Israel, to share a joint market and central productive organizations, in which Israel would be the leader in the light of its technological and economic supremacy.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Yoel Guzansky,2014. op.cit. p.143.

¹⁰¹(El-Hayah 2-5-1991)

¹⁰²Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky,op.cit.2017,pp.12-13.

¹⁰³Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, Arab Conference to Encounter Normalization with Israel, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*,(Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, no. 33, spring 2003), p.145.

In October 1992, at the National Institute for Middle East Studies, and in front of Egyptian intellectuals during his visit to Cairo, Shimon Peres summed up Israel's attitude regarding cooperation in the Middle East in the following considerations:

We must not observe the political negotiations by focusing on the past. We must put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict and build a new Middle East...The new Middle East should be, economically, an open area for all inhabiting nations...We could establish a Jordanian-Palestinian Confederation, or an Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian Confederation, or an alliance according to the form of Benelux.¹⁰⁴

Thereupon, Israel has been working on founding big regional projects that make economic connections between Israel and the Arab countries, that represent the essence of the political settlement desired by Israel, the Israeli main concept of peace is "peace for peace"; in other words, an economic peace¹⁰⁵ supported by the United States. Meanwhile, the Arab viewpoint stressed that normalization is a related issue of sovereignty; the Arabs' main concept of peace was "peace for land", as each country determines the suitable degree of normalization with the other country.¹⁰⁶

This matter is explained by Israel's endeavours during the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, and launched at the Madrid conference in 1991, in order to let the multilateral negotiations, which were concerned with economic and water cooperation affairs and other issues that were relevant to the normalization process, precede the bilateral negotiations related to land and security. Thus, Israel justified its viewpoint by the fact that the progress in the first round of negotiations would enhance the mutual confidence between the two sides, and consequently facilitate the achievement of satisfactory solutions in the second round issues. In fact, during this time, Israel succeeded in penetrating some closed doors within the Arab

¹⁰⁴(El-Safeer, 9-12-1992)

¹⁰⁵Nagib Eissa, Israel Bets on Normalization: An Economic Hegemony after Military Superiority, *Shoa'uon AL Sharq al awsat*, (Beirut, Centre of Strategic Studies, Researches and Documentation, (no. 5, February/March 1992), p.26.

¹⁰⁶(Middle East: 29-5-2005)

world, particularly in the Gulf region.

Also, when the Pacific Settlement began to falter in the region when Benjamin Netanyahu came to power in 1996, some GCC countries began to reconsider their steps adopted with regards to the normalization with Israel, and began to work on putting into effect the official and popular boycott. This was demonstrated in the boycott by the GCC countries of the Doha Economic Conference for the Middle East and North Africa held in 1997, as Gulf representation was at its minimum level due to Israel's participation when it had retracted from the peace process. Moreover, the GCC countries refused to participate with Israel in any forums or conferences held on its land. The Sultanate of Oman abstained from participating with Israel in the water conference in 1997 and the Emirates also refused to allow the Israelis to attend its annual exhibition for weapons, "AEDEX", on 16 March, 1997. In addition, both the Sultanate of Oman and Qatar closed their offices in Israel, as well as the Israeli offices in their capitals, in October and November 2000 respectively, as a protest against the repressive practices and in solidarity with the Second Intifada, which erupted in September 2000.¹⁰⁷

5.5.e The role of international factors in Gulf-Israeli relations

It is impossible to separate the Gulf-Israeli relations (that is, the normalization issue) from all the regional and international developments that occurred after the events of 11 September, including the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, and ending with the Israeli unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, in addition to Israeli attempts to benefit from such developments.

It is noteworthy that the events of 11 September took place at a time when the Gulf criticisms of Israeli practices against Palestinian rights had become more and more acute, and the Council's countries continued their support for the Second Intifada. In addition, there was the discomfort of the Gulf side regarding American policy in the peace process and its biased attitude towards Israel. Then, the US and Israeli pressure on the Gulf

¹⁰⁷Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Arab Conference to Encounter Normalization with Israel, op.cit.p.150.

countries began and the Western media started to accuse some Gulf countries of exporting extremism and terrorism abroad, other than supporting some terrorist groups (from the American perspective), such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The Gulf response to such pressures on two obvious behaviours was first, the Saudi initiative for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, through which the Arab countries expressed their acceptance of total normalization with Israel in return for its complete withdrawal from the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. Such an initiative later became, in the Beirut Summit in 2002, an Arab initiative. Second, the GCC countries rejected the voices claiming that petroleum was being used as a political weapon to exert pressure on the United States and Israel.¹⁰⁸

This study has noticed that the United States submitted several initiatives calling for “reforms” in the cultural, educational, political, and economic fields. Therefore, the Middle Eastern partnership initiative intervened at the end of 2002, launched by Colin Powell, the Secretary of State, followed by Bush’s call, in June 2003, to establish an American-Middle Eastern free trade zone by the year 2013. In addition, in February 2004 the American administration proclaimed the “Broad Middle East project”.

These projects aimed at realizing certain targets, the most important of which was the breaking of the power of the extremist religious currents, which carried out the resistance against the Israeli occupation and practices. Moreover, such projects sought to integrate Israel in the region, politically and economically, via opening the Arab markets for Israeli exports, regardless of the level of progress in the political settlement between the Arabs and Israel.

At this point, one could say that the “Broad Middle East Project” did not differ from the revealed Israeli view, as stated by Peres in his book *The New Middle East*, on the basis that the two initiatives aspired to establishing a new Middle Eastern regime as a substitute for

¹⁰⁸Mohammad Zurir El-Aksa Intifada in the Political Speech to the Gulf Countries, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*,(Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 24, winter 2001), p.63.

the Arab regional system.¹⁰⁹

Of note is the fact that the American occupation of Iraq did indeed result in important indirect benefits for Israel. The most crucial of these was the exclusion of Iraq as being a powerful military state from the circle of war against Israel, and the loss of Syria to a hypothetical strategic depth, which was useful in its conflict with Israel, in spite of the violent ideological disagreement between Iraq and Syria.

On the other side, the Israelis perceived these developments as a radical change in the regional power balance in the Middle East in favour of Israel.

The Israelis also considered that the fall of Baghdad constituted an extra hit to the Arab national current, which was still suffering from an intense crisis; the matter that strengthened the stream of the state national interest for each Arab country individually. Thus, this state individualism may lead to increase the self-seclusion of each Arab country and its renunciation of Arab national issues. The priority in this regard was the conflict with Israel, particularly as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had lowered morale, enfeebled the political significance of the concept of Arab national security, and led to its decay.

In the same context, there were fears that American pressures on any new Iraqi government would lead to establishing strong friendship relations with Israel that might have echoes in the relations between the GCC countries and Israel, particularly from the side of some countries who intensified their military relations with the United States, such as Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain.¹¹⁰ In addition, if Israel succeeded in this regard, then it would have divided the general Gulf attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. This fact required the GCC countries to sense such surrounding danger and to work to coordinate mutually for the purpose of confronting the Israeli threats, which began to develop after the American occupation of Iraq, targeting the Arab Gulf countries, and attempting to deepen its

¹⁰⁹Ashraf Saad El-Eissawi, *GCC Countries View of the Gulf Security*, op.cit, p.75.

¹¹⁰Mohammad EL-Saed Idris, *Gulf Cooperation Council 2003-2004, Gulf Strategic Report 2003-2004*, op.cit., p.85.

economic relations with some of the Gulf states.

From the aforementioned discussion, it seems that the Gulf reactions towards the Israeli plans could progress to reach an advanced stage in order to prevent and limit Israel's penetration inside the region. Also, Israel succeeded in building up diplomatic or commercial relations with some Arab and Islamic countries.¹¹¹

This meant that it was necessary to call for the reconsideration of the feasibility of the supposition raised along with the development of the peace process. This supposition implies the importance of the Arab and Gulf countries encouraging Israel, in the mid-nineties, to go forward in the peace process by offering incentives through speaking about normalization with the Israelis. These Arab political efforts to encourage Israel went in vain, as Israel did not respond to these efforts, even though it claimed normalization without presenting any meaningful concessions, and without stopping its policy, which the Arabs considered as being aggressive against the Palestinians.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed a range of external factors that contributed to the formation of the foreign policy decisions of the Gulf Cooperation Council. These factors included Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and its consequences, Gulf-US relations, and, finally, Gulf-Israeli relations.

The discussion revealed that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait created an exceptional dilemma for the security of the Gulf, where presumed friendly regional power turned out to be a source of threat, and at the same time, the international power that intervened to restore the security of the Gulf formed a new threat through provoking the strong regional neighbour, Iran. The US military presence in the GCC countries following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait complicated the security situation and forced GCC states to seek to execute bilateral security agreements with Britain, France, and the US. The permanent allies in the

¹¹¹(El-Sharq: 6-4-2004)

GCC further complicated the security situation because it simply put GCC states into an indirect military confrontation with Iran, who saw the US military bases on GCC territory as a direct threat to its security.

Consequently, this increased the US political influence in the GCC, and this affected the decision-making process with respect to the Middle East peace process. However, this influence only produced a limited impact when it came to the relations between GCC states and Israel except for Qatar, as has been briefly discussed in this chapter and as will be discussed in the next chapter.

The 11 September attacks were taken by the US as a strong pretext to intervene to create a new Middle East through a number of initiatives that were mainly founded on the premises of democratization and establishing the principles of embracing diversity of opinion and denouncing violence in its broad definition. These initiatives were not accepted by GCC states without reserve, but Qatar was the exception, as the study has discussed and as it will discuss in more detail in the coming chapter. Acting on such premises, the US attempted to persuade GCC states to adopt a stance that condemned terrorism. The GCC states, however, were deeply split with the US over the definition of terrorism, as the US wanted to include armed resistance against occupation, a definition that GCC states rejected as contradicting the immutable and legitimate right of all people to armed struggle against occupation, including the Israeli occupation of Arab territories

The next chapter will explore GCC foreign policies towards the Middle East peace process and the Palestinian cause as a central issue in the Middle East conflict.

CHAPTER SIX

The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Peace Process Projects: From Madrid to Camp David II (1991-2004)

6.1 Introduction

In the two previous chapters, this study investigated a set of internal and external determinants that had a key influence on GCC foreign policy making with respect to the Middle East peace process (1991-2005), including the relationship between the US and GCC states, the impact of the tense relations between the US and Iran, the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the PLO's stance on this occupation and the effect of the PLO's stance on its relationship with GCC states, as well as US attempts to introduce democratic reforms in the Middle East.

This chapter aims at highlighting key foreign policy stances adopted by the GCC with respect to fundamental issues and milestone events over the course of the Middle East peace process from the Madrid Conference until 2004.

The events and initiatives explored in this chapter that relate to the central research question in the current study include the Madrid conference, the Oslo Accords, the Gaza-Jericho agreement, Camp David, and finally the Roadmap

This chapter has also relied on a number of sources, including academic books, articles that examined the events of this significant historical period, and official documents, such as declarations made after GCC summits.

6.2 The Madrid Conference

A new phase of Gulf-Palestinian relations began in the early 1990s, specifically at the Kuwaiti-Palestinian level, in the shadow of the Palestinian stand towards the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which was not expected by the Gulf countries. Yet, the GCC states did not

relinquish their responsibilities towards the Palestinian cause and supported the invitation for an international peace conference under the auspices of Washington and Moscow. The GCC member states also issued a statement to the effect that the Council was ready to participate in the peace conference as an “observer”, should it receive an invitation to that effect and:

to support holding an international peace conference on the Palestinian cause, while abiding by the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish their own independent state on their land, and to confirm the necessity of exerting more efforts with friendly and Arab countries to hold such a conference.¹

Furthermore, the Council state members will participate in any guarantees that shall include the countries of the region in order to discuss issues related to armament reduction, the decommissioning of weapons of mass destruction, water sources and environmental protection.²

The Secretary General of the Council declared its support towards the conference in the extraordinary ministerial meeting held in Riyadh on 27 October 1991 and charged the Secretary General of the Council to attend the opening session as an observer on behalf of the Council’s states in addition to declaring the agreement of the Gulf Cooperation Council states to participate in the multilateral negotiations. More than once, the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council declared their support for the course of the peace process in the Council sessions or in the resolutions issued by each of the Gulf states.³

The Madrid Peace Conference in the Middle East was held on 30 October 1991 under the auspices of the US and the USSR, along with symbolic European attendance. Most Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and the six Gulf Cooperation

¹The Ministerial Council's 38th session held in Riyadh 3-4 March 1991, the GCC website <http://www.gcc-sg.org>

²Yehia Helmy Rajab, p.373.

³Essam Muhammad Abdul-Qader Salem, *the Palestinian-Israeli Negotiations after the Oslo Phase*, (unpublished master’s thesis, Institute of Arab Researches and Studies, Cairo, 2003), p.218.

Council states) participated in the conference. However, the PLO was prevented from officially participating in the conference. Palestinian representatives of the West Bank (with the approval of the PLO) under a Jordanian covering and among a common Jordanian-Palestinian delegation participated in the conference.⁴

With regard to the closing statement of the Twelfth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council states held in Kuwait from 23 to 25 December 1991,⁵ the Council praised the peaceful efforts exerted by the world community, expressing its pleasure with the results of the peace conference held in Madrid, in which it participated as an observer. It asserted its support for the efforts exerted to achieve peace and the intention of its states to participate in the multilateral negotiations, as an attempt by the Gulf Cooperation Council states to support the regional security by reaching fundamental solutions to all conflicts in the region in accordance with the international legitimacy.

This was the first time that the Gulf states had participated as part of the Arab-Israeli peace process. They then participated in the Moscow Conference in the multilateral negotiations on 28 and 29 January 1992, as the complementary section of the peace conference negotiations and the bilateral negotiations. Such negotiations aimed at facilitating the Arab-Israeli peace process through overcoming some thorny issues that had had a bad influence on the course of the bilateral negotiations between the direct conflicting parties.⁶

In this conference, the idea of leading two courses regarding the settlement process came into existence:⁷

- The bilateral course: This involved the Arab parties that are in direct conflict with Israel, such as Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians.

⁴ Muhsen Muhammad Saleh, *Projects of the Peaceful Settlement of the Palestinian Cause 1937-2001*, a series of methodical studies of the Palestinian cause (4), the Palestinian Centre for Information: www.palestine-inof.info/arabic/books/altawseyah/

⁵ Final Statement of the Twelfth Session of the Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council of the Gulf States from 23 to 25 December 1991. The website of the Gulf Cooperation Council (www.gcc-sg.org).

⁶ Yahya Helmy Ragab, p.374.

⁷ Ahmad Al-Rasheedy, *The International Environment of the Settlement Process: From The Palestinian Cause and the Horizons of the Settlement Process*, (Cairo: Centre of Political Researches and Studies, Faculty of Economy and Political Sciences, Cairo University, 1998), p.37.

- The multilateral course: This aimed at creating comprehensive international sponsorship of the settlement process by means of involving the most influential countries of the world as well as all regional and Arab parties to participate in the settlement process. Also, it aimed at creating a change in the general status quo in the Middle East to allow Israel to become a normal entity in the region. In addition, this course began to deal with some critical issues to remove any obstacles in the bilateral course, such as the refugees, water, security, limiting armaments, the environment, economy, and regional cooperation, with five committees formed to discuss these issues.

However, the real aim of the settlement process was to segment the Arab-Israeli conflict into two sections; the first one pertained to the Arab countries and Israel while the second related to the Palestinians and Israel, commensurate with the Israeli desire to isolate the Arabs from the Palestinian cause and turn it into a cause that concerns only the Palestinians.

6.3 Oslo Peace Accord (The Palestinian-Israeli Framework Peace Accord)

There is no doubt that the Oslo Peace Accord has caused a crack between the official Palestinian view and the official Arab view regarding how this trajectory should be settled. This is attributed to the fact that the official Palestinian attitude has gone beyond the Arab tradition of non-negotiable positions on accepting most of the terms and demands of the US administration and Israel. In addition, the Oslo Peace Accord has obliged the generalized official Arab attitude to relinquish some principles in order to cope with the Palestinian attitude regarding its relations with Israel.⁸

The Oslo Peace Accord was officially signed in Washington on 13 September 1993. It was the first agreement to be signed by both the Palestinians and the Israelis, and through which a peaceful settlement was carried out. A large segment of Palestinians and Arab

⁸Mounir Shafeeq, Oslo Peace Accord and its Sequences, (The Palestinian Centre for Information: without date), p.7. www.palestine-info.info

nationalists saw it as reflecting the enormous concessions the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was obliged to offer to get an accord that was similar in essence to the Camp David Peace Accord signed in 1978. However, the fact is that the accord was arranging mutual concessions on the both sides, and also, this accord affirmed the separation between the course of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and the course of the Arab-Israeli negotiations, a matter that has led both the Arabs and the Palestinians to be unable to coordinate attitudes and shoulder a collective agreement.

The Oslo Peace Accord was first known as the Palestinian-Israeli Framework Peace Accord or the Gaza-Jericho Accord. All the following agreements were signed between the PLO and the Israeli entity in accordance with this accord. Then, the Palestinian Authority took the place of the PLO regarding the representation of the Palestinian people. The most outstanding items of the Oslo Peace Accord are as follows:⁹

1- A limited self-rule authority for the Palestinians is established in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for a period of five years.

2- Before the beginning of the third year of self-rule, negotiations begin on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a matter that is supposed to lead to a permanent settlement on the basis of the Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and No. 338.

3- Two months after the agreement comes into force, the two parties are supposed to reach an agreement on Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho that includes giving the Palestinians limited authority covering some sectors such as education, culture, health, social affairs, direct taxes, and tourism.

4- Direct elections are held in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to elect a Palestinian self-rule council nine months after the application of self-rule. Shortly before the elections, the Israeli forces withdraw from the populated districts and redeploy in the West Bank.

⁹Emad Youssef, *The Political Repercussions of the Agreements on the Palestinian Self-Rule*, (Amman: Centre of Middle East Studies, 1994), pp.128 –136.

5- An interim self-rule Palestinian Authority covering the West Bank and Gaza Strip is formed, but its power does not include exterior security, Israeli settlements, and foreign relations, Jerusalem or the Israelis living on these lands.

6- Israel has the right to veto any legislation issued by the Palestinian Authority during the interim stage.

7- Any matter that is not settled by means of negotiations can be settled through a compromise mechanism agreed upon by the two parties.

8- Self-rule will gradually extend from Gaza and Jericho to the West Bank districts, according to later detailed negotiations.

9- The accord affirms that the PLO and the Palestinian Authority will reject “terrorism” and “violence”, preserve security, and prevent any armed acts against the Israeli entity.

With regards to the official Arab attitude, the Oslo Accord was met with semi-full support although it was first rejected by some Arab countries. However, it was later supported by the same countries, particularly because it was supported by the US and under its auspices.¹⁰ In the closing statement of the Fourteenth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council States held in Riyadh from 20 to 22 December 1993, the Gulf Cooperation Council States welcomed the Oslo Framework Peace Accord signed by the PLO and Israel on the basis that it was a first step on the way to realizing a just, comprehensive, and permanent solution to the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict, depending on Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and No. 338, the basis of land for peace, the Israeli withdrawal from the Arab-occupied lands, as well as the issue of returning Jerusalem and securing the right of the Palestinians to self-determination.¹¹

¹⁰Rauf Sulayman Abu Abed, *The Influence of the International Variables on the Peaceful Settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict 1991-2002*, unpublished master's thesis, (Cairo, Institute of the Arab Researches and Studies, 2004), p.220.

¹¹The closing statement of the Fourteenth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council States, Riyadh, 20-22 December, 1993 – The website of the GCC states is <http://www.gcc-sg.org>

6.4 The Palestinian-Israeli agreement on self-rule (First known as the Gaza-Jericho Agreement)

The Palestinian-Israeli framework peace accord signed in Washington on 13 September 1993 opened the way for holding negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, which resulted in their signing the agreement on self-rule in Cairo on 4 May 1994. One of the fruits of this agreement was the return of the Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to the Gaza Strip in June 1994.¹²

The Palestinian-Israeli agreement stipulates that a limited interim self-rule Palestinian Authority be established in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank for a period of no more than five years, during which and before the beginning of the third year, negotiations on the final status will be held. Such negotiations are supposed to lead to a permanent settlement on the basis of the International Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and No. 338.

The Palestinian-Israeli framework peace accord was a turning point in the Palestinian cause from the Arab and Islamic dimension to the bilateral regional dimension. The agreement was drawn up in secret over a period of more than a year and a half. For the first time, the Palestinians officially acknowledged the existence of an Israeli state on Palestinian land. Also, the Palestine Liberation Organization pledged to stop all armed acts against Israel and the Israelis living in the self-rule areas and to do its best to prevent such acts before they are carried out, a matter that gave some Arab countries the excuse to have peace with Israel and to acknowledge it as a Middle Eastern country, removing the main obstacle to Israel's possibility of becoming a nation like any other nations (as said in Hebrew). This agreement led to the breaking of the historical state of deadlock in Arab-Israeli relations, which led some Arab countries to have normal relations with Israel. These Arab countries, including some Gulf countries such as Qatar and Oman, that by reaching a solution to the problem of the Palestinian people, which is the core of

¹²Jawwad Al-Hamd, Introduction to the Palestinian Cause,(Amman: the Middle East Studies Centre, 1999) p.493.

the Arab-Israeli conflict, it became possible to reform Arab relations with Israel under the pretext that the Palestinian people had got their rights and that they respected the independent Palestinian decision.¹³

At this stage, the declaration issued by the Gulf Cooperation Council states came after the meeting of the representatives of the GCC states with the American Secretary of State on 1 October 1994, and called for putting an end to the indirect boycott of Israel, the “boycott of second and third classes”, indicating in the same statement that the Cooperation Council would support any initiative proposed by the Arab League on the topic of boycott and that this agreement should be reconsidered to take into consideration the recent aspects and requirements of the peace process in the Middle East.

In the same context, some Gulf states, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, and Bahrain, just supported the peace process and the Arab view on Jerusalem, but they suspended the process of having normal relations with Israel and linked it with the complete Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab occupied lands and giving all the rights back to the Palestinian people. With regard to Qatar and Oman, they took some steps to have normal relations with Israel at the official level in the framework of having attitudes and policies that are different from those adopted by the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

6.5 The Palestinian-Israeli interim agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip 1995

This refers to the interim agreement known as the Oslo Second Accord, which offered a comprehensive vision of the West Bank and a plan for a gradual Israeli withdrawal. Although a lot of steps were taken to set up a Palestinian parliament in the light of this agreement, through holding elections in the Palestinian occupied lands for the first time, the most important item of the Oslo Second Accord was the special arrangement

¹³Emad Youssef , The Political Reactions to the Self-rule Accord, (Amman: Centre of Middle East Studies, 1995), p.135.

concerning Palestinian land, which was prepared side by side with suggestions of Palestinian self-rule.¹⁴

Despite the agreement of the two parties in the introductory talks on the Oslo Second Accord to abide by the Security Council Resolution No. 242, the interim agreement offered convincing evidence that Israel intended to withdraw from some parts of the West Bank. In 1995 and 1996, Israel made a complete withdrawal from zone (A) with the exception of Hebron, and gave the Palestinian Authority some control over the Palestinians living in zone (B). However, there was an item among the conditions of this agreement pertaining to zone (C) that Israel would withdraw from zone (C) with the passage of time but it would not withdraw from parts that would be negotiated in the talks on the final status.¹⁵

Some critical issues, such as Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with neighbouring countries, and other issues of common interest were included in some items of the accord. Settlements and security arrangements were among the issues that are most related to the occupied lands. With the existence of hundreds of settlements and military watch points in zone (C), Israel negotiated to have the right to stay forever in a big part of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, even after the interim period. This is because the establishment of watch points and settlements needs legal or military permission from Israel. Thus, Israel saw that these Israeli parts of zone (C) would not be settled through negotiations but through Israeli political will alone.¹⁶

Contrary to the aim stipulated by the Oslo Accord as represented in returning all the occupied lands to the Palestinians according to Security Council Resolution No. 242, the

¹⁴The introduction to the agreement says nothing about the division of the West Bank into three districts, the biggest of which would remain under Israeli control. Instead, it set out that the two parties had the desire to put the framework peace agreement into force with regard to the arrangements for interim self-rule. (Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Washington, 28 September 1995, p.7.)

¹⁵Nicholas Juyat, *The Absence of Peace is an Attempt to Understand the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, translated by Talaat Al-Shayeb, (Cairo: the Culture Supreme Council, 2005) p.64.

¹⁶*Ibid.* p.65.

documents signed in September 1995 gave Israel the right to keep no less than 75% of the lands of the West Bank.

As for the closing statement of the Sixteenth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council States held in Muscat from 4 to 6 December 1995,¹⁷ the states of the Cooperation Council stipulated that peace should be comprehensive, just, and permanent, and that it should be a basis for security, stability, and development in the region and exchange of interests among the states of the region. They would also welcome signing the second stage agreement, which aims at extending Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They asserted that they were ready to support all possible efforts to hasten the final settlement between the parties of the peace process in the Middle East, according to the international legal resolutions and the Madrid Conference resolutions.

The Gulf Cooperation Council states still call for the Security Council to take all possible and suitable measures to force Israel to refrain from causing any change to the characteristics of the geography and population of Jerusalem with its well-known borders before 4 July 1967, and secure its adherence to the international legitimacy resolutions concerning Jerusalem, especially Security Council Resolution No. 242.¹⁸

At this stage, it was noticed that there was the development of some aspects of cooperation between some Gulf states (Qatar and Oman) and Israel on a national level, and not as a Gulf bloc through the Cooperation Council. The two years 1994 and 1995 witnessed active communications between those two countries and Israel. As a result of such communications and mutual visits, Qatar and Oman agreed to have mutual representative and commercial offices with Israel in 1996. This occurred as a result of different regional and international circumstances that will be discussed in relation to Qatar in detail in a later chapter.

¹⁷The Closing Statement of the Sixteenth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council States, Muscat, 4-6 December 1995, the website of the Gulf Cooperation Council States is www.gcc-sg.org

¹⁸The Fifty-sixth Session of the Ministerial Council held in Riyadh 18-19 September 1995, the website of the Gulf Cooperation Council States is www.gcc-sg.org

6.6 Redeployment protocol in Hebron 1997

The process of withdrawal and redeployment continued during the rule of the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, but the assassination of Rabin by Yigal Amir on 5 November 1995 led to the stopping of the mechanism of withdrawal. This is because Shimon Peres, who succeeded Rabin, froze the process of carrying out the agreement during the six months (from November 1995 to May 1996) in which he assumed power as the Prime Minister of Israel. The elections held in May 1996 resulted in the victory of the candidate of the Israel Likud Party, Benjamin Netanyahu, to be the Prime Minister of Israel.

When the Likud party assumed power in June 1996 it inherited a policy of limited withdrawal and extension of settlements from Rabin and Peres. It immediately developed a plan to establish thirty thousand buildings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. During the period from June 1996 to October 1998, eleven thousand buildings were built, especially in East Jerusalem. In addition, there was the project of Greater Jerusalem, which was ratified by the Israeli government, and under which 10% of the lands of the West Bank were annexed to the municipal borders of Jerusalem.¹⁹

Generally, the Likud policy of negotiations was founded on the basis of negotiation for negotiation, making use of the element of time to carry out the Israeli plans represented in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and judaizing Jerusalem and Hebron when possible. Netanyahu dropped out of his dictionary the word “land”, thus the principle of “land for peace” turned into “security for peace” and consequently, “peace for peace”. This policy was grounded on extending and deepening the concept of Israeli security from the security of the state as a whole to the security of each individual, without giving any attention to Palestinian security, either in terms of groups or individuals. He expressed his bad intentions regarding the Palestinian ambitions to have an independent state and the future of the settlement process in the final negotiations (on Jerusalem,

¹⁹Zaef Sheef, *Are Confrontations Inevitable?*, *Mokhtarat Israeleih*, (Cairo: Centre of Political and Strategic Studies, Issue no. 69, September 2000), p.29.

settlement, water, borders, and refugees). This could be realized from the extension of settlements vertically and horizontally, and the freezing of the multilateral negotiations on the issue of refugees, as well as the obscurity of the Israeli conception of the borders of the Palestinian state and its political framework, and the extent of independence given to the Palestinian state.²⁰

The Extraordinary Arab Summit held in Cairo from the 21 to 23 June 1996 aimed at supporting the Arab parties participating in the negotiations with Israel, especially Syria. Twenty Arab countries participated in this Arab Summit. They all supported the peace efforts on the basis of the Security Council Resolutions. The closing statement of the summit asserted that the Palestinian cause was the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that peace could not be realized without the Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab lands, including Jerusalem, and enabling the Palestinians to have the right of self-determination and to have an independent state whose capital is Jerusalem. The most important resolutions issued by this summit regarding the Palestinian cause were the following:²¹

- Israel's withdrawal from the occupied lands and Jerusalem as a condition to achieve peace.

- Reconsidering their agreements with Israel.

According to what was realized in the Arab summit conference in Cairo, and in conformity with the Arab summit's resolutions mentioned above, the seventeenth Gulf Summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council was held in Doha from 7 to 9 December 1996. In this summit, Arab leaders studied the developments of the peace process and what it had undergone because of the Israeli practices, which give a warning of the return to tension and violence. This led the Gulf Cooperation Council to reconsider the steps to be taken towards Israel regarding the peace process. The Council demanded Israel abide by

²⁰The Arab Strategic Report 1996, (Cairo: Centre of Political and Strategic Studies, 1996), pp.212-213.

²¹ (Al-Ahram: 24-6-1996:1)

its commitments regarding the accords signed with the Palestinian Authority and the full withdrawal from Jerusalem, as well as enabling the Palestinian people to have all their legal rights and the right to establish an independent state.²²

It became clear from Netanyahu's attitude that he could not recognize the signed accords, and that he would do his best to freeze them or abolish them. Netanyahu began his management of the crisis by making Jerusalem a part of the battle by asserting that Israel has the right to build settlements on any land. The Second Intifada that took place in September 1996, among many other factors, was a reaction to the Israeli archaeological excavation works attempting to explore what was underneath the western wall, that is, the western wall tunnel, a matter that exerted pressure on Netanyahu. So, he signed the Protocol of Redeployment in Hebron on 15 January 1996. Its most important items are the following:²³

- The Israeli forces will redeploy according to the protocol in a period that does not exceed more than ten days after signing it.
- The Palestinian Authority will be responsible for the area dedicated to it, as is the case with any of the cities of the West Bank.
- Israel keeps its security rights in the area dedicated to it in the city.
- A security coordination centre should be established for running common patrols that are equal, to some extent, in terms of armaments.
- The civil authorities and responsibilities in Hebron are assigned to the Palestinians in the area dedicated to them. As for the area dedicated to the Israeli control, the civil authorities and responsibilities are assigned to the Palestinians except for the matters related to the Israelis and their possessions.

²²Salah Salem Zarnouqa, Doha Summit and Challenges of the Gulf Cooperation Council, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo, Al-Ahram, Issue no. 127, January 1997), p.199.

²³(Al-Ahram: 16-1-1997)

The Arab foreign ministers held their meeting on 1 April 1997, taking into consideration the strong attitudes adopted against Israel by the Islamic Summit, the activities of Jerusalem's Committee and the meetings of the Gulf Cooperation Council, a matter that obliged the Arab League to have a clear and decisive attitude against Israeli provocative practices. The Arab League Resolution No. 107, at the level of the foreign ministers, stipulated the following:²⁴

- Stopping the steps of normalization taken with Israel in the light of the current peace process, including the diplomatic offices and missions to force Israel to adhere to the resolutions of the Madrid Conference and the principle of "land for peace".
- Suspending Arab participation in the multilateral negotiations, and keeping the first class boycott and activating it against Israel.

In this meeting, the Gulf Cooperation Council focused on the trend of the necessity of taking strong and decisive resolutions to force Israel to lead the way of peace, or for them to adopt a boycott against Israel. As for the second theme of the meeting, this emphasized not blocking negotiations between the Arabs and Israel completely.²⁵

Through the words of its foreign minister, Oman launched a fierce attack against the Israeli practices. Also, the Qatari Foreign Minister stressed the necessity of freezing relations with Israel until it changed its attitude towards the peace process and the establishment of settlements. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain had more conservative attitudes, whereas the UAE's attitude went beyond the Arab League as Sheikh Zayed called the Arab countries to have a decisive attitude regarding Palestinian rights, even if this would lead Israel to freezing negotiations for years.²⁶

²⁴Adnan El-Sayyed Hussein, Egypt and the Decision to Stop Normalization, *Shoa'uon AL Sharq Al Awsat*, (Beirut, Centre of Strategic Studies, Researches and Documentation, Issue no. 62, May 1997), p.21.

²⁵Mouna Yassen, Freezing Normalization with Israel: An Analysis of the Context of the Resolution and Trends, *Shoa'uon AL Sharq al awsat*,(Beirut: Centre of Strategic Studies, Researches and Documentation, Issue no. 62, May 1997), p16.

²⁶Ibid. pp.17-18.

It is worth mentioning that the enthusiasm for making such decisions was followed by less enthusiasm by the Arab countries to freeze the relationship with Israel, as they had diplomatic missions in Israel.

The closing statement of the Eighteenth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Kuwait from 20 to 22 December 1997²⁷ expressed the Council's rejection of the policies and practices of the Israeli government and demanded that it fulfil its commitments towards the agreements concluded with the Palestinian Authority, on top of which was the completion of the redeployment specified phases and the immediate initiation of negotiations concerning the permanent status with the Palestinian side. The statement also called upon the US administration to continue its efforts with a view to resuming the negotiations on all tracks and to further restore the peace process to its normal course. However, the GCC states remained unable to introduce fixed tangible mechanisms to push the negotiation process forward.

6.7 Wye Plantation Memorandum

Conditions were deteriorating during Netanyahu's term of office, and he significantly impeded the negotiation process in a manner that led to the cessation of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations for 19 months due to the continued Israeli operations towards the Palestinian Authority and people. Therefore, the US administration invited the two sides, the Palestinians and the Israelis, to enter into direct negotiations at Wye Plantation in the US state of Maryland to end the deadlock of the negotiations. During this round of negotiation, the two parties reached some points of agreement and the Wye Plantation Memorandum was thereby signed in the White House on 28 October 1998. The memorandum included the following points:²⁸

²⁷ The closing statement of the Eighteenth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Kuwait, 20-22 December 1997, Gulf Cooperation Council web site <http://www.gcc-sg.org>

²⁸(Al-Ahram: 29-10-1998:1)

- Redeployment: the first two phases of redeployment would be implemented as part of the Hebron Agreement concluded in January 1997, but the third phase specified in that Agreement would be considered through an ad hoc committee.
- Security: all necessary actions would be taken to combat terror and to prevent aggressive crimes against both sides.
- Human rights and the rule of law: the Memorandum addressed these issues very concisely and provided for the fact that the Palestinian Police would exercise powers and responsibilities to implement this Memorandum with due regard to internationally accepted norms of human rights and the rule of law.
- Economic issues: economic relations would be fostered between both parties, supporting economic development in the West Bank and Gaza, re-activating the permanent committees formed as per the Interim Agreement and the establishment and operation of the international airport in the Gaza Strip, as well as resuming the negotiations on the Safe Passage.
- Permanent Status Negotiations: the two sides would immediately resume permanent status negotiations on an accelerated basis and would make a determined effort to achieve the mutual goal of reaching an agreement by 4 May 1999. The negotiations would be continuous without interruption. The US had expressed its willingness to facilitate these negotiations.

As soon as the US declared the conclusion of the Memorandum, both the Palestinians and the Israelis released different statements. While the official Palestinian opinion affirmed that it was an advanced step on the way to the implementation of the Oslo Accords, the opposition factions, for their part, affirmed that this was the first step towards the concession of the national legitimate rights of the Palestinians. The Israeli side was divided over the Memorandum inside the governing right wing, as the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu embarked upon defending himself and the Memorandum, affirming

that the inheritance of the previous cabinet, the Labour cabinet, would not allow the conclusion of a better agreement and that this Memorandum had diminished much of the Palestinian ambitions.²⁹

The stance of the GCC was clearly embodied in the closing statement of the Nineteenth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Abu Dhabi from 7 to 9 October 1998.³⁰ In the statement, the Council welcomed the Wye Plantation Memorandum concluded on 23 October 1998 between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and considered it as an important positive step to be followed by more steps towards the full implementation of all agreements made and signed between both sides.

6.8 The Wye River (2) Memorandum

Despite the agreements made between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides, the conditions inside Israel were not stable and they deteriorated. The extremist right parties raged against Netanyahu because he had entered into the negotiations with the Palestinians, and they accused him of lying and fraud. However, in the following early elections, proposed by Netanyahu, Barak won the elections, but the conditions became worse as Barak came to power.

While Barak pledged to implement the remaining steps of the Wye Plantation Memorandum signed by Netanyahu's Cabinet on 23 October 1998, only the first phase of the Memorandum was implemented, and then the Cabinet abstained from implementing the rest of the phases. However, Barak said that there were essential amendments deemed necessary to be included in the text of the Memorandum. He clearly called for the insertion of the remaining steps of the Wye Plantation to be included within the Permanent Status Agreement.³¹

²⁹Emad Gad, Wye Plantation is a Product of US-Israeli Talks, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram, Issue no. 135, January 1999), pp.179-180.

³⁰The closing statement of the Nineteenth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Abu Dhabi, 7 to 9 October 1998, the Gulf Cooperation Council web site <http://www.gcc-sg.org>

³¹(Al-Ahram: 12-07-1999:4)

On 4 September 1999, the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, also known as “Wye River II”, was signed. The most important points of the Memorandum³² are:

- Permanent Status Negotiations would be started within a period not later than 13 September, while work to conclude the Permanent Status Agreement would be done within a one-year term at most.
- The Israeli Forces would withdraw from the West Bank territories in three stages in five months.
- The release of a number of Palestinian prisoners in three phases.
- The construction works of Gaza Port would start as of 1 October 1999.
- The opening of the Safe Passage from the Gaza Strip along the route to the southern West Bank.

The stance of the GCC stand towards this Memorandum was embodied in the closing statement of the Twentieth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Riyadh from 27 to 29 November 1999.³³ In the statement, the Council welcomed the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum concluded on 5 September, which called for the implementation of the Wye Plantation Memorandum, of which Netanyahu had frozen the implementation only two months after its conclusion.

Once the implementation process of the Memorandum had started, Barak, who declared that the provision of the timelines specified in the Memorandum did not mean that they were obligatory, made certain manoeuvres. He deliberately changed the sites of withdrawal and redeployment as he made amendments to these sites at the last minute. The Palestinian side therefore had to choose either to accept the offer or the implementation of the Memorandum had to be frozen. In March 2000, he offered to

³² (Al-Ahram : 05-09-1999:4)

³³The closing statement of the Twentieth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Riyadh, 27 to 29 November 1999, Gulf Cooperation Council Web site <http://www.gcc-sg.org>

include the third stage of redeployment within the Permanent Status Agreement. As a result, redeployments were ceased as he refused all attempts that aimed at implementing the third stage of redeployment and insisted on its inclusion within the Permanent Status Agreement.³⁴

6.9.a Camp David II

The preparations for a significant agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis to reach a mutual understanding for the pending issues left behind from the previous accords such as the Palestinian state and its capital, and to break the deadlock of the peace process, were reported when the US administration invited both the Palestinians and Israelis to enter into intensive and behind-closed-doors negotiations at the Camp David resort in order to conclude a permanent agreement. The negotiations were held from 11 to 25 July 2000, and ended with the declaration of US President Bill Clinton that the negotiations for concluding a permanent agreement had failed, and that he held President Yasser Arafat responsible for this failure. At the same time, he praised Barak's courage and readiness for providing the Palestinians with unprecedented concessions in order to potentially reach a political settlement. The failure of the Camp David negotiations led to the breakout of the Palestinian Intifada in September 2000.³⁵

The Camp David Summit II was not only a summit that brought both the Palestinians and Israelis together. Instead, it aimed to put some pressure from the US on the both sides to convince the Palestinians and the Israelis to take painful decisions about the settlement stages and the issues of higher sensitivity, such as the borders, settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem. The use of the interim solution technique as a basis of permanent peace in the Middle East on the part of Clinton led to the mismanagement of the talks. This was due to the fact that the UN resolutions became null and void and issues decided by the UN, such as the right of return, Jerusalem, self-determination, and disassembly of settlements

³⁴Emad Gad, *Palestine: The Land and People from the Relapse to Oslo*, (Cairo: Centre of Political and Strategic Studies, 2003), pp.291,292.

³⁵BelalAl-Hasan, *Israel in the Light of the Consequences of War*, (Beirut: Centre of Arab Unity Studies, 2004), p.373.

became subject to discussions and arguments. It is worthy of mention that these issues are of great importance to the Palestinians.³⁶

Factual events showed that the Israeli proposals made by the Israeli Prime Minister at that time, Barak, did not provide for withdrawal to the June 1967 borders, the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to an independent sovereign state, the acceptance to withdraw from East Jerusalem – the capital of the Palestinian state – or the recognition of the refugees' right to return to their homeland and their own properties.³⁷ This means that in the Camp David negotiations, Barak refused to commit himself to the UN Resolutions 194, 338, and 242, resolutions that constituted the basis of a balanced settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He insisted on starting from one of the Oslo principles that reads “The agreement made and signed by both parties shall be the practical application of the UN resolutions relevant to the solution.” This was a new situation that substituted the legitimacy of direct negotiations with the legitimacy of the resolutions adopted by the UN on behalf of the two parties.

The Palestinians took a hard-line stand towards Jerusalem, without providing any concessions related to the basic issues. This situation can be considered as one of the Palestinian red lines, and it was rejected at both the official and popular levels. Consequently, it was not expected that the Palestinian leadership would give up the issues of Jerusalem and refugees, or barter both for the declaration of the Palestinian state, as this is a matter of historical and serious responsibility. No Palestinian leadership would dare to waive these two issues. The most powerful reactions came from outside, and not from Yasser Arafat, perhaps due to the influence of Saudi Arabia and Egypt.³⁸

The Palestinian stand towards the Jerusalem issue involved the demand for the return of East Jerusalem under full Arab sovereignty to be the capital of the Palestinian state. But

³⁶Emad Awad, Camp David Summit II and Al-Aqsa Intifada, *The Arab Studies and Research*, (Cairo: Institute of Arab Studies and Research, Issue no. 34, December 2000), p.226.

³⁷NayefHawatma, Oslo and the Other Balance Peace, (Cairo: Al-Mahrousa for Publishing Press and Information Services, 2004).

³⁸Hassan Nafaa, The Arab Summit and Al-Aqsa Intifada, *Al Mostakbal AlArabi*, (Beirut: Centre of Arab Unity Studies, Issue no. 363, December 2000), p.121.

the Israeli stand is completely the opposite, where an Israeli political consensus that considers the unified whole, east and west, city of Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel can be seen easily. This was the Israeli consensus red line, posed before the Palestinian negotiator in the Camp David negotiations. This stand is also supported by the US administration, which considers the unified whole, east and west, city of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Therefore, it was not expected that Israel would make concessions in the context of negotiations over such a stand.

It is useful to observe that the acceptance to start negotiations ever since the beginning of the peace process in Madrid was outside the framework of the UN. This was in itself an implied approval of the controversial parties to substitute an alternative legitimacy and new terms of reference for peace, other than the ones that govern the Arab-Israeli conflict since its initiation until all parties agreed to the new reference.

Some in the Palestinian intelligentsia are of the opinion that the Palestinian leadership should not enter into negotiations alone over Jerusalem, for the reason that Jerusalem is not only a Palestinian issue and, therefore, the Palestinians alone should not be held responsible for the consequences of the negotiations as, in their view, Jerusalem is an Arab, Islamic, and a Christian cause that has not been given this collective nature. Consequently, the balanced negotiations should demonstrate material, political, and media assistance to the Palestinian negotiator at the official and popular levels at all tracks and the pre-agreed limits given to him.³⁹

However, Barak went to the Camp David negotiations with no radical or magic solutions for the issue of Jerusalem. Instead, he went with a specific suggestion or scenario that he tried to impose on the Palestinians by virtue of joint Israeli-US pressures. The Israeli scenario is about a unified Jerusalem under Israeli control. The Palestinians will be given broad autonomy in some Arab districts in the city and not in the old town of Jerusalem, and they are permitted to observe the holy sites and to raise a Palestinian flag over these

³⁹Muhammad Khaled Al-Azaar, *Al-Quds between the Intifada and Negotiations*, (Cairo, Arab Info. Centre, 2001), p.110.

sites. In addition, the territories of the Palestinian Authority are to be linked to the Holy Shrine through a safe passage established for this purpose.⁴⁰

International opinions concerning Jerusalem are divided into individual strands adopted by specific countries on the one hand, and other international strands embodied in the international resolutions adopted by various international organizations on the other hand. Concerning the international resolutions, there are more than 100 resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council or by the UN on Jerusalem. All the adopted resolutions consider Jerusalem as an occupied city that must be returned to its owner after the occupation has ended. However, such resolutions are kept in the archives and have not been put into practice. Moreover, the UN has not forced Israel to implement such resolutions. For their part, neither the Palestinians nor the Arabs have tried to make initiatives to demand the application of the resolutions, although the resolutions constitute a huge asset that emphasizes the Palestinian rights in the holy city.

The classical Gulf stance, both collective and individual, towards the Jerusalem issue stresses the basic principles relating to the status of the city that must be adhered to by the Palestinian negotiator and that must be understood by the Israeli and US parties. These principles are embodied in the necessity of full Palestinian control over East Jerusalem including all Muslim, Christian, or Jewish holy sites in the city being on equal footing based on international legitimacy, as expressed by the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the most important of which are Resolution No. 242, adopted by the Security Council on 22 November 1967, Resolution No. 338, adopted on 22 October 1973, Resolution No. 252, adopted on 21 May 1968, and Resolution No. 478, adopted on 20 August 1980.⁴¹

The collective stand of the Gulf States towards Jerusalem was embodied in the closing statement of the Twenty-First session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation

⁴⁰ Arab Strategic Report, (Cairo, Centre of Political and Strategic Studies 2001), p.244.

⁴¹ Muhammad Zarir, *Al-Aqsa Intifada in the Political Speech of the Gulf States, Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 24, winter 2001), p.59.

Council, held in Bahrain from 30 to 31 December 2000.⁴² The statement stressed the main joint stance of the Gulf states in relation to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem. The statement also affirmed that the realization of peace in the region and the subsequent normalization with the Israeli party were connected to the retrieval by the Palestinian people of all their legitimate rights, the most important of which was their right to establish a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as the capital. The Council also declared full support for the Palestinian Authority, and for President Arafat as an elected leader. This was the first time that the Palestinian Authority and its president had been mentioned.

The statement also embodied the absolute denial of the US declarations considering Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, which contradicts the international legitimacy resolutions. The statement further rejected the US intention to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem, a matter that led to hindering the peace efforts and impeding the progress of the peace process.⁴³

The GCC leaders continued to affirm their stance towards Jerusalem. In his speech before the Arab summit, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan, President of the United Arab Emirates, stressed that “The Palestinian cause is the essence of the conflict and there is no peace without the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.”⁴⁴ As it was reported in the semi-official Egyptian newspaper *AlAhrām*, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia at that time, King Abdullah, in the speech he delivered before the summit stressed that “Eastern Jerusalem is an Arab and Islamic territory that is not subject to concession or bargain and it cannot, in any way, be given up as it is an integral part of the Arab lands that fall under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.”⁴⁵

⁴²The closing statement of the 21st session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Bahrain, 30-31 December 2000, the Gulf Cooperation Council web site <http://www.gcc-sg.org>

⁴³The 76th session of the Ministerial Council held in Jeddah on 1-2 September 2000, the Gulf Cooperation Council website (<http://www.gcc-sg.org>).

⁴⁴(*Al-Ahrām*: 21-10-2000:1,4)

⁴⁵(*Al-Ahrām*: 21-10-2000:1,4)

Concerning the stance of individual countries, the US for example, even if it is just a media viewpoint, considers Jerusalem as an occupied city. But, in practice and in alliance with Israel, such a stance considers Jerusalem as the unified capital of Israel. The US administration dealt with this, saying as a matter of fact, and this was explicitly expressed during the course of the Camp David negotiations when the US posed Barak's thoughts and negotiated in the name of Israel.⁴⁶

The US President at that time, Bill Clinton, used the method of intermediate solution as a basis for permanent peace in the Middle East. As mentioned, these issues are of great importance to the Palestinians and include the issues of the right of return, the status of Eastern Jerusalem, the right to self-determination and the elimination of Jewish settlements established on the occupied territories.⁴⁷

Therefore, the summit failed to achieve positive outcomes due to the sensitivity of the issues posed for negotiations, as each party considered them to be a matter of national security. Consequently, the summit came to an end, while the swirl of violence continued in the occupied territories. Thus, the scene of the negotiations in Camp David seemed to be a clear conflict of “red lines” and hard-line rejections by the Israeli party against demands and “red lines” and corresponding rejections by the Palestinians. As the confrontation between the Palestinian demands and the Israeli “red lines” and rejections were obviously set out, the specified objectives of the negotiations held in Camp David II were as follows:⁴⁸

6.9.b Barak's objectives

Nawaf al-Zour, who has studied the context of Camp David in detail, identified the objectives of the two leaders, Barak and Arafat. Barak’s objectives can be summarized as follows:

⁴⁶ (Al-Khaleej: 26-07-2002:4)

⁴⁷ Emad Awad, p.227.

⁴⁸ Nawaf Al-Zour, Camp David (2). A conflict of Palestinian and Israeli Rejections, Islam online web site: <http://www.islamonline.net/iol-arabic/dowli/qpolitic-jul-2000//qpolitic12.asp>

- Concluding an agreement over the permanent issues according to the Israeli red lines.
- Including the third phase of withdrawal into the Permanent Agreement.
- Working to delay the due declaration of the Palestinian state date by the deferred time, 13 September 2000.
- Putting an end to the national Palestinian demands and ambitions with regard to the basic issues.
- Bringing the century-long dispute with the Palestinians to an end.
- Barak's personal ambitious goals.
- Stopping the breakout of the Intifada and the violent confrontations in the Palestinian occupied territories.

6.9.c Arafat's objectives

Arafat had more narrow objectives than Barak. The objectives of Arafat were centred on two points:

- The commitment of Israel to the international resolutions, especially Resolutions No. 242 and No. 388, relating to the Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian lands, and Resolution No. 194, relating to the Palestinian refugees.
- Obtaining international guarantees for, and supervision of, the application of any agreement by Israel.

6.10.a The Gulf Cooperation Council's stand towards the Second Intifada and the Roadmap

From its very beginning, the peace process aimed at bringing the tension in the region to an end, and attempted to entrench new pillars and bases to achieve stability. However, the

Israeli hard-line policy and the US flagrant bias towards Israel were the reason behind the failure to conclude any peaceful agreement to establish stability.

6.10.b The Second Intifada

After Sharon's visit to the Holy Mosque Shrine on 28 September 2000, and on the following day, Israeli soldiers killed five Palestinians and seriously injured many others, and the Second Intifada broke out.⁴⁹ Then, Barak's cabinet fell and Sharon was elected as Prime Minister; he gained 60% of the vote in the cabinet elections that took place in February 2001, and he took office on 5 March 2001.⁵⁰

This visit was heavily rejected and condemned by Saudi Arabia, expressing its denial of the policy of silence adopted by the US towards the Israeli violations. Through its Foreign Minister, Saud Ben Faisal, Saudi Arabia demanded that the US put pressures on Israel to end the crisis and to go back to negotiations.⁵¹

The Intifada represented an obvious and explicit declaration of the rejection of the Israeli proposals for a solution, and an invitation to resist the pressures exerted by the US and also the condemnation of its apparent bias in favour of Israeli policies. The Second Intifada rearranged the hierarchy of the Arab priorities anew to get the Palestinian cause back at the top of the political agenda, as it is basically an Arab cause that cannot be left for the Palestinians alone due to its impacts on the security, stability, and balance in the Arab region as a whole.

In another context, the US, in its capacity as the sponsor of the negotiation process between the Palestinians and the Israelis, began to work towards containing the Intifada. The US movement was embodied in an international and regional conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh on 17 October 2000, a few days after the breakout of the Intifada. The

⁴⁹Ahmad Sakhr Besiso, PLO between the Struggle Stages and Settlement Tracks, (The Palestinian Information centre: no date), p.66.

⁵⁰Gehad Auda, Alla, Gomma, Palestinian Suicide Bombings: Description and Strategic Evaluation, *Awrak Strategia*, (Cairo: Issue no. 114, Centre of Political and Strategic Studies, 2002), p.33.

⁵¹(Al-Hayah: 20-04-2002:1)

statement delivered by Bill Clinton pointed out three main issues. First, the immediate cessation of the Intifada under the slogan of stopping all forms of violence. Second, the two parties, the Palestinians and the Israelis, were to commit to not taking unilateral steps. Third, that the two parties would resume negotiations as the sole way to conclude an agreement to end the conflict between them.

Starting from the findings reached in Sharm el-Sheikh on 17 October 2000, the US continued sponsoring the Palestinian-Israeli bilateral negotiations based on the draft solution presented by Washington named “the Proposals of President Clinton”, and most of its items were in harmony with Barak and his cabinet’s visions of the solutions, and this was the reason for the negotiation round held in Taba.

In this context, the GCC states had both official and popular significant stands that expressed the depth of their sense of belonging to the Arab nation. These stands also expressed an objective understanding of the Arab higher interests in the wake of contemporary international and regional events.⁵² As the Second Intifada broke out, a new stage of the GCC reaction to the Palestinian cause began to embody the Gulf stands supporting the Intifada, including:⁵³

- On 10 October 2000, the GCC Ministers of Justice pleaded for the international community and the UN Security Council member states to assume their responsibilities and to take actions necessary to stop the terrible crimes committed by Israel against the bare-handed Palestinians.
- Prior to the Arab Summit, in October 2000 the Sultanate of Oman declared the closure of its commercial office in Tel Aviv, and similarly the closure of the Israeli office in Muscat.

⁵²Muhammad Saad Abou Amoud, *The Gulf states and A-Aqsa Intifada*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 24, winter 2001), p. 9.

⁵³Asharf Saad Eisawy, *Al-Aqsa Intifada and the Gulf Cooperation Council States Policy towards Israel*, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 24, winter 2001), pp.53, 54.

- The GCC states launched a broad donation campaign. Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan donated a sum of US\$ 8 million for the sake of the Intifada victims. Also, King Fahd donated a sum of SAR 30 million, as did the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Prince Abdullah, who contributed a sum of SAR 5 million. Qaboos Ben Said demanded the dispatch of emergency medical aid and donations to support the Palestinians in their confrontations with Israel.

According to *Al-Ahram* newspaper, the GCC states established three levels of supporting the Intifada to ensure its continuity. These levels included a number of political, financial, and media mechanisms detailed as follows:

6.10.b.i The political and media aspects

Many officials and politicians in the Gulf states participated in the popular demonstrations that broke out in the wake of the Intifada, expressing political and popular solidarity with the Palestinian people. In addition, the governments of the GCC allowed the marches and protest campaigns against Israel aimed at providing support for the Intifada.⁵⁴

6.10.b.ii The financial and economic aspects

The GCC states established two main channels for providing financial and economic support to the Palestinian people with a view to supporting the Palestinians economically during the Intifada, working towards the disengagement between the Palestinian and the Israeli economies and eliminating the reasons for the economic loyalty of the former to the latter, as well as upholding the Palestinian negotiating position during the negotiations for a permanent solution. These two channels were embodied in an official channel, where the Gulf governments adopted decisions to make donations in favour of the Intifada Fund adopted in the Arab Summit held in Cairo in 2000. The second channel was a popular “unofficial” channel, as the Gulf authorities permitted the formation of

⁵⁴(Al-Ahram: 23-10-2000:4)

popular committees for collecting donations for the Palestinians in coordination with other Arab bodies.⁵⁵

6.10.b.iii The diplomatic aspect

In this context, it is noted that there are two secondary levels:

The regional level: The regional level was made through two main tracks:

The first is the Arab track, which was represented in achieving Arab solidarity as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait participated in the Arab and Islamic summits side by side with the Iraqi delegation, despite their known political stance towards the former regime in Iraq, with a view to giving a push to supreme Arab national interests over individual interests. In this framework, the call for the unity of the Arab stand and will was the main focus of the speeches delivered by Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan, President of the United Arab Emirates, in the opening of the two Arab summits held in Cairo and Doha, in addition to the visit paid by the Saudi Defence Minister, Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, to Syria and Jordan in January 2001, during which he stressed that “Saudi Arabia will not stand hands-off in case any Arab country is at risk by Israeli threats.”⁵⁶

The second track was represented in the Islamic track, through which the Arab states in general and the Gulf states in particular put pressure on the Islamic delegation participating in the Eighth Islamic Summit held in Doha in November 2000. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also pressurized the African delegations, which had established relations with Israel, and Saudi participated in the Summit in order to push the delegations towards cutting such relations and stopping all forms of normalization with Israel until it complied with the UN resolutions in relation to the Palestinian cause and Jerusalem. These pressures demanded that some financial aid and assistance be provided to make up for the aid provided for Israel by countries.⁵⁷

⁵⁵(Al-Hayah: 13-10-2000: 6)

⁵⁶Radio Monte Carlo, 10/01/2001

⁵⁷Talha Gebriel, the Islamic Summit is an Arab Summit,(Al-Wasat: 20-11-2000).

- The text of the closing statement of the Doha Conference, the UAE (Al-Ithad: 14-11-2000).

The international level: The target of the GCC states was represented in two main objectives:

First objective: Delivering decisive messages to Washington concerning its stand towards the Israeli aggression against the Islamic rights in the city of Jerusalem, and holding Washington and the international community responsible for the events taking place in the Palestinian occupied territories. This was obviously expressed in the statements made by Prince Abdullah during the opening of the Cairo Summit in 2000, in which he held the US fully responsible for the events taking place in the Palestinian occupied territories. Also, Sheikh Zayed's announcements on 13 December 2000 stressed the responsibility of Washington for what was happening in the Palestinian occupied territories and also for offensive aggressions against the bare-handed Palestinians.⁵⁸

Second objective: Working towards providing international protection for the Palestinian people against the Israeli army and the settlers. Prince Abdullah pleaded for the international community to put an end to the dangerous violations committed by Israel against the Palestinians, particularly as the confrontation between the two sides was totally unequal and was close to deliberate killing. Also, the Bahraini Information Minister, Ibrahim Al-Mutwa, pleaded for the international community to assume its human and ethical responsibility towards the legal pursuit of the people who committed massacres and crimes against the Palestinians, and to bring them to international courts.⁵⁹ For its part, the United Arab Emirates, in a statement provided to the UN Security Council, demanded the formation of an urgent and neutral international fact-finding committee to be entrusted with identifying the persons responsible for the massacres committed against the Palestinian people.

In its speech in an unusual session of the UN Security Council on 5 October 2000 considering the Israeli violations, Kuwait expressed its condemnation of the UN's stance towards the massacres committed by Israel in the Palestinian territories. Kuwait also

⁵⁸ (Al-Hayah: 13-12-2000: 6)

⁵⁹ (Al-Ithad: 31-12-2000:6)

called upon the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities towards stopping the Israeli practices against the Palestinian people, and to conduct an international investigation into these crimes.⁶⁰ On 9 April 2002, Oman also pleaded for the UN Security Council to adopt all necessary measures to punish Israel and to hold it responsible for the destruction it was causing in the Palestinian occupied territories.⁶¹

Following the Israeli obstinacy came the failure of the international community to force Israel to accept the UN Security Council resolutions, and the flagrant and unprecedented bias of the US towards Tel Aviv, to the extent that the US President described Sharon as “a man of peace”, a statement that inflamed the feelings of anger among the Arab citizens. At this stage, King Abdullah, the then Crown Prince, established the goals of his visit to the US in 25 April 2002 after the declaration of the Arab Peace Initiative in the Beirut Summit. He demanded that the Israeli military operations in the West Bank be brought to an end and he also demonstrated the importance of the existence of international forces to protect the Palestinians, as well as explaining the principles on which the relations between the US and the Arab world are based. In this context, the accompanying delegation with King Abdullah sought to give special prominence to specific points for the US officials, including major point. This can be summarized in the fact that the relations between Saudi Arabia and the US are deeply split due to the policies of President Bush’s administration in the Middle East, based on the principle of indirect interference save in case of extreme necessity. The second point was that there were critical consequences for the security and stability of the region unless the US restrained the whims of the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon.⁶²

Therefore, Saudi Arabia introduced an eight items draft aimed mainly at restoring confidence in both the US and Israel on one hand, and in the Arab world on the other. The draft also aimed at paving the way for the parties concerned with the peace process

⁶⁰ (Al-Qabas: 06-10-2000:4)

⁶¹ (Oman: 16-04-2002:6)

⁶² Shehata Muhammad Nasser, Prince Abdullah's Visit to Washington: A Reading of the Saudi Vision for Peace with Israel, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh* (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 30, summer 2002), p.100.

to enter into negotiations in an attempt to turn the Arab initiative into a reality through renewing confidence among all parties.⁶³

Saudi Arabia introduced a proposed draft for the closing statement of the first regular Arab Summit held in Amman in March 2001. The proposed statement charged the Boycott Bureau with holding a meeting to activate the Arab boycott against Israel. The proposal was amended to provide for the demanding of the activation of the boycott through holding boycott meetings summoned by the Main Boycott Bureau with a view to preventing dealings with Israel.⁶⁴

On 27-28 March 2002, the Arab Summit in Beirut approved the Arab Peace Initiative, based on the conviction of the Arab countries that the armed solution to the conflict had neither achieved peace nor security for each of the parties concerned in the region. This Arab Peace Initiative included seven basic points, as follows:⁶⁵

- 1- Israel should reconsider its policy and choose peace, declaring that a just peace is its strategic choice as well.
- 2- Israel shall do the following:
 - Withdraw from the Arab occupied territories including the Syrian Golan Heights to the line of 4 June 1967, as well as the other lands occupied in Southern Lebanon.
 - Reach a just and agreeable solution of the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 194.
 - Agree to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with sovereignty on the pre-occupied Palestinian lands since 4 June 1967 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with its capital as Eastern Jerusalem.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, the Arab Conference for Resisting Normalization with Israel: An Invitation for Activation, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 33, spring 2003), p.147.

⁶⁵Ahmed Yusuf Al-Qurrai, Beirut Summit Initiative: The Descending Countdown to Manama Summit. *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram, Issue no. 151, January 2003), pp.112, 113.

3- In response to that, the Arab countries shall:

- Consider that the Arab-Israeli conflict has reached its end, and consequently they shall enter into a mutual peace agreement with Israel that guarantees security for the countries of the entire region.

- Set up natural relations with Israel within this comprehensive peace frame.

4- Absolute denial of all forms of Palestinian resettlement that contradicts the special status of Arab countries.

5- Inviting the Israeli government and all Israelis to embrace this initiative for the purposes of protecting peace opportunities and the prevention of bloodshed that would enable the Arab countries and Israel to peacefully live side by side, and provide future generations with a secure, stable, and flourishing future.

6- Calling upon the international community, including all countries and organizations, to support the above-mentioned initiative.

7- Forming a special committee comprising the Arab League Secretary-General and a number of member states to make the communications necessary for such an initiative, and to acquire the assured support on all levels, most important of which are the Security Council, the United Nations, the United States, the Russian Union, and the European Union.

Thus, the basic idea that was introduced by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was clarified, and the Arab viewpoint in relation to the peace prerequisites was set out.

The articles of the Arab Summit communiqué in regard to the Palestinian cause included the following:⁶⁶

⁶⁶Nabila, Abu Sultan, the Beirut Arab Summit, 28-3-2002:
http://www.oppc.pna.net/mag/mag5-6/new_page_11.htm

1. The Arab leaders highly regard the Palestinian people's distinguished fortitude, their gallant Intifada and their legal leadership by President Yasser Arafat.
2. The Arab leaders hold Israel to be fully, legally, and thoroughly responsible for the problem of the Palestinian refugees and their displacement, and they express their thorough denial of the attempts regarding their settlement out of their original homes and lands. At the same time, the Arab leaders confirm their adherence to the Security Council Resolution with regards to Jerusalem, especially Resolutions Nos. 242, 267, 465, and 478.
3. In the light of the relapse of the peace process, the Arab leaders confirm their commitment to halt any kind of relations with Israel, and to activate the Arab Bureau boycotting of Israel until it complies with international legitimate resolutions and the Madrid reference, as well as withdrawing from all Arab lands occupied after the June 4, 1967.
4. The Arab leaders once again reaffirm their previous decisions related to their adherence to a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic goal and choice that should be fulfilled in the light of carrying out international legitimacy, and they demand that Israel resume the peace negotiations on all levels and routes in accordance with the Security Council resolutions including Resolutions Nos. 242, 338 and 458, and the General Assembly Resolution No. 194, in addition to the Madrid Conference and the "Land for Peace" Principle.
5. In the light of the events of 11 September 2001, the Arab leaders reviewed the international circumstances that resulted in the launching of a global anti-terrorism campaign in accordance with the Security Council No. 1,373 dated 28 September 2001.⁶⁷

⁶⁷Security Council Resolution 1373: S/RES/1373

The Arab leaders reviewed the tragic conditions that the Palestinian people are undergoing due to the ongoing occupation and Israel's destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure, imposing a siege on both the people and their leadership. Hence, the Arab leaders confirmed their ongoing support of the Palestinian economy and its infrastructure through supporting the Palestinian Authority budget with a gross amount of US\$ 330 million to be granted on the basis of 55 million per month for a period of six months starting from 1 April 2002, and to be automatically renewed as long as the aggression exists. The grant is renewed every six months, and these grants are non-reimbursement grants.⁶⁸

6.11 The American view of terrorism and its effect on the Palestinian status quo

In accordance with the US declaration of war on what it called "terrorism", with its slogan, "He who is not with us is against us", the meaning of the US President's statement on the Middle East in his speech on 24 July 2002 was effectively that the establishment of a Palestinian state was always a permanent constituent of the American perspective of the solution, as long as the right of Israel to exist was regarded. He assured his audience that negotiations were the sole way to establish such a state. Later, his Secretary of State, Colin Powell, reaffirmed such a view in his famous speech in Louisville University, Kentucky State. Consequently, the Intifada and resistance were stigmatized with terrorism, and the Palestinian leadership represented by the authority was to apprehend those who practice terrorism and put them to trial, and to bear its responsibility in halting violence according to the US government.

Although the majority of Arab countries expressed their conservative reception of the speech acknowledging the importance of establishing a Palestinian state and halting the settlement, they refused the American condition of a change of Palestinian leadership in response to a foreign will, rather than the will of the Palestinian people. This was

⁶⁸ Esmat Abdul Majid, *Situations and Challenges in the Arab World*, (Cairo: Dar Ash-Shuruq, 2003), p.22.

reflected by the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ahmed Maher, in his statement on 4 July 2002, following his talks with Prime Minister Tony Blair in London.

Also, the Arab countries' declared viewpoint towards supporting Arafat was analogous to that of Egypt, as he was the Palestinian people's elected President. The Arab stance also demanded a time frame for the achievement of the implications of the speech and the mechanism to carry them out, as well as the demand to synchronize the halting of violations by the Palestinian side, and their shift of strategy in conducting the conflict, with an Israeli withdrawal to the prior 28 September positions, and the removal of all traces of aggression.⁶⁹

The Palestinian Authority did not comply with the pressures from the American side to the effect of dissolving the Intifada and the resistance under the slogan of "terrorism deterrence and the declaration of belonging to the civilized world". The green light was given for Sharon's government to carry out the preventive wall operation on 29 September 2002, right after the Arab Summit was concluded and after the declaration of the Arab Peace Initiative in Beirut. That operation won American political cover and the Israeli armed forces re-occupied Palestinian cities and camps in the West Bank. The most devastating Israeli operation was in Jenin Camp, which started at dawn on 2 April 2002 and lasted until 10 April.⁷⁰ The US submitted a resolution to the Security Council that was unanimously approved to the effect of forming a fact-finding committee in Jenin Camp. However, this resolution was frozen only one week after its date of issue. On the other hand, Washington confirmed that such a resolution had been formulated through mutual consultation with Israel, which had expressed its readiness to cooperate in the light of its implications.⁷¹

According to the London-based *Al-Hayah* newspaper, there were three main stances adopted by GCC states towards the Preventive Wall operation and the Palestinian cities

⁶⁹Malik Auni, Bush's speech on the Middle East: A Way out for Settlement or a New Crisis?, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram Establishment, Issue no. 149, January 2002), p.124.

⁷⁰Abdul Qadir Yassin (ed.), *The Epic of Jenin*, (Cairo, Arab Media Centre, June 2002), p.3.

⁷¹ (Al-Hayah: 21-4-2002:6)

re-occupation, in addition to Arafat's siege embodied in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia declaration: the Saudi Crown Prince declared on 6 April 2002, "We have called upon the American Secretary of State to the effect that the United States of America move towards calling for the prompt Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian occupied lands." In his meeting with US President Bush on 25 April 2002, he did his best to refute Sharon's allegation that Israel was fighting terrorism just like the US. The effect of this visit was Sharon's consent to an American offer of American-British protection of six wanted Palestinians against untying the siege imposed on Arafat,⁷² in addition to support from Bahrain, whose Defence Minister, Khalifa Ben Mohamed Al Khalifa, on 2 April 2002, called upon the Arab countries that had relations with Israel to cut them off in protest against the aggression. He also criticized the Security Council member states and called upon them to stand firmly and clearly by the side of international legitimacy and justice. In addition, there was support from the United Arab Emirates, which was represented by the Defence Minister Mohamed Ben Rashed Al Maktom, who called upon the Security Council to implement Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter against Israel, adding that "No one believes that the US is not able to oblige Israel to withdraw."⁷³

On the other hand, there was US political support for Israel through usage of the veto in the Security Council in many draft resolutions that provide protection for Israel's inadmissible policies towards the Palestinian people and against any move towards convicting Israel. Examples of this are the American veto against implementing Mitchell's plan and sending international observers to supervise the limitation of the level of violence.⁷⁴

In response to such accelerated developments, there came the closing statement of the twenty-third session of the Supreme Council of the GCC member states, held between 21

⁷² (Al-Hayah: 29-4-2002:1,6)

⁷³ (Al-Hayah: 10-4-2002:1,6)

⁷⁴ Muhammad Ibrahim Muhammad Adh-Dharf, *The Evolution of the International Terrorism Phenomenon and its Repercussions on the Arab Nation and the Palestinian Cause*, (Unpublished PhD thesis, Institute of Arab Researches and Studies, Cairo, 2004), p.186.

and 22 December 2002.⁷⁵ The Council welcomed Prince Abdullah's Peace Initiative adopted in the Beirut Arab Summit in March 2002. The Council also welcomed the statement President Bush made in the United Nations that implied a US vision towards the establishment of a Palestinian state. In addition, the Council called upon the US to lay down a mechanism for carrying out such a vision and concepts in accordance with the legal rights of the Palestinian people.

However, the Second Intifada indicated that all previous agreements and treaties had reached a deadlock, and it affirmed two things: first, the GCC states would never relinquish their responsibilities towards the Palestinian cause, and that was demonstrated by the official and public stand taken in support of the Intifada. Second, if it is guaranteed that the security and stability of the Middle East region are linked with a permanent settlement, it can also be said that the stability and security of the Gulf region are greatly tied with reaching a solution for the Palestinian cause.

6.12 The Roadmap plan

After the events of 11 September, the policy of Bush's administration changed toward the Palestinian cause. Its stand was based on the conviction that the failure of Camp David and Taba was merely attributable to Yasser Arafat. Consequently, according to Bush, the Second Intifada was no more than a terrorist act and Israel was entitled to deter and terminate it as a way of defending its security and the safety of its citizens. The American administration made Security Council issue Resolution No. 1373, which defines the obligations of the UN member states to exterminate terrorism without specifying its accurate definition, and this led to equating terrorism with the resistance of the Palestinian public to the Israeli occupation.⁷⁶

⁷⁵<http://www.gcc-sg.org/report23.html>

⁷⁶Taher Shash, *The Future of the Palestinian Cause after the 11th of September Events*, *Awark AlSharq Alawsat*, (Cairo: The National Centre for Middle East Studies, Issue no. 29, July 2002), p.35.

Bush delivered his speech on 24 June 2002,⁷⁷ clarifying that the concept of real peace meant ending the Israeli occupation in accordance with UN Resolution Nos. 242 and 338, giving a decisive solution to the refugees and Jerusalem issues, supporting the peace process and combating terrorism, and, according to the American viewpoint, changing the leadership of the late President Yasser Arafat and replacing him with a practical leader who complied with the Israeli and American perspectives on the settlement. This American perspective was the basis for peacefully changing the map of the region through establishing a Palestinian state capable of existing beside the Israelis. It is noteworthy that such a Palestinian state would be transitional or provisional, and the parties should negotiate afterwards about the most complex issues, such as the borders, Jerusalem, the refugees, and water.⁷⁸ Later on, the Roadmap was declared, displaying Bush's own perspective previously expressed in this speech.

The Roadmap is the official name the US Department of State gave to the Middle East peace plan on 30 April 2003,⁷⁹ after two copies of it were delivered to the Palestinian and Israeli officials. It called upon them to start discussing how to reach a final peaceful settlement in three phases: the first phase from October 2002 to May 2003, the second phase from June 2003 to December 2003, and the third phase from 2004 to 2005), and the establishing of a Palestinian state at the beginning of 2005. The Roadmap laid out a plan for establishing a Palestinian state with temporary borders by the end of 2003. After commitment to the ceasefire agreement was guaranteed, the Palestinians had to start acting to suppress the fundamentalists. As for Israel, it had to withdraw from the Palestinian cities and freeze the setting up of Jewish settlements on occupied lands. This plan was tailored by the Middle East Quartet Committee, which included the UN, the US, the EU, and Russia in accordance with Bush's insight, which was declared in his speech on 24 June 2002. This plan underwent many adjustments in response to Israeli demands

⁷⁷ The International Documents: The Statement of President Bush on the Middle East, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah* (Cairo: Al-Ahram, Issue no. 149, July 2002), pp.112, 113.

⁷⁸ Hassan Abu Taleb, The Arab Regime: Iraq Post Occupation Challenges, *Strategic Pamphlets*, (Cairo: Center of Political and Strategic Studies, vol. 13, Issue no. 126, 2003), p.8.

⁷⁹ The Roadmap was first declared on 15 October 2002. Upon the request of Israel, it was postponed more than once until it was officially declared on 30 April 2003.

and pressures, which included three main points.⁸⁰ First was to eliminate the Saudi initiative, as it was considered part of the Roadmap. Second was to declare that the decisions reached by the Quartet Committee supervising the plan must be unanimous (responding to the Israeli fears of the European stance, which seemed to them to be biased towards the Palestinians). Third was to postpone the official declaration of the Roadmap plan until after the elections at the end of January 2003, and once again there was a further postponement until the aftermath of the appointment of the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority.

Before the US officially announced the Roadmap plan, and before Secretary of State Colin Powell's arrival in the region, Israel attempted to propagate an alternate plan through the scheme of Eilon, the Israeli Tourism Minister at that time. This scheme was based on a demand that the US and the Western countries set up a Middle East Marshall Plan, which aimed at settling the Palestinians residing on Palestinian land in Jordan, dismantling the Palestinian Authority, imposing Israeli sovereignty from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and settling the Palestinian refugees in their places of existence through a compromise with the host countries in this regard.⁸¹

The American administration released the third version of the Roadmap plan after the appointment of the Palestinian Prime Minister and the fall of Baghdad to the Western coalition. Thus, the Israeli route in dealing with the Palestinian resistance and the Intifada entered a new stage. The government of Sharon considered the Roadmap to be a political means of pressure on the Palestinian side in addition to the military pressure, as demonstrated by the bloody suppression. This was represented by the vague statement made by the Israeli government, which lacked the explicit and clear consent on the map. This statement was followed by a document containing 14 conservative points on the

⁸⁰ Muhammad Khaled Al-Azaar, The American Roadmap for Establishing a Palestinian State, *Shoa'uon AL Sharq al awsat*, (Cairo, Issue no. 8, October 2003), p.147.

⁸¹ Muhammad As-Saeed Idris, Eilon's Scheme as an Alternative Plan to the Roadmap, *Al-Quds*, (Cairo: Centre of Arab Media, Issue no. 54, June 2003), p.5.

map. Should those conservative points be adopted, the map would be eventually re-structured as they leave it free from the political implications previously stated.⁸²

It can be said that the Gulf states “declared” stance towards the Roadmap was based on the commitment to international legitimacy and the 2002 Beirut Arab Summit resolutions, and the inevitability of implementing Prince Abdullah’s Middle East Peace Plan,⁸³ even though there are still other undeclared stands that constitute a new Gulf political perspective towards the Palestinian cause.

In the closing statement of the twenty-fourth session of the Supreme Council of the GCC member states, held on 21 and 22 December 2003,⁸⁴ the Gulf leaders expressed their resentment towards Israel’s continuity in adopting techniques of state terrorism, as demonstrated by assassinating Palestinian leaders and symbols and exposing the Palestinian people to exemplary punishment, hunger, house demolition, and banishment. The Council demonstrated its follow-up on Sharon’s speech about the Israeli government’s determination to take a one-sided decision to carry out the so-called isolation plan or “disengagement”. Once again, the leaders affirmed their adherence to Prince Abdullah’s Peace Initiative, in addition to their insistence that commitment to the Roadmap plan was vital in order to reach a solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Ministerial Council also appreciated the outcomes of the Sharm el-Sheikh and Al-Aqaba summits on 3 and 4 June 2003, the support of the Roadmap, which promulgates the termination of the Israeli occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state on

⁸² Nayef Hawtmeh, *Oslo and the Other Balance Peace*, (Cairo: Al-Mahrousa for Publishing Press and Information Services, 2004),p.17.

⁸³(Al-Ittihad: 4-6-2003:1)

⁸⁴ The closing statement of the 24th session of the Supreme Council of the GCC member states held between 21 and 22 December 2003 in Kuwait, the GCC website <http://www.gcc-sg.org>

the verge of 2005, and Prince Abdullah Ben Abdulaziz's initiative, which was unanimously adopted in the 2002 Beirut Arab Summit.⁸⁵

It is worth noting that the plan included in its first stage ending in May "putting an end to terrorism and violence, restoring the Palestinian life to its nature and setting up the Palestinian foundations." This could be interpreted as the Palestinians being required to promptly and unconditionally stop acts of terrorism and violence, restore Palestinian life to its normal course, set up the Palestinian foundations, and take up a comprehensive political reform process. All such measures were to be accompanied by Israeli supporting measures, and the Palestinians and Israelis would resume security cooperation on the basis of Tenet's plan for bringing violence and terrorism to an end.⁸⁶

The Arab countries were mentioned in the first stage, as they were required to withhold private and public financing, and all facets of support to groups that embrace or take part in terrorism and violence. However, as most of the Palestinian factions and organizations have military wings and conduct military acts against Israel, it seemed that the Palestinians were required to be stripped of any Arab support, even if such support was received from individuals or private associations. Should any violation occur, Israel's non-commitment would be justifiable. In addition, all donors who were interested in providing budgetary finance were required to transfer such funds through the sole account of the Palestinian Finance Ministry, which meant domination over all foreign finance methods.⁸⁷

The second stage, June 2003 to December 2003, which was allocated to the establishment of a Palestinian State, was a transitional period where all efforts were to be concentrated to accomplish a transitionally bordered Palestinian state with sovereignty features that

⁸⁵The eighty-seventh round of the Ministerial Council held in Jeddah on 16 June 2003 on the GCC web site <http://gcc-sg.org/mnstr1088.html>

⁸⁶Zakareyya Hussein, *The Strategy of Israeli Negotiation: The Course of the Arab-Israeli Negotiation Throughout a Quarter of a Century 1977-2004*, (Cairo: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, Issued 2004), p.318.

⁸⁷Taha Khalil, *The Roadmap and the Difficulties of Implementation*, *Awark AL Sharq Al awsat*, (Cairo: The National Centre for Middle East Studies, Issue no. 31, June 2003), p.24.

were based on the new constitution as a step toward the permanent solution. However, the pace of progress towards this stage was governed by the Quartet Committee's assessment of the efforts of both parties.⁸⁸

What was required from the Arab side was that the Arab countries were to restore whatever ties they had with Israel before the Intifada (such as the commercial offices), and to revive the multilateral engagements related to water, environment, economic development, the refugees, and armament limitation.⁸⁹

The third stage "agreement on the final status and bringing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to an end, 2004-2005" aimed at stabilizing the reform and stability of the Palestinian foundations and guaranteeing an effective security performance in addition to conducting Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which aimed at reaching a permanent status agreement by 2005. As for the Arab side, the Arab countries were to accept complete and normal relations with Israel, and the recognition of the security of each state in the region within an Arab-Israeli comprehensive peace frame.⁹⁰

In accordance with the previously mentioned GCC member states stance towards the Palestinian cause and the multiple peaceful settlement projects and schemes, it is quite apparent that there was a vital and important connection between the GCC states and the peace process. The GCC perspective emphasizes supporting the comprehensive peace process that warrants for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state whose capital is Jerusalem, the rejection of settling the Palestinians in the territories of GCC states, in addition to the demand for a just solution for the refugee problem in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, and finally the resoluteness to financially and morally support and sustain the Palestinian legitimacy, "the Palestinian National Authority".

The GCC states were influenced by great public support for the Palestinian cause, which could not be officially overlooked or surpassed.

⁸⁸ Zakareyya Hussein, p.322.

⁸⁹ Taha Khalil, p.24.

⁹⁰ Ibid, pp.324, 325.

6.13 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the relationship between GCC states and the Middle East peace process and the stance adopted by the GCC with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East peace process. The chapter revealed the existence of a general vision that affected the stance of GCC states towards the Middle East Process, which entailed support for Arab and Palestinian rights, particularly the right of Palestinians to declare a national state with Jerusalem as its capital. This chapter also highlights the support of GCC states for the Middle East peace process from the onset and throughout all the attempts that followed the Madrid Conference and the attempts of GCC states to overcome the challenges that emerged during the peace process. At one point, GCC states even agreed to leave out the indirect boycott of Israel from the second and third degrees, which affected companies investing in Israel. The situation changed with the arrival of Benjamin Netanyahu at the helm of power in Israel in 1996 and in response to the increasing aggressive attitudes of his government, Arab states held the 17th Arab Summit and announced decisions to reconsider policies towards Israel.

GCC states voiced support for the Wye Plantations and Wye River accords, while in the Second Camp David Accord, GCC states unanimously reasserted a past and immutable stance in support of Arab rights, including the right of refugees to return and the Palestinians right to declare a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and also to support Yasser Arafat as an elected Palestinian president.

The GCC continued to support Arab and Palestinian rights. GCC justice ministers called on the international community to shoulder its responsibility and take measures to stop Israeli crimes against the Palestinians. Meanwhile, the Sultanate of Oman closed its trade office in Tel Aviv, and the Israeli trade office in Muscat.

Saudi Arabia exerted efforts at the Arab, Islamic, and African levels to champion the Palestinian issue and to curtail Israel diplomatically.

Following the 11 September attacks, Saudi Arabia sought to re-crystallize its foreign policy, and in 2002 Saudi Arabia announced the Arab Peace Initiative in Beirut, while at the same time sharp differences emerged between the GCC states and the US on the definition of terrorism and distinguishing between terrorism and the legitimate right of armed struggle against occupation. However, despite such differences, GCC states at the institutional and official state levels continued to support the US peace efforts.

This chapter has shown that GCC states were keen to support the Middle East peace process and champion Arab rights, as expressed by a number of summit and ministerial meetings. Due to regional and international conditions, GCC states were encouraged to engage more actively in the peace process and announced their commitment to peace as a strategic Arab choice. GCC states attended the Madrid Conference as observers, and later took part in the multilateral negotiation rounds, some of which were held in Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.

In 2003, the US announced plans to produce social, political, and cultural changes in the Middle East in what was known as the “Greater Middle East” or the “Colin Powell Initiative”, and which were received with scepticism and reserve by all GCC states except Qatar, which welcomed the initiative. Qatar’s stance proved to be a source of pressure against the ruling GCC regime and later led to a key split among GCC states.

In Chapter Seven, the study will explore the political stances of GCC states on the Middle East Peace process and relevant US initiatives, and the support by GCC states of the Palestinian cause since the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Peace Process after the Death of Arafat

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is an extension of the previous chapter to discuss the stances taken by GCC states on the Middle East peace process and analyse these stances with respect to the process after the demise of the Palestinian National Authority chairman Yasser Arafat, and in light of the US-backed democratization drive specifically targeting the structure of Palestinian national authorities as well as the Middle East democratization shift from a broader perspective.

This chapter also includes analysis and examination of GCC state policies with regard to the issues of succession and the transfer of power of Palestinian national authority after the death of Arafat, and the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the GCC stance on the Roadmap, the obstacles facing the Roadmap, and attempts to revive the Arab peace initiative.

The sources used in this chapter include secondary sources, which comprise academic periodicals, academic research, which has already been presented, and a limited number of primary resources, such as closing statements issued by GCC summit meetings, ministerial meetings, and related news articles published in GCC newspapers.

On 14 February 2003, and under the pressure put upon him by Israel, the US, and the European Union, Arafat accepted the principle of appointing a prime minister, offering the position to Mahmoud Abbas, who formed the first Palestinian government on 29 November 2004, amid Palestinian suspicion and an American-Israeli welcome. On 11 November 2004, the death of Yasser Arafat was officially declared, and hence a new phase was initiated, known as the post-Arafat phase.

7.2 The new Palestinian leadership

Mahmoud Abbas assumed the role of Prime Minister within the Palestinian National Authority in accordance with the context of the Palestinian amendments made to the Roadmap plan, which confirmed the appointment of a new Palestinian prime minister and restricted the authority and privileges of Arafat before he died. Mahmoud Abbas was one of the key catalysts in the peace process, and he is considered to be a practical leader in the Palestinian Authority. Further, Abbas enjoys solid connections in the US and Israel, in addition to his well-known views against militarizing the Intifada, and his strong relationships with the Palestinian opposing squads, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, including his talks with them despite their rejection of his directions regarding the route of the Intifada. Most important of all, however, is his strong base inside the Palestinian Liberation Organization.¹

Before the death of Arafat, all plans aiming at the continuation of political settlement were frozen, awaiting Arafat's passing away in whichever manner, or at least, severely decreasing his privileges, through distributing them, as well as the dispossession of his financial and security privileges. In the light of this environment, Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, suggested the Unilateral Disengagement Plan, which entails the comprehensive unilateral withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip, along with the disengagement of four settlements in some areas of the northern West Bank. The term "unilateral" indicates what Israel considers to be "the absence of a Palestinian partner" that is fit for negotiations. Sharon's plan has gained American and global approval, rendering it a part of the Roadmap.²

The presence of Arafat was an excuse adopted by the Israeli government to delay, or even to avoid, the agreed peace commitments, being a part of the problem rather than being a

¹The Arab Strategic Report, 2002-2003, (Cairo: Center of Political and Strategic Studies, 2003) p.275.

² Emad Gad. The Future of Settlement after Arafat, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram, issue no. 159, January 2005), p.122.

part of its resolution, and under his commandship, Israel had no adequate Palestinian negotiator. What, then, was the Israeli attitude towards dealing with Abu Mazen?

Israel does not view Abu Mazen as a true partner in the peacemaking process in the area, yet he is the sole person to converse with. Israel denounces his mildness and hesitance in facing the Palestinian Islamic movements. However, Israel knows that he is the only person with whom it can discuss some of its main issues, and after the events of Gaza in July/August 2007, the importance of Abu Mazen increased for Israel. Given this situation, the peace process moved at a slower pace until it was completely frozen, allowing Israel to confiscate lands and to build up the barrier wall, in addition to hardening the procedures of moving goods and Palestinian people across the towns of the West Bank, making it difficult for them to perform their Islamic rituals in Al-Quds, not to mention the increasing numbers of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. Such situations have presented several challenges to the Gulf Cooperation Council, as revealed in its 25th Summit, convened in Manama in December 2004, among which are the following points:³

- Utilizing the Israeli actions against the Palestinians by some of the extremist groups to exert pressure on the Gulf governments, or to practice terrorism against the United States and the other countries siding with Israel. Reviewing the statements made by these groups, the most important of which is Al-Qaeda, the connection between their operations and the escalating conditions in Iraq and Palestine is clearly noticeable.
- The negative impacts which the Gulf-Arab relationships may face due to the approval of some Arab countries to signing the economic Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) agreements with Israel and the US. This is a matter seen by several analysts as a reason, among others, that may cause damage to the Arab intra-trade in general and, in particular, the economic exchange between Gulf countries and the countries signing such agreements. This is in addition to the supposition that such agreements would initiate the Arab-Israeli

³Mamdouh Saber, Manama Summit: The Challenges and Results, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 40, winter 2005), p.102.

normalization process, which is held frozen until reaching a fair resolution in respect of Palestine.

With the absence of Arafat, the need, or at least the desire, emerged to hire staff members in the positions of the Authority's institutions. Some of these positions were official, such as the position Arafat was personally occupying, while others possibly emerged as a consequence of his absence, a matter that caused the anticipation of the impact of Arafat's absence on the future of the relationships between the national Authority and the various Palestinian groups, and even within the Authority itself. This stems from the fact that the popularity of Arafat over the previous four decades was the most prominent element in achieving unity and solidarity of the interior bloc. Hence, the absence of Arafat and the lack of an alternative leadership with the same popularity gave rise to fears about the possibility of slipping into an interior conflict instead of directing the efforts towards political settlement,⁴ which already had happened in the events in Gaza in 2007.

The Palestinian leadership proved successful in arranging for a streamlined transfer of power, and distributing the positions occupied by the late President Arafat harmoniously. In this context, Mahmoud Abbas was elected President of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, after being the said Committee's Secretary in Ramallah, soon after declaring the death of Yasser Arafat in Percy Military Hospital in France on 11 November 2004. Thus, in their 25th Summit in Manama, from 20 to 21 December 2004, the GCC leaders expressed their "wishes for the new Palestinian leadership to succeed in the continuation of bearing the responsibilities, integration, and cooperation in facing the future challenges" and they praised "the wisdom and sense of responsibility expressed by the Palestinian leadership in the streamlined manner in which the authority was transferred."⁵

⁴ (Al-Khalij: 16-11-2004:4)

⁵ The Gulf Summit Fails to Resolve the Manama Dispute – Riyadh, Islam Online Website, 21-12-2004, <http://www.islamonline.net/arabic/news/index>

Also, in its statement, and in addition to the wishes of the new Palestinian leadership, the Council asked President Bush to concentrate his efforts towards a peaceful process in a manner that would fulfil the commitments and promises made for establishing a Palestinian state that had the ability for Palestinians to live side by side peacefully with Israel. In the same context, the Council also addressed the Quartet Committee with an invitation to continue its efforts that aimed at setting up the appropriate environment to facilitate the work of the Palestinian political process, as well as moving the peace process in the Middle East forward according to the basics and requirements referred to in the Roadmap and the Arab initiative.⁶

It was on 9 January that the new Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, was elected for the position, thus becoming the second president of the Palestinian National Authority, after President Yasser Arafat.⁷ The new president started his career by tackling a number of challenges, the first of which were the challenges inside the Palestinian internal bloc, which he referred to when saying, “I will move from the minor jihad to the major jihad”, which is concerned with reform, development, and paving the political route,⁸ in a manner that enabled him to shoulder the responsibilities of the coming phase. However, in mid-March 2005,⁹ Hamas declared that it would participate in the legislative election that would be held in mid-July 2005. Nevertheless, the said election was held on 25 January 2006, when Hamas won the majority of the Legislative Council seats. The reaction of the GCC was represented in congratulating and welcoming President Mahmoud Abbas for acquiring the presidency of the Palestinian National Authority, wishing the new government success in supporting integration and cooperation in facing the challenges, so

⁶The closing statement of the 25th Summit, convened in Manama, 20-21 December 2004, on the Council’s website, (<http://www.gcc-sg.org>)

⁷Subhy Esseilah, Palestine After Arafat: Challenges of Reform and Settlement, *Mozakerat Estratejeah*, (Cairo: Center of Political and Strategic Studies, Fifteenth Year, Issue 151, 2005), p.4.

⁸ (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat: 14-01-2005:1)

⁹Subhi Essilah, op.cit, p.18.

as to achieve the Palestinians' ambitions towards establishing an independent state on their national land, with the Holy Quds as its capital.¹⁰

This reaction is manifested in the closing statement of the 26th Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council state members, which was held in Kuwait from 18 to 19 December 2005.¹¹ The Council expressed its ambitions that the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and some settlements in the West Bank was a step in the right direction, provided that it was followed by more action towards full withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories. Once again, the Council asserted the adherence of its state members to the Arab Peace Initiative approved at the Beirut Summit in 2002, which originated in international legitimacy resolutions. The Council also confirmed the integration between this initiative and the Roadmap. This was in the light of its belief that fair and comprehensive peace in the Middle East could be achieved only through establishing an independent Palestinian state, based on its necessary constituents, along with stopping the settlement process, evacuating the settlements, giving up the building of the separation barrier, and removing what had been built up so far.

7.3 The Israeli unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and its consequences

On 5 January 2004, in front of the Central Committee of the Likud party, Ariel Sharon said:

The best plan for the security of Israel, it is my plan, and I will execute it. Continue raising your banners that have the slogan "terrorism has won", and I will assume my responsibilities to achieve peace and security on this land. Brave settlers are loyal to Zionism. However, Israel will have to give up some of the Jewish settlements in the context of peace with the Palestinians. However, if they refuse our suggestions, we will work on

¹⁰The General Administration, News Section, a Comprehensive Report on the Achievements of the Gulf Cooperation Council, issued on the occasion of holding the 26th session, the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

¹¹The closing statement of the 26th Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council state members, Kuwait, 18-19 December 2005, the Council's website (<http://www.gcc-sg.org>).

separating ourselves from them both militarily and politically, severing every possible form of communication with them.¹²

He previously mentioned them in his speech, on 18 December 2003, in front of the attendees at the Herzliya National Security Conference, in which he announced his plan to disengage from the Palestinians. On the surface, this shows that Sharon was determined to proceed with his unilateral disengagement through waiving some of the settlements for the safety and security of the Israelis. However, if this was only on the surface, the hidden intentions confirm the unwillingness of Sharon and his determination, after his assumption of power in 2001, not to get back to negotiations or any previous commitments. Sharon sought to reach a specific political position that enabled him to achieve political settlement with the Palestinians as he saw fit, yet after resolving the security, political, and economic issues, he used his statements to pretend that there was no Palestinian partner with which to negotiate.¹³

The concept of final disengagement was not new. Rabin adopted the idea after a series of suicidal operations during 1994, yet the dominant political status made it impossible to execute the plan. Also, after the failure of the Camp David negotiations and the eruption of the Second Intifada, Barak initiated the plan once again under the name “Breathing Borders”. Then Sharon announced his disengagement plan, in an attempt to improve the security, political, economic, and even personal conditions. The said disengagement plan was based on the following considerations:¹⁴

1. Full freezing of the current status is harmful. In order to disintegrate this frozen state, Israel should take the initiative towards stepping away from any Palestinian cooperation.

¹²Ibrahim Ghali, Warning of Disengagement: A Dangerous Plan for a Critical Reality, *Al-Quds*, (Cairo: Arab Media Center, Issue no. 62, February 2004), pp.38-39.

¹³Ibid.p. 39.

¹⁴(Yedioth Ahronoth: 30/05/2004), <http://withdraw.sis.gov.ps/arabic/sharon-plan.html>.

2. The aim of the plan is to move towards a better secured, political, economic, and demographic status.
3. In any future constant settlement, there will never be an Israeli settlement in Gaza. In return, it is obvious that in Judea and Samaria there will remain areas belonging to Israel, including the central blocks of Jewish settlement.
4. Israel supports the endeavors of the United States working side by side with the global community to push forward the march of reforms, so that a new Palestinian Authority will be established that proves its ability to fulfil its commitment according to the Roadmap.
5. Getting out of Gaza and the area of northern Samaria will limit interaction with the Palestinian residents.
6. Completing the gradual plan will deny the right for the Palestinians of any other claim against Israel in the future regarding its responsibility for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.
7. The gradual Disengagement Plan is not contradictory with the outstanding agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. Any related outstanding agreement remains valid.

Israel expected some degree of wide global support regarding this separation process, as this support would be seen as an essential constituent in pushing the Palestinians towards performing their assigned tasks, in a practical manner, in fields pertaining to fighting terrorism, and implementing the reforms as outlined in the Roadmap, upon which returning to negotiations would be possible. On 7 June 2004, the Israeli government approved the Unilateral Disengagement Plan from the Gaza Strip and some parts of the northern West Bank. However, this approval was denounced by the Likud, Mefdal Religious Party, and the Jewish settlers groups, as well as the Central Commandership Meeting of the Ten Palestinian Squads in Damascus, on 17 June 2004, where the plan of

Sharon was viewed as a threshold towards the dissolution of the Palestinian case. Hence, the project should have been entirely rejected.¹⁵

The Palestinian leadership expressed its viewpoint in a statement issued after its emergency meeting, held on 14 April 2004 in Ramallah, considering the conditional withdrawal from Gaza as an obvious clue that it was not a withdrawal, but, rather, was transforming the Strip into a huge solitary prison. Upon his acquiring the presidency of the National Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas confirmed, on 15 January 2005, the commitment of the National Palestinian Authority to the peace process, asserting its readiness to receive the areas in the Gaza Strip and West Bank from which Israel would withdraw, refusing to bargain this withdrawal with the national project, and accepting it only as a step in the Roadmap to be followed by the continuation of the peace process. Then, on another occasion, and in an interview with *Al-Arabeya* (satellite channel) on 28 July 2005, Abbas confirmed that the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank was unilateral, and that the Palestinian Authority was tackling the issue with great interest, “as we comprehensively prepare ourselves on the Authority level, as well as on the public and mass levels, so that this event will be accomplished as properly required by us.”¹⁶

This was followed by the American reaction to the Unilateral Disengagement Plan prepared by Sharon’s government, in the statement made by the American President upon his meeting with Sharon on 14 April 2004, describing the plan as a brave one. The US also confirmed that it would remain committed to the vision of two states, as mentioned in the Roadmap, and that it would exert its best efforts to prevent the imposition of any other new plans, confirming, meanwhile, its solid commitment to the security of Israel as a Jewish state, including its safe borders that should be protected, and keeping the Israeli

¹⁵Tareq Hassan, The Unilateral Disengagement and the Peace Process Future, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah*, (Cairo, Al-Ahram Establishment, Issue 158, October 2004), p.132.

¹⁶The Palestinian Reaction to the Israeli Evacuation Plan, General Information Establishment, Palestine, <http://withd-aw.sis.gov.ps/arabic/president.html>

rights to defend itself against terrorism.¹⁷ It is notable that on 11 September 2005, the Israeli occupation announced a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

The reaction of the Quartet Committee was made clear in its statement in Brussels, dated 9 May 2005, highlighting the following:¹⁸

1. Withdrawal should be implemented within the execution of the Roadmap.
2. It should be a step on the path to finding the solution for two states.
3. The settlers who will be moved from the Gaza Strip should not be transferred to the West Bank.
4. There should be a transfer process organized by negotiating with, and delivering to, the Palestinian Authority.
5. Israel should streamline the Gaza reform reconstruction process.

The reaction of the GCC was expressed in the 24th Summit, where the Council confirmed its rejection of the content of the speech delivered by the Israeli Prime Minister on 14 September 2003, regarding the intention of the Israeli government to take a unilateral decision to implement the so-called separation plan, or the “Disengagement Plan”, while refusing any negotiations with the Palestinian side. The Council asserted its austere denunciation of such arrangements, which did not serve the Arabs, and international efforts were exerted to re-enliven the peace process.¹⁹

The attitude of the GCC towards the unilateral withdrawal plan can be explained on the basis that the Council believed in fair and comprehensive peace, as well as in establishing a Palestinian state, with Jerusalem (Al-Quds) as its capital. The Israeli plan strongly

¹⁷<http://withdraw.sis.gov.ps/arabic/AA.html>. Also refer to Islam Online website, in a citation from the French News Agency; an unofficial translation of the text of the announcement made by George Bush, the American President, on the Middle East, as issued after his meeting with Sharon, on Wednesday 14-04-2004.

¹⁸The official website of the Secretary of State, 10-05-2005.

¹⁹Media and Information Center, the Kuwait Summit concludes its agenda by denouncing the Israeli assaults and terrorism, as well as confirming the unity of Iraq, 22-12-2003, <http://mic-pal.info>

opposed all that the GCC council proposed. Moreover, it denied the idea of having a peace partner, thus entirely canceling the rights of the Palestinians, which the Council could not accept.

7.4 The stumbling block in implementing the Roadmap

In spite of the international commitment to the Roadmap, as represented in the Quartet Committee, realities proved that this commitment was not serious. After one year , following the announcement of the Roadmap and starting its relevant negotiations, the United States changed its attitude and sided with Israel, through the American acceptance of the 14 Israeli reservations over the Roadmap, as mentioned in Bush's promise to Sharon issued on 14 April 2004. The Americans sought to relate the Israeli Unilateral Disengagement Plan to the Roadmap, in return for the American promise to Sharon, as represented in the letter of guarantees sent to him in April 2004.²⁰

The main points in the guarantees letter of 14 April 2004:²¹

- The American approval of Israel's keeping of military positions in the Gaza Strip.
- Giving Israel the right to break into Gaza and pursue Palestinian individuals or organizations under the pretext of defending the security of Israel.
- The vow to protect the security of Israel as a Jewish state.
- Approving the cancellation of the right of Palestinian refugees to get back to their houses in Israel, and thus hinting that the return of the refugees would be to the newborn Palestinian state and not to Israel.

²⁰Mohamed Al-Deeb, The Second Balfour promise (Bush's promise to Sharon): The American Guarantees Letter, *Shoa'uon AL Sharq al awsat*, (Cairo: Al Ahram, Issue 11, July 2004), p.119.

²¹Ahmed Sayed Ahmed. Gaza between Sharon's Plan and the Egyptian Initiative, *As-Siyasah Ad-Dawliyyah* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Establishment, Issue no. 157, July 2004), p.155.

- Confirming Israel's right to annex settlements in the West Bank, with the necessity of modifying the borders, and hence, as stated by Bush, returning to the borders of 1948 is a totally unrealistic matter.
- Bush vowed to confront any attempt to suggest any settlement plan proposed by any side.
- Giving Israel the right to control the airfields, water sources, and land borders.

Hence, this letter totally ignored the Roadmap, in addition to the fact that Bush gave himself the right to be the sole party concerned with proposing settlement plans for the peace process. Such promises were contradictory to both Security Council resolutions numbers 242 and 338. Also, being related to the issues to be resolved in the context of the final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, the promises were also contradictory to the Roadmap, which stipulated that its third stage was designed to resolve the final status issues through direct negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

On the other hand, the previously mentioned critiques expressed by the GCC regarding the guarantees offered by Bush to Sharon in April 2004²² represented the reaction of the GCC towards the US disavowal from its commitments, particularly the establishment of two states, one for the Palestinians and the other for the Israelis. Hence, the GCC described Bush's statements as a serious and pitiable transformation that ignored the international legitimacy resolutions, which consider the Palestinian lands as occupied. Consequently, this would lead the extremist Israeli government to commit further violations of international laws,²³ and this represented a serious setback in its approach towards the settlement process in the region.

While Israel was connecting between continuing the pacifications from its side, and the progress Mahmoud Abbas was making in building up the squads dissolution program,²⁴ in

²²Refer to the Disengagement Plan script – The American Guarantees document – Sharon's memo to Bush – Bush's speech in front of Sharon, The Palestinian Information Center, 17-04-2004, <http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/palestoday/reports/report2004/wstheeqa.htm>

²³Swiss Broadcast, <http://www.swissinfo.org/sar/swissinfo.html>

²⁴Abdullah Al-Asa'al, After Sharm Al-Sheikh, Will Abu Mazen be the Leader of the Anti-Terrorism Front in Palestine?, *Al-Quds*, (Cairo, Arab Information Center, Issue 75, March 2005), p.79.

the light of the American statements supposing that the Palestinian resistance and Intifada were acts of terrorism hindering the peace process, Bush asked Abbas to fight what he called the “armed gangs”, referring to the resistance squads, considered as a serious threat to the chances of the establishment of the Palestinian state. Also, he implicitly referred to the impossibility of moving to the Roadmap or any further Israeli-Palestinian negotiations regarding the final status before finalizing this issue. This obviously shows that Bush sided with Sharon’s policies and his insistence on the security part of the settlement process in general, and the Roadmap in particular.

The GCC member states differentiated between “terrorism” on the one hand, which is religiously, lawfully, and morally rejected, and the legitimate armed struggle against foreign occupation, which is accepted by international treaties and religious legislation.²⁵ Hence, these states responded positively to the Security Council resolution No. 1373/2001 regarding anti-terrorism, and confirmed their commitment to abide by the other related resolutions. Thus, in 2002, the security strategy of fighting extremism accompanied by terrorism was duly approved. It was approved by the Supreme Council in its 24th session in Kuwait in 2003. Such a reaction obviously reveals the Gulf Council’s clear attitude of denunciation towards terrorism, yet not the type of terrorism viewed by the US and Israel, who tend to equate Palestinian resistance with global terrorism.

In this context, the American administration vowed to support any future Israeli attack against the Palestinians, under the pretext of “hot pursuit” and the right to pursue those wanted by the Israelis. In practice, this meant enabling the Israeli occupation forces to undertake military operations against the resistance squads, even after the redeployment in the areas from which Israel was supposed to withdraw, claiming its right to “self-defense”.²⁶

²⁵Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, *The Impact of 11/09 Events on the Arab World*, p.15.

²⁶Al-Sayed Awad Othman, ‘Bush’s Promise and the Validity of Settlement’, *Al-Quds* (Cairo, Arab Information Center, Issue 65, May 2004), p.40.

It was also noticeable that in September 2005, President Bush, while standing beside Mahmoud Abbas, announced his disavowal of Abbas's opinion regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state before the end of his term of presidency in January 2009. Further, Bush practically annihilated the peace plan, known as the Roadmap, through his full adoption of the Israeli security approach towards the settlement process and the negotiations with the Palestinian Authority.²⁷

It became clear that this qualitative development in the American attitude was destructive to the basis of the peace process including the resolutions made by the United Nations and international legitimacy, or even previously adopted American attitudes. Such a development was contradictory to the American guarantees given to the Palestinian leadership, yet it was a push to Israel to continue the policy of imposing a new reality on the ground, and putting an end to the mediation role played by the American administration, not to mention losing its credibility, putting an end to the proposed Roadmap, and slamming the door in the face of real settlement.

7.5 Attempts to revive the Arab peace initiative

Since its outset, the Second Intifada has adopted violent and armed tools. Hence, the form of armed resistance has dominated the general view of its activities. Militarizing the Intifada, through suicidal operations and shootings, has not been an easy choice; however, it is the only effective weapon for the Palestinians, given the imbalance of forces when compared to the Israeli forces. All Palestinian wings have viewed the Intifada as an inevitable response to the occupation policy, and the targeting of civilians by Israeli forces.²⁸

Throughout the year prior to the war in Iraq, the Palestinian Authority faced an Arab and international campaign calling on it to reform, a matter that the Palestinian Authority saw as viable only through holding municipality and legislative elections. Hence, the

²⁷Maged Azzam, Has Meles Report Shot the Roadmap and Bush's View? Arab Media Internet, 08-10-2005, <http://www.amin.org/views/uncat/2005/nov/nov8-5.html>

²⁸ The Arab Strategic Report 2002-2003, (Cairo: Center of Political and Strategic Studies, 2003), p.272.

regulations of the Authority changed “in an application of the Oslo Agreement, which promulgates the presidency of the Authority only”, so that they would include the position of a Prime Minister on 19 March 2003. Hence, the first Palestinian government was formed according to the new legislation on 20 April 2003, and the Roadmap was officially declared on 30 April 2003.²⁹

Mahmoud Abbas became the Prime Minister in the Palestinian Authority, through application of the requirements of the Roadmap regarding the Palestinian reforms, which stressed the formation of a new Palestinian Prime Ministry, introducing the position of a Prime Minister with powers as a step towards the reform of the Palestinian Authority, and limiting the powers of Yasser Arafat.³⁰

Based on the above, the American initiative called for the convening of an Arab-American-Israeli Summit in Aqaba on 4 June 2003, so as to position both the Palestinians and Israelis on the American track towards the peace process. Sharon always prevented the implementation of the Roadmap, and yet continued his commitment to what was mentioned in Bush’s letter regarding the termination of the Intifada as the first condition to cooperate with any Palestinian government. This pushed Mahmoud Abbas to meet the Palestinian squads, so as to reach an agreement with them to announce a unilateral Palestinian truce, and called on both the United States and Israel to go ahead in implementing the second step of the Roadmap related to several Israeli entitlements, the most important of which was the withdrawal from the Palestinian self-rule areas.³¹

The issue of political and economic reform in the Arab world was strongly suggested after the US issued its so-called proposal of the “Greater Middle East”, which the US afterwards confirmed in the Big Eight Summit, convened in the state of Georgia at the outset of 2004 under the title “Partnership for Development and a Joint Future with the

²⁹Belal Al-Hassan, *Israel in the Light of War Results: A Seminar on the Occupation of Iraq and its Repercussions on the Arab, Regional and International Levels*, (Beirut: Center of Arab Unity Studies, 2004), p.384.

³⁰The Arab Strategic Report 2002-2003, op.cit, p.275.

³¹Belal Al-Hassan, op.cit, p.384-385.

Greater Middle East and North Africa Region”, after making some essential modifications.

In contrast with this proposal, several Arab countries stated that the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict came on top of the elements that caused the stumbling block regarding democratic reform and the development process in the region.³² Meanwhile, others saw that postponing political reform under the claim of dedication to confronting the Israeli danger was no longer acceptable, neither internally nor externally. After more than fifty years of postponing the political reform based on this claim, nothing has been achieved in the context of liberating Palestine. On the contrary, the political situation has further deteriorated to the stage of internal political suffocation, which threatens to explode at any time, in addition to the noticeable aggravation of security risks.³³

Based on the above, democratic reform and development processes have occupied an advanced priority from Arab and the Gulf countries’ perspective. Some³⁴ see that developing political regimes towards democracy and political reform is an essential condition to increase the capacity of these regimes in meeting the internal, regional, and international challenges under the sole American control of the global system, that is, given the sole tackling of the peace process in the Middle East by the US. This reform issue was reiterated in the Tunisia Summit in May 2004, expressing a collateral Arab attitude in the face of external pressures. The Arab and Gulf countries³⁵ re-confirmed the Arab peace initiative, as adopted in the Beirut Summit, and rejected the contradictory situations with this initiative and the rules of international legitimacy and the reference

³²Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, *The Reality and Future of the Political Reform in the Arab World*. Op.cit, p.70.

³³Mohamed Saad Abu Amoud, *Determinatives of the Political Reform in the Arab Countries*, in *Democracy Issue in the Arab World*, (Cairo: Cairo University, Faculty of Economy and Political Sciences, Center of Developing Countries’ Studies and Researches, 2004), p.6.

³⁴Mohamed Saad Abu Amoud, *Democratic Development in the Arab World and the Arab National Security*, *Shoa'uon Khalejeh*, (Cairo: Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, Issue no. 25, Spring 2001), pp.46-47.

³⁵Refer to the closing statement of the 16th Ordinary Session, which was convened in Tunisia in May 2004, www.arab-summit.org; Ahmed Sayed Ahmed, *Gaza between Sharon's Plan and the Egyptian Initiative*, op.cit, p.158.

points of the peace process, in a hint at the stances adopted in the two letters exchanged between Sharon and Bush.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed issues related to the transfer of power and succession after the death of the Palestinian Authority leader, Yasser Arafat. In particular, it has focused on US proposals to restart the Middle East peace process in the hopes of settling the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Roadmap, the Gaza unilateral withdrawal, and the backing by GCC states of US Middle East peace efforts.

This chapter has also highlighted the scepticism of GCC states about US plans seeking to tie the Middle East peace process to political and economic reforms in the region, as a US attempt to use democratization as a conflict resolution, which the GCC bloc viewed with concern and perhaps also resentment. GCC states declared that reforms must reflect internal needs, and must be linked to the native and domestic culture rather than being externally imposed. This was with the exception of Qatar, who backed the US democratization drive without reservation, as will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. GCC states also expressed reservations about the US attempts to link self-defence and resistance against occupation with terrorism. GCC states insisted on making a distinction between terrorism as a criminal act, which should be condemned, and the legitimate right of resistance against occupation. This chapter also discussed GCC efforts to salvage the Middle East process, including initiatives floated in Beirut, and how various circumstances led to the eventual collapse of the peace process.

In Chapter Eight, the study will explore and analyse key features of Qatar's foreign policy with respect to the Middle East peace process and Qatar's decision on the initiative to normalize trade ties with Israel.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Qatar's Foreign Policy towards the Middle East Peace Process (1991-2005)

8.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters explored and analysed the foreign policy of GCC states with regard to the Middle East peace process. This chapter engages with part of one of the main research question, which is what was the overall agreed upon foreign policy of the GCC towards the Middle East peace process, 1991-2005? As the previous two chapters engaged in exploration and analysis of the foreign policy of the GCC states towards the peace process, this chapter, explores Qatari foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process. The main objective of this chapter is to engage with Qatar's foreign policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict prior to the start of the peace process, its support for the first Palestinian Intifada and then how it reacted to what was perceived by GCC member states as the PLO's negative stance with respect to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The chapter further evaluates Qatar's support for the efforts that led to holding the Madrid Peace Conference, and the means with which it dealt with Israeli policies towards the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Finally, it looks at Qatar's stance with respect to the treaties and plans that followed the Madrid Conference.

This chapter is one of the data analysis chapters that deals with two types of documents. The first category consists of the statements of Qatari officials, such as those of the Emir of Qatar and from Qatari ministers or diplomats, whether they were published in Qatari newspapers or were kept in archives.¹ The second category consists of UN documents, including addresses delivered by Qatari officials, such as Qatari diplomats, the Foreign Minister of Qatar, and the Emir before the UN General Assembly. The time frame of this chapter extends from 1982 to 1993.

¹Statements attributed to ministers, diplomats, and the Emir of Qatar are revised by a specific office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Emiri divan prior to publication; therefore, such statements are published pursuant to official procedures.

8.2 Qatari-Palestinian relations

Qatar's foreign policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, and, later, the peace process, cannot be fully understood without thoroughly studying and analysing Qatar's foreign policy towards the Palestinian question, and how Qatar pursued a peaceful solution to this cause in particular, which is a quest that has been tackled in different ways ever since the Egyptian President, Anwar Al Sadat, announced his peace initiative in 1977.

With regard to Qatari-Palestinian relations, Qatar's foreign policy towards Palestine seems constant, and characterized by a clear Qatari backing for Palestinian rights. Furthermore, Qatar was fully aware of the complex nature of the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and was also aware of Palestinian rights and the Israeli obligations towards the occupied territories.

It is helpful to start with a quick historic review that goes a little further than the timeframe set for this study of the relationship between the two parties, in order to understand the state of steadiness that marked Qatar's relationship with Palestine and then, the changes that took place in Qatar's policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict in later stages.

Qatar was one of the first states that allowed an office for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) on its territory in 1964. It was also among the first states that allowed expatriate Palestinians living on its soil to vote in the elections for the National Palestinian Council.²

According to the ex-Emir of Qatar, Khaliah bin Hamad, in an interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, relations between Qatar and Palestine had "stability and continuity."³

² (Al Raya: 3-1-1991:1)

³The Emir Press interviews, (Doha: the Department of Publication and Press, 1976), p.25.

The Qatari government supports the Palestinian struggle and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to establish their state on their homeland, with Jerusalem as its capital. Qatar's support for the Palestinians has taken many forms, including the exchange of official visits between government officials from both sides, and the stances adopted by the Qatari government as represented by the Emir of Qatar, the Qatari cabinet, the foreign minister, and Qatari officials and diplomats in international organizations and arenas, as well as the material and moral support extended by Qatar, as evident in the rhetoric of the Emir, the prime minister, the Foreign Minister of Qatar, and the popular support extended by Qatari civil society organizations.

8.3 How Qatar saw the Palestinian issue with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict

According to the ex- Emir of Qatar, Khaliah bin Hamad, "Qatar has always perceived that the Palestinian question represents the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict."⁴ Qatar attributed great importance to this issue, and held that the non-resolution thereof would make Middle Eastern stability impossible to attain. Many Qatari officials have reiterated this stance. For instance, during the UN General Assembly discussions over the Palestinian issue, Qatar's UN envoy summed up the problem by saying that the Palestinian question represents the essence and the core of the conflict in the Middle East, adding that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, must be recognized.⁵ Qatar reiterated the same stance in the closing statement at the conclusion of the visit by Tanzania's Foreign Minister, Salem Ahmed Salem.⁶ During the visit of Donald Rumsfeld, the then US president's special envoy to the Middle East, the Emir of Qatar told Rumsfeld that Qatar believed that it was necessary to arrive at a permanent and just solution to the Palestinian question.⁷

⁴ Op.cit. The Emir Press interviews

⁵ (Al Raya: 9-12-1982:2)

See appendix No: 1

⁶ (Al Raya: 14-12-1982:1)

See appendix No: 2

⁷ (Al Raya : 26-4-1984:1)

Furthermore, in an interview with Qatar's Crown Prince Hamad Bin Khalifa during the Emir's tour of West Asian nations, Sheikh Hamad said that:

Given that the Palestinian issue is the essence of the Middle East conflict and the fact is the Palestinian issue is Arab nations' number one concern; therefore, it will be the priority among the issues that the Emir will discuss during his talks with the Asian heads of state.⁸

In his address before the UN 40th session, the Emir of Qatar stated that "Qatar believes that the Palestinian issue is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that this part of the world will remain teeming with problems and risks until a just resolution is reached."⁹

In his address to Qatar's Advisory Council, the Emir of Qatar reiterated the same point, that the GCC had to:

...unite as a single entity to direct our maximum collective efforts to resolve the Palestinian issue, our central and most essential issue, by arriving at a just resolution based on our Arab vision as drawn by the resolutions of the Arab Summit held in Fez in 1982.¹⁰

Thus the centrality of the Palestinian issue in the perception of Qatari officials meant that they have made remarkable efforts, and given care to this issue throughout the years of the conflict and thereafter during the years that were spent in pursuit of a peaceful political settlement. Qatar has maintained that the settlement of the Palestinian issue will be decisive in the stabilization of the Middle East region, and a key factor in resolving the remaining issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

⁸ (Al Raya: 12-4-1984: 1, 3)

⁹ (Al Raya: 12-10-1985:3)

¹⁰(Al Raya: 12-10-1985:3)

8.4 The early years of Qatari foreign policy towards the Palestinians

Qatar was among the first nations that opted for the actual recognition of the PLO when Qatar accepted the inauguration of the office of the PLO, even when it was under British rule during the tenure of Sheikh Ahmed Bin Ali in 1964, the same year that the PLO was established. In addition, Qatar was among the first nations that allowed Palestinian expatriates living on its soil to vote in the elections of the National Palestinian Council. Relations between the State of Qatar and Palestine continued to develop gradually, reflecting the growing capabilities of Qatar and the PLO. The principal governing Qatar's foreign policy towards Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict was that "The State of Qatar accepts whatever the Palestinians accept regarding their cause and rights." It is possible to discuss Qatar's foreign policy towards the Palestinian issue in an objective manner, starting from the final years of the rule of Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, when Qatar's foreign policy began to be formulated independently.

8.5 Qatar and the invasion of Lebanon 1982

The war of Lebanon in 1982 resulted in the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon to Tunisia, meaning a loss of political and military influence, and thus its ability to pose a threat to Israel's security. Following the PLO's departure to Tunisia on 1 October 1985, Israeli air forces raided the PLO headquarters in the Tunisian capital, wounding and killing 156 Palestinians and Tunisians. Qatar condemned the raid, but did not condemn the US and its protection of Israel, as Qatar had done previously. In addition, despite the fact that Israel had announced that the US had been previously notified of the raid, which the US considered an Israeli act of self-defence,¹¹ Qatar did not criticize the US in any way. This signalled a shift in Qatar's foreign policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. Qatar only condemned the raid in a statement issued by the Qatari cabinet, which announced Qatar's solidarity with the Palestinian and Tunisian people.¹²

¹¹ (Al Raya: 2-10-1985:1)

¹² (Al Raya: 3-10-1985:1)

In his address to the UN during the 40th session, the Emir of Qatar said that:

While the Arabs show an honest and undisputable desire to bring peace to the Middle East, the Zionist entity continues in its defiant rejection and negative attitude towards any peace initiative. The evilness of this entity has been growing as it becomes more and more dependent on military might and the policies of persecution, domination and expansion.¹³

The State of Qatar reiterated in its address before the UN General Assembly meeting that holding an international peace conference attended by all the concerned parties, including the PLO, was the most feasible path to lead to a comprehensive and just settlement of the conflict on the basis of restoring all the Arab occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and the Palestinian people's right of self-determination and the establishment of an independent state on its national soil.¹⁴ The EU later supported the call for holding an international peace conference to be attended by all the concerned parties in the Middle East, and the Qatari cabinet issued a statement welcoming the EU stance.¹⁵

The proposal to hold an international peace conference got a lukewarm reception from the US,¹⁶ and this signalled the actual end of the proposal.

But despite the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the US, in a letter to US President Ronald Regan, the Emir of Qatar reiterated the call to hold the international peace conference, stressing the principle of general international law that prohibits the occupation of land through military force.¹⁷ In a clear manifestation of its rejection of the proposal to hold an international peace conference for the Middle East, the US closed the PLO media office in Washington DC in response to the adoption by the National Palestinian Council of the idea of the international conference for peace in the Middle East.¹⁸

¹³ (Al Raya: 12-10-1985: 3)

¹⁴ (Al Raya: 27-11-1986:1)

¹⁵ (Al Raya 5-3-1987:1)

¹⁶(Al Raya: 18-3-1987:1)

¹⁷(Al Raya: 25-5-1978:7,1)

¹⁸(Al Raya: 22-9-1978:5)

Despite the US rejection, the majority of Arab states and Qatar remained in favour of the proposal. The Emir of Qatar reiterated such support in a letter he sent to the UN Palestinian Rights Committee stating that:

The best path towards resolving the Palestinian issue and ending the Arab-Israeli conflict is through holding an international peace conference with the participation of the five UN Security Council permanent members and all the concerned parties, including the PLO.

In the same letter, the Emir of Qatar described Israel as a “force of tyranny and aggression who is seeking to displace and irradiate the Palestinian people in order for the Zionists to take their place.”¹⁹

8.6 Qatar and the establishment of the Palestinian State

As a result of the failure or the thwarting of all attempts to arrive at a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict in general, and the Palestinian issue in particular, and for other reasons, including Jordan’s decision to disengage from the West Bank, the eruption of the Intifada, and in response to the Palestinian aspirations, talks began on the possibility of declaring a Palestinian government in exile.²⁰ The talks soon developed into an idea unilaterally to declare a Palestinian state.²¹ In his address on the occasion of Qatar’s Independence Day, the Emir of Qatar said “Qatar will support the declaration of a Palestinian state, if such a declaration was made.”²²

In a new breakthrough paving the way for a comprehensive peace process in the Middle East, the National Palestinian Council, through a majority vote during a meeting in Algeria, approved UN Security Council Resolution Number 242, and declared the

¹⁹(Al Raya: 1-12-1987: 14,1)

²⁰(Al Raya: 4-8-1988:1)

²¹(Al Raya: 9-8-1988:1)

²²(Al Raya: 3-9-1988:1)

establishment of an independent Palestinian state, a decision that represented a turning point in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.²³

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat arrived in Doha with the Palestinian flag on his motorcade, signalling that he was the president of the State of Palestine. Arafat held talks with the Emir of Qatar over the Algeria resolutions. For his part, the Emir of Qatar reiterated Qatar's immutable stance continuously to support the Palestinian people's just struggle to restore their legitimate rights under the leadership of the PLO.²⁴ The Emir officially welcomed the State of Palestine in his address to the Advisory Council on 28 November.²⁵ Meanwhile, the PLO submitted Palestinian diplomatic passports to the US embassy in Tunisia, and requested the issuance of entry visas to the American territories to Palestinian diplomats who would attend the UN General Assembly meeting.²⁶

A statement by the US Department of State announced that the US rejected the issuance of entry visas to Arafat and the accompanying delegation. Qatar criticized the American decision, and the Qatari foreign ministry expressed regret at the US decision and surprise over what it described as the negative stance that came in spite of the recent decisions adopted by the PLO, which confirmed that it would proceed along the path to peace. Qatar described the US decision as a violation of the treaty signed between the US and the UN in 1947, and expressed hopes that the US Department of State would reconsider the decision, which Qatar said it found unjustified and contradictory to any US efforts to prove the credibility and seriousness of its pursuit of a just and permanent solution to the Middle East conflict.²⁷ In the end, the US did not yield to the Arab demands and the UN decided to move the session in which Arafat was to make his address to Geneva, where the Swiss government granted him an entry visa to Switzerland.²⁸

²³(Al Raya: 16-11-1988:1)

²⁴(Al Raya: 25-11-1988:1)

²⁵(Al Raya: 29-11-1988:3)

²⁶(Al Raya: 26-11-1988:1)

²⁷(Al Raya: 26-11-1988:1)

²⁸(Al Raya: 6-12-1988:1)

However, in a surprising development, the US announced that it would start direct talks with the PLO, and appointed its ambassador in Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau, as its representative in these talks. Israeli minister without portfolio, Ezra Weizman, described the US decision as the beginning of a new era in the Middle East, and that the PLO, after having unequivocally recognized Israel, had become a probable partner in the Middle East peace talks.²⁹ Qatar welcomed the US decision, and described it as a step along the right path and a major contribution in the acceleration of the holding of an international peace conference geared towards the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Qatari foreign ministry said Qatar hoped that the new US administration would one day exert more efforts to develop this stance in a manner proportionate to the gravity of the Middle East issue.³⁰ The political path seemed to have finally witnessed tangible progress, paving the way for an international peace conference to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

For several reasons, the much anticipated breakthrough leading to the international peace conference never materialized, and the Qatari stance with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict continued to reiterate that the comprehensive resolution of the conflict would only be through bilateral negotiations, whether direct negotiations between the concerned parties or through an international peace conference. Qatar's Foreign Minister, Abdullah Bin Khalifa Al Attya, reiterated that "Qatar backs the Egyptian efforts to hold direct Palestinian-Israeli talks as a step towards a comprehensive solution to the conflict in a manner that achieves a just solution to the Palestinian cause."³¹ Despite Qatar's support of the two proposals, namely, the international peace conference and the holding of direct negotiations between the Palestinians on one side, and the US and Israel on the other, Qatar, at the same time, backed the Palestinian Intifada, which continued to rage for the second year at that time. This is what Qatar and Algeria reiterated in a joint statement released at the end of a visit by the Emir of Qatar to Algeria. In their joint statement, the two countries condemned "the oppressive and aggressive Israeli acts."³² This indicated

²⁹ (Al Raya: 16-12-1988: 1)

³⁰ (Al Raya: 18-12-1988:1)

³¹ (Al Raya: 7-1-1990:4)

³² (Al Raya: 8-1-1990:1)

Qatar's clear desire that the Arab parties in general, and the Palestinians in particular, must use all means at their disposal in dealing with the conflict, namely the negotiations or the use of pressure. In line with the same Qatari approach in support of the holding of the international peace conference, Qatar, in its address before the 46th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, called on the international community to "intensify efforts aimed at urgently holding an international peace conference attended by the five permanent UN Security Council member states and all the concerned parties, including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."³³

8.7 Post-war: In pursuit of the International Conference

In a statement released on Sunday 9 March 1991, Qatar welcomed US statements confirming the US commitment to the exertion of efforts to solve the Middle East problems:

The State of Qatar receives with great satisfaction the announcement of US President George Bush before congress last Wednesday to the effect that the US is committed to work towards a comprehensive and just settlement for all the Middle East problems and the Palestinian Cause in particular..President Bush's address had many positive and constructive points, especially his call for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242, 338, the Land for Peace Principle and guaranteeing the safety of all the concerned parties, including Israel.³⁴

In a number of cables sent by the Emir of Qatar, Qatar called on the leaders of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, in addition to Canada and Germany, to work on resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict in the light of the new world order. The Emir of Qatar said that "the determination and resolve based on the principles of justice, which

³³ (Al Raya: 2-2-1990:1)

³⁴ (Al Raya: 10-3-1991:1)

were adopted by the coalition countries (in the Kuwait Liberation War, Desert Storm) in dealing with the Gulf crisis, was the key to achieving the goals of the international community.” The Emir of Qatar expressed hopes that the international efforts would achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.³⁵

In the meantime, the US and Israel concluded a preliminary agreement during the Regional Peace Conference for the Middle East, which was sponsored by the US and the Soviet Union. The Israeli Foreign Minister, David Levi, said that “Israel informed the US of its agreement on the holding of a regional peace conference”.³⁶ In response to this statement, the Chairman of the Palestinian Journalists’ Syndicate, Radwan Abu Ayash, said “The PLO does not object to an interim settlement that will eventually lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state and the PLO will not reject a transitional self-rule period that leads to the establishment of a Palestinian state.”³⁷ Israel’s Defence Minister, Moshe Arens, however, stated that “Israel does not agree to the proposal to hold a regional peace conference”, adding that the “US proposal to hold a regional conference is progressively being transformed into a proposal to hold an international conference, which Israel rejects.”³⁸ The same view was confirmed by the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, who rejected the idea of holding a regional peace conference and retracted his earlier agreement with the US Secretary of State, which was to the effect that the conference should be a regional one consisting of a single session before turning into an international conference. Shamir said that “If subsequent sessions were held after the conference, then we will never enter into the stage of direct negotiations and if the conference turned into an international conference, then such conference must not authorize the (Palestinian) Authority to dictate any decisions.”³⁹

In this context, the Qatari stance was unchanged and supportive of holding an international peace conference: “The GCC states are willing to take part in the peace

³⁵ (Al Raya: 12-3-1999:1)

³⁶ (Al Raya: 10-4-1991:1)

³⁷ (Al Raya: 20-4-1991:1)

³⁸ (Al Raya: 28-4-1991:1)

³⁹ (Al Raya: 29-4-1991:1)

conference if invited as an observer”, stated Qatar’s Foreign Minister,⁴⁰ and this is what actually happened. The Emir of Qatar, Khalifa Bin Hamad, went on a Gulf tour that included Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, before being visited in Qatar by the UAE Crown Prince as the Palestinian issue took back stage, pushed back by the concerns with the security of the Arabian Gulf.⁴¹ In the first political appearance for Hamad Bin Jassem, the Minister of Municipality and Agriculture, before the Islamic countries foreign ministers conference, Bin Jassem spoke of “Qatar’s insistence on the rights of the Palestinian people, led by the right of self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.” Bin Jassem also reiterated Qatar’s support of the Palestinian Intifada.⁴² At that time, and between the Madrid conference’s conception and the event itself, discussions took place and controversy ensued over a number of different issues, including the formation of the Palestinian delegation, the nature of the conference, the participants, and the venue and timing of the conference. Qatar was not involved in any of these issues, made no comments, did not side with any particular point of view, and only settled for the position of observer while waiting for the outcome of the intense public and often secret negotiations that dominated the Middle East and elsewhere in the world.

8.8 The Madrid International Peace Conference

When the negotiations on the outstanding issues related to the international conference were completed, US Secretary of State, James Baker, and his Soviet counterpart, Boris Pankin, announced in a joint press conference held in Jerusalem “the holding of the International Peace Conference in Madrid on 30 October 1991 and that US President George Bush and his Soviet counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev will send invitations to attend the conference to the Arab states, Israel and the Palestinians.”⁴³

The official spokesperson for Qatar’s foreign ministry welcomed the US and the Soviet invitation to attend the conference, as well as the attendance of the US and Soviet

⁴⁰ (Al Raya: 5-12-1991:1)

⁴¹ (Al Raya: 6-6-1991:3)

⁴² (Al Raya: 7-8-1991:11)

⁴³ (Al Raya: 19-10-1991:1)

presidents: “Qatar expresses hope the conference will lead to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and 338 on resolving the Palestinian issue and recognizing the Palestinians’ right of self-determination and ending of the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories”, said the spokesperson, who added, “Qatar views this conference as a starting point to solve the Middle East problems, particularly, the Palestinian issue.” The foreign ministry spokesman also called on the international community to support the conference and its anticipated outcomes, including the achievement of comprehensive peace, ending the Israeli occupation and the co-existence in peace of all the nations of the region.⁴⁴ The Qatari cabinet expressed hopes in a statement that the conference “will succeed in finding solutions to the Middle East problems and ending the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of international legitimacy and the Land for Peace principle.”⁴⁵ The Qatari cabinet also reiterated that any just and comprehensive peace had to be based on UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and 338, ending the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories, equality in rights and security for all the nations of the region, and recognizing the right of self-determination for the people of Palestine.⁴⁶

Against what was expected from the Madrid conference, and in an unexpected move, the Israeli Knesset passed a resolution ruling that the Golan Heights was Israeli land, whose status should be non-negotiable. In response to this proclamation, the Qatari foreign ministry spokesperson said that “It is regrettable that Israel is continuing with its expansionist policies while at the same time engaging in peace talks based on the principle of Land for Peace and UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and 338.” The spokesperson also described the Israeli decision as:

a flagrant violation of UN resolutions, particularly Resolution No. 497, which holds as null and void Israel’s annexation of the Golan Heights. The

⁴⁴(Al Raya: 20-10-1991:1)
See appendix No:3

⁴⁵ (Al Raya: 31-10-1991:1)

⁴⁶ (Al Raya: 31-10-1991:1)

Israeli decision also represents a flagrant defiance of the peace conference and a provocation against the sentiments of all the parties taking part in the peace process.⁴⁷

In another act that negated the spirit and the objectives of the peace process, the Israeli government seized and confiscated the Islamic Court building in Jerusalem and all the documents kept therein. The Government of Qatar deplored the Israeli act, and a spokesperson for the Qatari foreign ministry expressed Qatar's condemnation of the Israeli assault on Islamic sanctuaries, particularly at a time when the world was ushering in a comprehensive peace process focused on the determination of the future of Jerusalem and the other occupied territories: "The Israeli occupation authorities' timing of this aggression is a clear indication that Israel is attempting to obliterate the facts and the historic evidence proving the Arab and Islamic identity of Jerusalem", said the spokesperson, who added that the Israeli authorities must return all the documents plundered from the Islamic Court building in Jerusalem and put an end to such practices.⁴⁸ Qatar once again renewed the call that Israel return the Islamic documents seized by the Israeli government from the Islamic Court in Jerusalem during the ministerial anti-crime meeting held in Paris, when the Qatari ambassador in Paris, Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad Al Attya, asked:

How will it be possible for all the nations of the world to be optimistic over the possibility of achieving a just peace and a peaceful coexistence in the Middle East after the Madrid meeting when acts of plundering that violate the most basic human rights are still being committed?⁴⁹

In his address to the UN General Assembly meeting, Qatar's envoy to the UN welcomed the peace conference and the launch of a comprehensive peace process in the Middle East. Abdulla Al Na'ema, speaking before the 46th round of the General Assembly, said that:

⁴⁷ (AlRaya: 15-11-1991:1)

⁴⁸ (AlRaya: 22-11-1991:1)

⁴⁹ (AlRaya: 24-11-1991:1)

Qatar backed the peace negotiations out of its conviction with the legitimacy of the Palestinian cause and the State of Qatar reiterates its backing of the right of self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state to be a welcoming home nation for the Palestinian people who, for a long time, have suffered from displacement and abuse...Peace will never be achieved in the region unless Israel withdraws from the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the return of all the rights unjustly taken away from the Palestinian people...The state of Qatar believes that unless the Palestinian issue is resolved, the situation in the Middle East will explode and the repercussions of such an explosion will be far reaching and will not only impact the **Middle East**.⁵⁰

Qatar also reiterated the same point of view during the Emir's address on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, delivered before the committee concerned with the exercise by the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights. The Emir of Qatar stressed Qatar's strong belief that resolving the Palestinian issue was the path to peace in the Middle East and if this was not resolved in a way that guaranteed the Palestinian people their legitimate rights, including the right of self-determination and the establishment of an independent state, then there would be no peace or security in the Middle East and the conflict, which threatened international peace and security, would continue. The Emir added that once a resolution to the Palestinian cause was reached and was satisfactory to the Palestinians, the Arab states would uphold and agree to whatever was satisfactory to the Palestinians. He added that if Israel wanted to live in peace, it must withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, not only from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but also from the Golan Heights, Southern Lebanon, and Jerusalem. The Emir of Qatar also referred in his address to the documents plundered by Israel from the Islamic Court in Jerusalem, and accused Israel of resorting to acts of oppression with the aim of

⁵⁰General Assembly Documents: A/46/PV.52, 22-11-1991. See Appendix No. 4.

derailing the peace process. At the same time, he expressed optimism at the success of the peace process, given the breakthrough in international relations that it promised to achieve. He said that “This breakthrough is a reason for hope that the efforts exerted along the path to peace shall finally succeed after the long wait for half a century, during which many lives were lost and many resources wasted.”⁵¹

8.9 Multilateral negotiations

Despite the conflict raging on the southern Lebanese front and Israel’s multiple shell attacks there on 11 January 1992, Qatar refrained from commenting on the escalation. However, Qatar accepted the invitation to attend the multilateral talks on regional cooperation, which were to be held in Moscow on 28-29 January 1992,⁵² which indicated Qatar’s implicit recognition of Israel. Qatar’s Foreign Minister, Mubarak Al Khater, did indeed arrive in Moscow for the talks.⁵³ Qatar stressed that the multilateral talks could not be an alternative for bilateral talks, and at the same time, Syria refused to take part in this round, as it considered the talks as an early reward given to Israel before progressing in the negotiations on the political path. Qatar’s Foreign Minister, Mubarak Al Khater, said:

Cooperation in the field of economic development, environmental protection, or the sharing of water resources cannot be achieved unless a tangible progress is made in bilateral talks towards the establishment of a comprehensive peace...Everything we will talk about in this round will become meaningless against the backdrop of the continued Israeli occupation and denying the Palestinian rights.

He added that:

⁵¹(Al Raya: 30-11-1991:1)

⁵²(Al Raya: 17-1-1992:1)

⁵³ (Al Raya: 27-1-1992:1)

Peace is the basis for cooperation in all areas of life and Qatar's acceptance of the invitation to take part in the negotiations was based on its fundamental stance calling for the resolution of international conflicts through peaceful means and Qatar's wish to see an honourable and just end to the conflict that has beleaguered the Palestinian people and the Arab countries neighbouring Israel... We are advocates of a peace that is based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the respect for the sovereignty and independence of nations, and justice, liberty, and equality. Whoever seeks peace must renounce any illegitimate greed and ambitions because there shall be no peace if there is injustice, persecution, and racism.⁵⁴

Following the conclusion of this round of the negotiations, five work groups were formed to discuss the key issues of the region. The first group was to discuss armament control; the second, economic development; the third, cooperation in the area of sharing water resources; the fourth, environmental issues; and the fifth, the issue of refugees. These work groups were to meet in Belgium, Canada, the US, and Japan.⁵⁵ Qatar's point of view with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process that started in Madrid was reiterated in the address of Qatar's new Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, to the UN General Assembly. He said:

The Palestinian issue is among the issues that are as old as the UN and it is an issue which remains unsolved. It is an issue to which my country ascribes great importance. Qatar looks forward to quick progress towards the resolution of this issue within the framework of the ongoing peace process. The Palestinian question and the unalienable rights of the Palestinian people represent the cornerstone of the Arab-Israeli conflict and once a resolution for the Palestinian issue that is satisfactory to the

⁵⁴ (Al Raya: 29-1-1992:1)

⁵⁵ (Al Raya: 30-1-1992:1)

Palestinians is achieved, we will accept that solution. Moreover, if Israel wants to live in peace, it should withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories and not just from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but also from the Golan Heights, Jerusalem, and Southern Lebanon... The State of Qatar supports the peace efforts and expresses hopes that a just, comprehensive, and permanent solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue can be reached based on UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and 338.⁵⁶

In his annual letter on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, wrote that "The peace process, since its beginning in Madrid, has not made any progress due to Israeli rigidity",⁵⁷ adding that "the Arab side has accepted the principle of the two states on the historic land of Palestine, and is also taking into consideration and reviewing the Israeli security concerns... The peace process cannot go on without achieving any progress."⁵⁸ Qatar's ambassador to the UN, Hassan Ali Al Na'ema, told the 47th General Assembly meeting that:

The State of Qatar unconditionally and absolutely backs the brave Intifada of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian people's continuous resistance against the Israeli occupation and its practices... I hope that the new US administration will take the appropriate measures for the success of the march for peace in the Middle East, for peace talks are not an objective per se but a means to establish comprehensive and permanent peace in the region, which is based on recognizing the national rights of the Palestinian people and the complete withdrawal from all the Arab territories, including Jerusalem... The State of Qatar reiterates the need to pressure Israel into performing its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention on the

⁵⁶General assembly documents: A/47/PV.18 30-9-1992. p. 22. Appendix No. 5.

⁵⁷ General Assembly documents: A/47/PV.18 30-9-1992.p.22.

⁵⁸(Al Raya: 30-11-1992:4)

protection of civilians during military conflicts... Qatar's support of the peace negotiations in the Middle East stems from its support of the just Palestinian cause and Qatar's constructive stance aimed at realizing the goal of the struggle of the Palestinian people, which is to establish an independent Palestinian state on its national soil.⁵⁹

8.10 The Gaza-Jericho Agreement

Despite the lengthy negotiation process that extended for ten rounds until the early summer of 1993, and despite the failure of the negotiations to produce any major breakthrough, the Qatari cabinet, during its meeting on 9 June 1993, welcomed the start of the tenth round of talks and reiterated Qatar's fundamental keenness to create an atmosphere that was conducive for the continuation of these negotiations until positive outcomes that guaranteed the protection of the Arab legitimate rights were approved and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and 338 was achieved.⁶⁰

While the concerned parties were shuttling between Washington, Moscow, and the Middle East for the multilateral negotiations, and hopes for peace were growing increasingly thin without the achievement of any significant breakthrough, the Norwegian capital, Oslo, was the venue for twenty secret meetings between Israel and the PLO. In Oslo, the negotiations progressed rapidly and on a path that was different from the path taken by the public negotiations.⁶¹ The Oslo negotiations surprised the world with news of the imminent signing of what was to become known as the 'Gaza-Jericho Agreement', which coincided with the start of the eleventh round of bilateral talks and which was considered the first major achievement of the Madrid Conference.⁶² In the beginning of September, 1993, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) made a visit to Doha, where he was received by Qatar's Crown Prince, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa. Abu Mazen briefed Sheikh Hamad on

⁵⁹ General Assembly documents: A/47/PV.77/ 3-12-1992. p.6.

⁶⁰ (Al Raya: 10-6-1993:1)

⁶¹ (Al Raya: 31-8-1993:1)

⁶² (Al Raya: 31-8-1993:1)

the latest developments in the Middle East peace talks, and Sheikh Hamad reiterated Qatar's support of the Palestinian issue, the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and sympathy with the daily suffering experienced by the Palestinians. The Crown Prince also reiterated the importance of recognizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in the light of US Security Council Resolutions No.242 and No. 383, as these two resolutions recognize the right to peace and security for all the people of the Middle East on the basis of the Land for Peace principle.⁶³ Qatar seemed cautious in announcing its stance with respect to the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, settling for its previously announced stance to the effect that Qatar would accept whatever was accepted by the Palestinians.

At the same time, the GCC Ministerial Council held a meeting in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, returned to Doha after Abu Mazen concluded his visits to Qatar, and in comments on the Gaza-Jericho Agreement and in line with the closing statement of the GCC ministerial meeting, Bin Jassem said that the GCC countries welcomed the agreement on the grounds that the GCC countries backed any constructive efforts that served the interest of the Middle East peace process, guaranteed the legitimate Palestinian rights, and returned the occupied lands, including Jerusalem, to their rightful owners: "From this standpoint, the GCC council welcomes and supports any solution that is satisfactory to the Palestinians and which establishes a comprehensive and just peace in the region", said Bin Jassem.⁶⁴ In addition, in unequivocal comments as part of an interview with the MBC news network, the Qatari Foreign Minister reiterated that Qatar would eventually back all that the Palestinians opted for, particularly the choice that would eventually lead to a foothold from which the Palestinians would be able to form a Palestinian government able to recover all Palestinian rights. Bin Jassem added that this would be based on a number of Palestinian and Arab fundamental principles, including upholding the Arab identity of Jerusalem.⁶⁵ In an official statement released at the weekly cabinet meeting, Qatar welcomed the Gaza-Jericho First Agreement:

⁶³ (Al Raya: 6-9-1993)

⁶⁴ (Al Raya: 7-9-1993:1)

⁶⁵ (Al Raya: 12-9-1993:1)

The cabinet welcomes the Palestinian-Israeli agreement signed by the two sides in Washington on the thirteenth of this month as a first step towards a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East that guarantees the legitimate national rights of the Palestinians in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and 338, and paves the way for the return of all the occupied Arab territories, particularly Jerusalem.⁶⁶

A senior-level Qatari delegation was among 44 delegations to take part in the Middle East Peace Conference held in Washington, which aimed at giving economic support to the Palestinian self-rule authority. US officials said the conference was focused on providing adequate assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinians during the five-year transitional period, identifying urgent needs in the short run and creating a panel in charge of coordinating international aid. The delegates said they were confident they would raise US\$ 400 million in annual assistance from the international community.⁶⁷ Speaking before this conference, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Jassem Bin Hamad said that:

It is important to make clear that for Qatar, the concept of peace represents the peace that advocates the creation of trust between the concerned parties and whose most prominent outcomes must be the equality among all nations in rights and obligations, and I am not talking about financial capabilities, but humanitarian initiatives. Therefore, we hope this first step towards peace will be a start to establish a comprehensive and complete peace for all the parties of the conflict. I am now certain that all our nations now understand the meaning of peace, which is based on economic and political development... On this occasion, I have the pleasure to announce that Qatar will contribute directly in supporting the activities of this conference and we will later announce what our contribution will be.⁶⁸

⁶⁶(Al Raya: 16-9-1993:1)

⁶⁷(Al Raya: 2-10-1993:1)

⁶⁸(Al Raya: 3-10-1993:1)

8.11 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the first part of the central research question, namely, what was Qatar's foreign policy with respect to the Middle East peace process, and to what extent was it convergent with, or divergent from, the rest of the GCC's Middle East foreign policy? The chapter was divided into a number of subsections related to the Qatari stances with respect to the issues and subjects that constitute the peace process, both during the initial stage preceding the direct negotiations between the US and the PLO, and the Qatari role to encourage the US to engage in direct negotiations with the Palestinians, and the Palestinian Intifada phase, which Qatar viewed as a legitimate struggle against the Israeli occupation. The discussion included Qatar's role and vision with regard to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The analysis of the historical data revealed that Qatari policy aimed to defend Arab rights and to exert pressure on Israel through condemnation of Israel's policies related to the issues of settlements, Jerusalem, Palestinian rights, and the other occupied territories. In addition, Qatar showed its strong support of the Middle East peace process after the Madrid Conference, when Qatar hosted the Arms Control Regional Conference, which was an offshoot of the Madrid Conference. In an unprecedented move, Qatar also received the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, in Doha.

The chapter has demonstrated that when the Gaza First Accord was announced, Qatar seemed cautious to declare a clear stance with regard to the accord. This caution continued until Qatar's Foreign Minister returned to Doha after the GCC ministerial meeting held in Riyadh, to declare that Qatar supported any party working towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East. Qatar also reiterated its previous stance that it would accept any settlement that the Palestinians themselves accepted.

In the next chapter, an attempt will be made to analyse the Qatari position with respect to several initiatives that aimed to revive the Middle East peace process, and to examine how Qatar began to push for new foreign policy objectives, such as the promotion of

democracy in the Middle East, and the inter-Gulf conflicts stemming from this stance with other GCC states.

CHAPTER NINE

The Emergence of a Distinctive and Divergent Qatari Foreign Policy towards the Middle East Peace Process

9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the beginning of the peace process in the Middle East and how Qatar contributed to the process at different levels; first, in encouraging the US to recognize the PLO; second, in asking the US to establish direct negotiations with the PLO; third, in helping to prepare the environment to hold the Madrid Conference; and finally, how Qatar worked to support its outcomes and supported the US efforts in the peace process. The chapter aims to engage with Qatar's repeated attempts to normalize trade and political ties with Israel, despite the fact that this decision was in deep conflict with principles upheld by GCC states regarding relations with Israel.

This chapter has several goals. The first is to explore Qatar's foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process, of which the normalization of Qatari-Israeli ties is considered a key component. This normalization reveals Qatar's desire and expectations regarding its Middle East role, as well as US pressures on Qatar and how such pressures contributed in shaping the Qatari political stance that placed Qatar at a confrontational trajectory with other Arab states. The chapter also examines the Qatari non-governmental pressure exerted on the Israeli government as a form of political manoeuvre to evict the Israeli trade representation office from its Doha headquarters.

The timeframe of this chapter covers the years between 1993 and 1999, during which several issues arose in the context of Arab-Israeli relations, and other issues emerged after the Madrid Conference until the Middle East and North Africa Economic Conference was held in Doha.

The data analysis presented in this chapter is based on three types of documents, namely, the statements and addresses made by Qatari officials and Qatari institutions concerned with the subject of the research, such as the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Qatari Council of Ministers. These official statements were extracted from a Qatari newspaper that is regarded as semi-official and extensively covers Qatar's stance, and officials' statements with regard to the peace process and Qatari foreign policy towards it. There were also the statements of Qatar's Foreign Minister or Qatari diplomats, made before the UN General Assembly or the UN Security Council. Finally, there were the documents containing statements made by the Prince of Qatar on different occasions.

9.2 The Qatari initiative to normalize ties with Israel

In an unprecedented step for Qatar, and in what seemed to be a proactive Qatari initiative in line with its vision on building trust among the parties of the conflict, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, met with his Israeli counterpart, Shimon Peres, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting. Bin Jassem told reporters that the meeting tackled the means to encourage a path towards peace, particularly along the Syrian and Lebanese path, adding that the meeting was in the interests of Middle East peace efforts. In response to questions on the pan-Arab boycott of Israel, Bin Jassem said the boycott was a unanimous pan-Arab decision that could be lifted via a pan-Arab decision when the grounds for it no longer existed, and that if comprehensive peace was achieved in the Middle East, then all these issues would be subject to reconsideration and review. On the other hand, Bin Jassem also voiced support for the Palestinian-Israeli agreement and questioned the viability of any alternative in the absence of this agreement. In addition, Bin Jassem denied any visit by an Israeli official to Doha.¹ However, the door opened for these visits, as well as for other secret and public meetings in the months to come.

¹ (Al Raya: 17-10-1993:1)

9.3 The Natural Gas Agreement

Among the Madrid Conference agreements was a specific mechanism to discuss regional issues during the multilateral talks. The Qatari capital Doha hosted the fifth conference for the armament control and regional security working group, which was attended by 43 states, including Israel and Palestine. This was the first public appearance of an Israeli delegation in Doha, and in his address to the conference, Qatar's Foreign Minister reiterated the Qatari stance by saying that:

...any step in the area of the normalization of ties or regional cooperation cannot be achieved in the absence of a complete breakthrough in the bilateral talks on all paths...Peace is the strategic objective of all the region's nations...There are concerns that the door for the peace which we all look forward to may close if no quick and tangible progress is made in the negotiations and along all negotiations paths... The task of this working group is to proceed along two parallel paths; the first has to do with arms control and the second with trust building.²

After the conclusion of the conference, the Qatari Foreign Minister stated that:

The Israeli delegation's visit to Doha does not mean the normalization of ties between Qatar and Israel, as this meeting was scheduled at the Madrid Conference and Qatar participated in that conference and agreed to take part in the march for peace and the building of trust... Qatar's cooperation with Israel in relation to the export of liquefied natural gas primarily depends on achieving material progress in the peace process along all its paths.

According to the *Al Raya* newspaper, a statement made by the Qatari Foreign Minister also denied the conclusion of any agreement with Israel with respect to this issue and also

² (AlRaya: 4-5-1994:3)

denied any agreements to hold meetings with Israel's Shimon Peres in the upcoming stage.³

After Hamad Bin Jassem concluded a visit to Cairo, during a press conference there he responded to a question on the nature of relations between Qatar and Israel by denying the existence of any political or economic ties: "There are only some delegations between the two sides, nothing more."⁴ Speaking at the prevailing stage of the peace process during an interview with Qatari television, Bin Jassem said that:

Qatar backs the Peace for Land principle because Qatar believes in peace. The will of the Arab countries that have common borders with Israel, who occupies parts of their land or has regional claims thereon, is sufficient to guarantee that these countries will recover their rights and free their occupied lands... Qatar went to the Madrid Conference to provide backing for the Arab negotiator... The Qatari concept of the peace process along the Palestinian path is the return of the Arab lands occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem and the establishment of a Palestinian State.⁵

In response to a question on reported Qatari plans to make the Israeli port of Eilat a transit point for Qatari natural gas exports, Qatar's Foreign Minister denied these reports, and said:

Israel offered to purchase Qatar's natural gas and we responded by telling them "You are trying to drive a wedge between Qatar and Egypt because Egypt is geographically closer to you". The Israelis' response was that they cannot accept having only one source of energy according to the Israeli national security perspective. And I told them that progress must be made in the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in order, as for us, to be able to talk about this cooperation... and that Qatar has not, so far, made a decision on

³ (Al Raya: 6-5-1994:1)

⁴ (Al Raya: 7-2-1995:1)

⁵ (Al Raya: 13-2-1995: 1,4)

the opening of an office to coordinate the relations between the two countries or with respect to the export of natural gas and this is for one reason, namely that Syria and Lebanon has not still made peace with Israel and we will take such a decision at the appropriate time.

Bin Jassem also stated that “Qatar asked an American consultancy company and not an Israeli company to study the natural gas pipeline project”, adding that the meetings with Israeli officials only aimed at acquiring knowledge of the adversary and the thought process thereof.⁶

This came as the Reuters news agency carried reports to the effect that progress had been made in the talks to export Qatar’s liquefied natural gas between Qatar and the US company Enron, which promised to export 5 million tons of natural gas annually, half of which would be exported to India.⁷ The news report, however, did not mention where the other half of the deal would go. At the same time, Israel announced that it would confiscate 530 dunams⁸ of Arab land in Jerusalem.⁹ The spokesman for the Qatari foreign ministry said that “Qatar was watching these reports with concern and considers these acts a stark violation of international conventions.” The spokesman reiterated that “Qatar views Jerusalem as part of the Arab occupied territories and that the confiscation decision will cast negative shadows on the peace process.”¹⁰

On the other hand, the Qatari cabinet reiterated Qatar’s fundamental stance with respect to the confiscation of Arab territories in Jerusalem, and expressed its strong indignation over the Israeli actions, which the cabinet described as a grave violation of international treaties and conventions.¹¹ Taking advantage of US support and protection, Israel confiscated 120 more hectares of Arab land in Eastern Jerusalem;¹² at the same time, the US threatened to

⁶ (Al Raya: 13-2-1995: 1,4)

⁷ (Al Raya: 14-4-1995:1)

⁸ A unit of land equal to almost 1,000 square metres.

⁹ (Al Raya :28-4-1995:1)

¹⁰ (Al Raya: 2-5-995:1)

¹¹ (Al Raya: 4-5-1995:1)

¹² (Al Raya: 10-5-1995:1)

veto any international resolutions or declaration if the issue of the confiscation of the lands in Eastern Jerusalem was discussed in the UN Security Council.¹³ During the address delivered by Qatar's Ambassador to the UN Security Council, Hassan Ali Al Ne'ama, the State of Qatar called on the UN to:

...adopt a resolution that is binding to Israel to return all the confiscated Arab lands in Jerusalem, to put an end to Israel's settlement activities there, dismantle all the Israeli settlements in Jerusalem, end the closure of the city, and to stop all the excavation activities that threaten the foundations of the Al Aqsa Mosque.¹⁴

Qatar also demanded that the UN Security Council unequivocally declare that it did not recognize any amendments caused by Israel in its capacity as an occupying authority and that impacted the legal status, the demographic makeup, or the geography of Jerusalem, and it also demanded that Qatar refuse the ratification of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, which is a material violation of the ground rules of international law.¹⁵

The US did use the right of veto to derail a resolution calling on Israel to stop the confiscation of lands and return the land it had already confiscated. At the same time, Doha hosted a forum organized by the Qatar Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the US Council on Foreign Relations on the future relations between the Gulf states and the US.¹⁶ As a result of pressures related to the Israeli political system, and threats by Israeli political parties dominated by Arabs of a vote of no confidence against the government of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and perhaps as a result of unannounced and unseen US pressures, the Rabin government decided to freeze previously approved plans for the confiscation of more land.¹⁷ This direct interpretation does not explain the reality of the Israeli decision to retract its decision to confiscate more

¹³ (Al Raya: 11-5-1995:1)

¹⁴ (Al Raya: 16-5-1995:2)

¹⁵ (Al Raya: 16-5-1995:1)

¹⁶ (Al Raya: 19-5-1995:1)

¹⁷ (Al Raya: 23-5-1995:1)

land because threats by Arab-dominated political parties in the Israeli Knesset for a vote of no confidence in the government were repeated on other occasions. However, this did not produce the same outcome as the confiscated land had on the Israeli Government.

With the rise of Hamad Bin Khalifa to the helm of power in Qatar to succeed his father Sheikh Khalifa in June 1995, the pace of mutual understanding and cooperation between Israel and Qatar began to accelerate, and in November 1995, and on the side-lines of the Amman Economic Conference, the US company Enron signed an agreement with Israel to supply the latter with liquefied natural gas from Qatar for US\$ 2 billion annually.¹⁸

Meanwhile, bilateral Qatari-Israeli relations began to take shape, and by the end of 1995, Israel's Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres, visited Qatar to sign the agreement to transport the Qatari liquefied natural gas from Qatar to Israel. Peres said, "The political process with Qatar has started; we took a small step forward and I believe we have just begun on the path towards a new relationship. I feel very optimistic in this regard."¹⁹ Peres, for his part, responding to questions from reporters on the reported discord between the Gulf countries over economic and political ties with Israel. Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, said, "I don't believe there is any discord but rather differences in points of view held by each country on how to deal with this issue, and this is a healthy aspect."²⁰

After the signing in Amman of the agreement to export the liquefied natural gas to Israel, Qatar's Foreign Minister reiterated the same principles during his address before the UN General Assembly's 50th round in December, which was after the conclusion of the natural gas agreement. During discussions about Article 42 of the meeting's agenda, pertaining to the Palestinian issue, Qatar's Foreign Minister stressed the importance of Jerusalem in any proposed settlement for the Arab-Israeli conflict, given the revered status of this city to Muslims and non-Muslims, and said:

¹⁸ (Al Watan: 1-11-1995:1)

¹⁹ (Al Watan: 1-11-1995:1)

²⁰ (Al Raya: 1-11-1995:1)

Qatar is taking part in the peace efforts out of its commitment to the principles of international legitimacy and its fundamental support of law and justice... The achievements made in the peace talks are still surrounded by peril and threats as the issues on the agenda of the final negotiations are numerous and complex.²¹

This final part of Hassan Ne'ama's address is an indication that the Qatari foreign ministry was aware that the peace process did actually take off, but that it certainly had not risen to meet Qatari expectations in particular, and Arab expectations in general. So, if the peace process did not meet Qatari expectations, then why did Qatar sign a trade agreement with Israel, even if it was an indirect agreement that was signed by an intermediary? The signing of this agreement clearly contradicts the statements made earlier the previous year by the Qatari Foreign Minister, when he stated that "Any step in the direction of the normalization of ties or regional development cannot be achieved in the absence of a complete breakthrough in the bilateral negotiations on all paths."²²

Moreover, the Syrian path was experiencing genuine and tough challenges, and the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement was also being met with difficulties in the actual implementation on the ground. So could the Qatari step be considered as an attempt to build bridges of trust with Israel? The answer is not clear and Qatar did not give any justification for this stance. Prior to the signing of the gas accord with Enron, the Emir of Qatar said that:

Qatar supports the peace process in the Middle East...The region badly needs the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace that serves the interests of all parties...There are a number of proposals to discuss the project to transport Qatari natural gas to Jordan and Israel, and Qatar

²¹(Al Raya: 1-12-1995:4) See Appendix No: 9.

²²(Al Raya: 4-5-1994: 3)

doesn't object to supplying Israel with natural gas after the conclusion of the peace process.²³

Meanwhile, Palestinian Minister of Culture and Media, Yasser Abdrabu, hailed Qatar's support of the Palestinian Authority during his visit to Qatar and called on Qatar to take part in monitoring the Palestinian elections as part of the international supervision of these elections.²⁴

When the US congress adopted a resolution to transfer the US embassy to occupied Jerusalem,²⁵ the Qatari cabinet denounced the decision describing it as:

...a negative decision that will seriously damage the peace process and that constitutes a contradiction with international legitimacy, and in particular the UN Security Council Resolutions related to the status of Jerusalem. The Qatari cabinet calls on the US administration to maintain an impartial stance as dictated by its status as an effective partner in the peace process.²⁶

On the sidelines of the Middle East and North Africa Economic Conference, Qatar's Minister for Industry and Energy met with Israel's Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres.²⁷ In a press conference with the Qatari Foreign Minister, after the conclusion of the Israeli-Qatari meeting, and in response to a question about feelings of unease on the Palestinian side with respect to this meeting, and that it presented Israel with an award that it did not deserve, Qatar's top diplomat said:

We in Qatar do not need permissions to hold meetings with any given party, and we are not trying to harm anyone or compete with anyone. We are not a direct party in the conflict but we are a party in the peaceful solution, whether on the Palestinian or the Syrian path, and there is no one

²³ (Al Raya: 28-10-1995:1)

²⁴ (Al Raya: 20-10-1995:2)

²⁵ (Al Raya: 22-10-1995:1)

²⁶ (Al Raya: 1-11-1995:1)

²⁷ (Al Raya: 1-11-1995:1)

telling us who we should or shouldn't meet, and this is clear from our practices for many years now.²⁸

In response to a question on a possible meeting between the Emir of Qatar and the Israeli Prime Minister, Qatar's Foreign Minister said, "This is up to Qatar to decide."²⁹

During February 1996, Hamas carried out three suicide attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon, killing scores in Israel. The official spokesperson for the Qatari foreign ministry said:

The State of Qatar follows with great concern the recent deadly developments in Jerusalem and Ashkelon, and expresses regret for these acts and condemns them... Violence will only lead to counter violence and will derail the peace process... The State of Qatar condemns terrorism of all forms and from all sides.³⁰

Following the deterioration resulting from the actions by Hamas to derail the peace process, the US, Egypt, and the EU called for a conference essentially aimed at curbing the extremist armed resistance groups in Palestine and in the other states engaged in the peace process. This conference was dubbed the "Peacemakers Summit", and was held in the Egyptian Red Sea resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh. Qatar confirmed that it would send a senior-level delegation to take part in this conference, headed by Qatar's Prime Minister, Interior Minister, and Foreign Minister.³¹ The delegation was not headed by the Emir of Qatar, despite the fact that nearly thirty world leaders attended the summit. Instead, the Emir of Qatar opted to stay in Doha to chair a meeting of the cabinet.³² This signalled the beginning of turmoil in relations between Cairo and Doha. In his address at the Peacemakers Summit, Qatar's Prime Minister reiterated Qatar's fundamental stance with respect to the peace process, while condemning the recent acts of terrorism:

²⁸ (Al Raya: 1-11-1995:1)

²⁹ (Al Raya: 1-1-1995:5)

³⁰ (Al Raya: 5-3-1996:1)

³¹ (Al Raya: 13-3-1996:1)

³² (Al Raya: 14-3-1996:1)

Qatar condemns terrorism of all forms and from all sides regardless of the identity of its perpetrators, because terrorism is the same everywhere and the perpetrators deserve the same punishment. Our countries must unite in condemning these acts of terrorism, regardless of whether these acts were perpetrated by states, organizations, or individuals, because violence will only breed counter violence and will lead the region into an endless vicious cycle of violence that will derail the peace process.³³

In a move seen as an attempt by Qatar to give Israel something to encourage it to continue with the peace process following the devastating terrorist attacks, Doha extended an open invitation to Israel's Prime Minister to visit Doha.³⁴ This was exactly the explanation given by the Qatari Foreign Minister about this invitation one day after the conclusion of the summit, when he said "Our contacts with Israel aim at encouraging it to move forward with the peace process."³⁵

In response to a question on whether or not Qatar would support a military strike against Hamas, Qatar's Foreign Minister said:

Qatar supports striking against terrorism anywhere and without any reservation, because many parties are involved in these acts of terror and not just Hamas, and at the same time not all the Hamas factions are terrorists. We simply reject and condemn terrorism in general.

In response to another question about whether Qatar was carrying out a manoeuvre to bolster its relations with Israel for the purpose of obtaining more concessions on the Palestinian issue, the Qatari Foreign Minister said that Qatar was sending a message to the Israeli people that if the peace process succeeded, and if rights were returned to all the

³³ (Al Raya: 14-3-1996:1)

³⁴ (Al Raya: 14-3-1996:1)

³⁵ (Al Raya: 15-3-1996:1)

nations of the region, then there would be no problem in having cooperation between the nations.³⁶

9.4 The visit by Shimon Peres in the Gulf: The practical normalization of ties

As the Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations hit a blind alley, the Sultanate of Oman welcomed Shimon Peres, whose second leg of his Gulf tour took him to Doha in the first visit by an Israeli Prime Minister to Qatar. Peres were officially received in Doha, and conducted talks with the Emir of Qatar. Peres described the talks as "...very friendly...The door was opened to commercial trade...The economic aspect of Arab-Israeli relations is much more important than the political aspect."³⁷ Peres said the two countries concluded an agreement to avoid double taxation and the carrying out of joint research on desert regions and water usage.³⁸ During a reception at Doha Palace, the two sides agreed to open commercial offices in their respective countries, and Israel's Foreign Ministry undersecretary said that the agreement granted certain privileges and diplomatic immunities to officials from both sides.³⁹ For his part, the Emir of Qatar Hamad Bin Khalifa described the visit by saying it was:

...in line with the framework to bolster trust between the different parties in the Middle East to achieve a just and permanent peace...Permanent peace is the peace based on justice and comprehensive solutions on all paths, particularly the Syrian and Lebanese path, in line with the outcomes of the Madrid Conference and the UN Security Council Resolutions No.242 and 338, the Land for Peace principle, and the withdrawal from Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and Sothern Lebanon.⁴⁰

High hopes for peace vanished, however, as a result of the stalemate on the Syrian path and the Israeli offensive against Lebanon on 12 April 1995, which was aimed at the

³⁶ (Al Raya: 15-3-1996:1)

³⁷ (Al Raya: 2-4-1996: 1,15)

³⁸ (Al Raya: 2-4-1996: 1,15)

³⁹ (Al Raya: 2-4-1996: 1,15)

⁴⁰ (Al Raya: 2-4-1996: 1,15)

disarmament of Hezbollah. Qatar condemned the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, and the spokesman for the Qatari Foreign Ministry reiterated the Qatari position by saying that:

The State of Qatar views these assaults as a serious violation against the sovereignty, security, and stability of Lebanon, an obstacle to the peace process, an escalation of tensions and a threat to international peace and security... The State of Qatar calls on Israel to immediately abandon the policy of violence, which will only lead to counter violence and hindering the peace process.⁴¹

The same stance was adopted by the Qatari cabinet, which called on Israel to withdraw from all occupied Arab territories and to respect UN Security Council Resolution No.425, which required Israel to withdraw from Southern Lebanon.⁴² As a practical response, Qatar, on the orders of the Emir, sent urgent humanitarian aid, including medical supplies, to Lebanon.⁴³ During this round of Israeli hostilities, Israel bombarded the UN shelter in the town of Qana on 18 April, killing 97 people.⁴⁴ Qatar's ambassador to the UN called on the international community to condemn the Israeli assault, and demanded that Israel immediately withdraw from Southern Lebanon and respect the sovereignty and security of its territories, while criticizing the UN Security Council for failing to play its role in preserving the peace and security of a member nation.⁴⁵ Following the signing of the ceasefire agreement by Israel and Lebanon, Qatar's Minister of Justice visited Jerusalem, in the first visit of its kind by a Qatari official. Faisal Al Hussaini, the Palestinian Authority official in charge of the Jerusalem portfolio, said that the Qatari Minister of Justice's visit to Jerusalem would thwart the Israeli attempts to distance Qatar from the Palestinian issue.⁴⁶ In addition, in his address before the annual conference for the Jewish-American Committee, Qatar's Foreign Minister reiterated the importance of continuing

⁴¹ (Al Raya: 14-4-1996:1)

⁴² (Al Raya: 18-4-1996:1)

⁴³ (Al Raya: 19-4-1996:1)

⁴⁴ (Al Raya: 19-4-1996:1)

⁴⁵ (Al Raya: 26-4-1996:3)

⁴⁶ (Al Raya: 4-5-1996:1)

the march towards peace despite the obstacles, adding that dialogue was the best tool to resolve problems because wars lead to no achievements. He said that:

Qatar hosted an arms control conference and received Israel's Prime Minister Shimon Peres. Qatar also decided to open trade offices with Israel...All these steps were taken in support of the peace process. Qatar decided not to establish ties with Israel under the cover of another state and Qatar opened direct telephone lines with Israel last year. What Qatar has done must be considered a model for the relations between Arab states and Israel. The Israelis have the right to know what will they get in exchange for returning the Arab occupied lands...By the end of this year, Qatar will sign a final agreement to supply Israel with natural gas, which will be based on the agreement initialled by the two countries during the Amman Summit last year.⁴⁷

In addition to the doors being opened for these visits, other secret and public meetings would also be taking place in the coming months.

9.5 Israeli election, peace process, and the stalling of Qatari-Israeli normalization

When the Israeli general election took place, Shimon Peres competed against Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu adopted a tougher stance towards the main negotiation issues, and as the US was not satisfied with his position, it therefore supported the candidate that Washington saw as moderate. Despite this fact, Netanyahu narrowly defeated Peres.

The change in the Israeli Prime Minister was accompanied by a similar change within the Arabs, and the Arab states called for an Arab summit in Cairo, the twenty-first in the history of the Arab summits on the level of the heads of states, to consider the consequences of Netanyahu's election as the Israeli Prime Minister. The Deputy Prime Minister of Qatar, the Minister of the Interior, flew to Cairo in order to represent the Emir

⁴⁷ (Al Raya: 12-5-1996:1)

of Qatar at the Summit.⁴⁸ This was the second indication that the relationship between the two countries was getting worse.

The summit was held, and Qatar adopted a conservative stand against Israel due to Netanyahu's political discourse in his electoral campaign. Such a stand was expressed in the final statement of the summit, which included four major points on the peace process. The first point was that Arabs adhere to peace as a strategic option; second, there was the seriousness of any deviation from the principles of the peace process, and the principle of land for peace in particular; third was the rejection of settlement activity and non-recognition of its results; fourth was adhering to resolving the issue of Jerusalem and the refugees according to international legitimacy principles and the UN resolutions.⁴⁹

After the summit, the Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs stated:

Qatar is currently considering the trends of the existing Israeli Government and the extent of its abiding by the peace process. Upon the results, we, in coordination and consultation with the Arab states, especially those engaged in the peace process, will take the appropriate decisions towards Israel. Netanyahu's statements in the electoral campaign are discouraging and frustrating, and I ask him to reconsider them and to abide by the agreements and treaties signed by Israel. Qatar did not conclude a direct contract with the Israeli Government for supplying gas but it concluded a contract with a US company, and it is entitled to supply to any country. This company concluded a contract with Jordan and Israel.⁵⁰

The same fact was stressed by the Minister of Industry and Energy, Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah, who stated:

⁴⁸(Al Raya: 21-6-1996:1)

⁴⁹(Al Raya: 22-6-1996:6)

⁵⁰(Al Raya: 9-7-1996:1)

Qatar did not conclude a direct agreement with Israel for gas supply. The agreement was concluded between Qatar and the US Company, Enron. By virtue of such an agreement, Enron is entitled to purchase five million tonnes of liquefied natural gas to whoever it is entitled to supply.⁵¹

In the same vein, the Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that:

The government of Qatar may have to reconsider its relations with Israel if the peace process falters. We are monitoring the actions taken by Netanyahu's government, and as for the Israeli commercial office in Doha, some Israeli elements are in Doha now to arrange opening of the office, but we have no elements in Israel and under the current circumstances, we may not open a commercial office for Qatar in Israel.⁵²

It seems that Qatar had to postpone opening its commercial office in Israel for various reasons. After Qatar had taken the decision not to open the commercial office, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced the decision on 23 September. Hamad bin Jassem stated that the relations between the two countries had experienced apathy since Netanyahu came into power as Prime Minister.⁵³

Within such a tense situation, Israel started digging on the Temple Mount, which caused violence in the occupied territories. Foreign Minister Qatar Hamad bin Jassem blamed Israel, and stated that it bore the responsibility for escalation and violent actions that had erupted in Jerusalem and Ramallah. Jassem further called upon Israel to abide by the resolutions reached. The spokesperson of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that "Qatar calls upon all countries to denounce the Israeli actions and to put an end to such irresponsible actions, which would harm the Islamic monuments and lead the region back to tension."⁵⁴

⁵¹ (Al Raya: 12-7-1996:1)

⁵² (Al Raya: 12-7-1996:1)

⁵³ (Al Raya: 24-9-1996:1)

⁵⁴ (Al Raya: 26-9-1996:1)

As a reaction to the Israeli practices, Qatar cancelled a meeting that Israel had called for between the Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and the Qatari Foreign Minister, due to the deterioration of conditions.⁵⁵ Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassem further stressed that:

Relations with Israel have completely halted since Netanyahu came into power. We will not develop such relations. I did not meet any officer representing an Israeli company or any government official, but I have met the Jewish associations and discussed the present situation. I hope the peace talks will not be threatened, and I further hope that Netanyahu reconsiders his stance as I see that the region has no option but to go for peace, and normalization with Israel is on hold at the present time.⁵⁶

It was clear that Qatar dealt gingerly with the Netanyahu government, and it seems that they were concerned about the policy. However, Qatar later insisted on holding the Economic Cooperation Conference in the Middle East and invited Israel to the conference.

9.6 MENA Economic Cooperation Summit - Doha

After the MENA Economic Cooperation Summits that were held in Morocco and Amman in Jordan respectively, and within the deteriorating conditions after Netanyahu became the Israeli Prime Minister, Cairo hosted the third summit. The difficulties with the peace process overshadowed the summit, whose goals include integrating Israel in the region's economic cooperation. During the summit, the Qatari Foreign Minister announced that:

Qatar has halted normalization with Israel and the Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy has been informed of this decision. Normalization will remain halted until Israel goes for a positive move towards the peace process in general and the Palestinian issue in particular.⁵⁷

⁵⁵(Al Raya: 28-9-1996:1)

⁵⁶(Al Raya: 6-10-1996:3)

⁵⁷(Al Raya:13-11-1996:10)

Shortly after that, Israel participated in the Milipol Qatar 96 Conference for Security, and the Qatari Foreign Minister clarified that Israel had participated in the conference because it had been arranged a year before, and the invitations had been sent to the countries a long time ago. Therefore, Israel participated in the conference like any other country, just as it participated in the Cairo summit.⁵⁸ Then, the Minister stressed that “Qatar's stance towards Netanyahu's government would not change, and Qatar's support for the Palestinians would not stop.”⁵⁹ After that, the Minister of Industry and Energy stated that “The next summit will be held in Doha.”⁶⁰ This was another reason behind the tension between Qatar and some Arab states, such as Egypt and the KSA, and the United Arab Emirates to a lesser extent. After that, the Qatari Foreign Minister headed to Gaza in order to meet Yasser Arafat with reference to the continuance of Qatari political and economic support for the Palestinians. During the visit, it was evident that Qatar was ready to oppose the actions of Netanyahu's government at all costs. Qatar's Foreign Minister stated that if a cancellation of the gas agreement was in the interest of the Palestinians, Qatar would cancel such an agreement.⁶¹

At the same time, Netanyahu's government was expanding the Emmanuel Settlement in the occupied West Bank, in a challenge to the US objections in this regard. The Israeli Government's spokesperson, David Bar-Ilan, stated, “I am sure the Americans will understand that expansion is meant to meet the normal growth of population in the settlement, and they should not object to such expansion.”⁶² In his statement to Qatari television, the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, stated, “I rule out the possibility of severing relations with Israel, except if developments would give us a way to take a decision of severing such relations.”⁶³ At the same time, the Sultanate of Oman informed

⁵⁸ (Al Raya:13-11-1996:10)

⁵⁹ (Al Raya:14-11-1996:1)

⁶⁰ (Al Raya:13-11-1996:11)

⁶¹ (Al Raya:19-11-1996:7)

⁶² (Al Raya:21-12-1996:1)

⁶³ (Al Raya: 2-12-1996:1)

the League of Arab States that it had cut all means of communication with Israel after the faltering of the peace process.⁶⁴

The Qatari position remained steady regarding freezing normalization with Israel under Netanyahu's government. Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassem stated:

In response to the practices of Netanyahu's government, Qatar's government stance is clear, which is: as long as the Israeli Government adopts a position that does not result in progress in the peace process, Qatar will halt its activity in this field, but it will not retreat in its undertakings unless the Israelis do so.⁶⁵

Netanyahu's government continued its practices of expansion in HarHoma in the occupied territories. The Israeli practices were discussed in the UN Security Council, where Qatar's representative in the Council, Mr Al-khalifa, stated, "The Israeli practices will waste the efforts exerted, and it is a serious breach of the UN Security Council resolutions and Oslo Accord." He further stated that "Qatar calls upon the international community and patrons of the peace process to bear their responsibility in ensuring that Israel complies with its commitments."⁶⁶ The US voted against a resolution condemning Israel, which made Qatar's representative state that the UN Security Council had become a tool of the US dictatorship, as it solely objected to the draft resolution supported by Sweden, Britain, France, and Portugal.⁶⁷ He further stated that, "The US stance and using the veto right shall be deemed as US support for such practices. This jeopardizes the whole peace process."⁶⁸

On the sidelines of the Qatar Gas Conference, the International Relations Officer for Enron, Kelly Kimberley, commented regarding the Gas Agreement signed between Enron and Qatar's government, saying that Israel was not among the clients negotiating

⁶⁴(Al Raya: 26-12-1996:1)

⁶⁵(Al Raya: 7-3-1997:7)

⁶⁶ UN Security agenda, 3747

⁶⁷(Al Raya: 9-3-1997:1)

⁶⁸(Al Raya: 13-3-1997:1)

the purchase of the gas deal.⁶⁹ After Israel insisted on continuing with expansion practices in Eastern Jerusalem, Qatar challenged Israel, as the Emir of Qatar had sponsored the Jerusalem Conference in Doha, which was inaugurated by the Qatari Foreign Minister. On the other hand, during the Islamic Summit Conference in Islamabad, Qatari Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem, called for the adoption of a unified Islamic policy to confront the Israeli settlement expansion in Eastern Jerusalem.⁷⁰ After the conclusion of the Ministerial Meeting of the GCC states, the Qatari Foreign Minister stated:

Qatar will not hesitate to execute any Arab or GCC resolution that would benefit the Palestinian or Syrian issues. If the Israeli Government remains intransigent, we will immediately take whatever action is in the interest of our brothers in Palestine and Syria.⁷¹

In his statement before the UN General Assembly, Qatar's permanent representative stated "Israel's settlement policy represents a flagrant breach of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 on the Protection of Civilians and their Properties during Wartime and the Hague Convention of 1907."⁷²

Qatar held the Israeli Government responsible for the obstacles with the peace process in the Middle East region, due to the intransigent policies it adopted, leading to a retreat from the principles agreed in the process since the Madrid Conference. Israel further ignored the agreements reached between the Israeli Government and its Arab neighbours. In Qatar's statement before the UN General Assembly, the Foreign Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem, stated that "The desired peace in the region is still a mirage."⁷³ He further called upon Israel to abide by the treaties signed thereby, and to undertake its commitments. In addition, he called upon the international community to alleviate the pain suffered by the

⁶⁹(Al Raya: 19-4-1997:1)

⁷⁰(Al Raya : 24-4-1997:1)

⁷¹(Al Raya: 27-3-1997:1)

⁷²(General Assembly - Tenth Special Session: 13A/ES-10/PV.1)

⁷³(Al Raya 27-4-1997:1)

Palestinian people under occupation due to the daily cleansing practices exercised by the Israeli forces.⁷⁴

In the same month, while battles were occurring in Jerusalem, Qatar's government invited the countries concerned with the peace process to attend the MENA Economic Cooperation Summit, and Israel was among those countries who officially accepted the invitation.⁷⁵ The Qatari Cabinet met on Wednesday 10 April, discussed the situation in Hebron, and denounced and condemned the actions of the Israeli settlers that had led to the murder of three Palestinians.⁷⁶

As a result of the Israeli decision to build a new settlement, "HarHoma", in one of the Arab areas of occupied Jerusalem, the UN General Assembly discussed the situation and condemned the Israeli decision and all illegal Israeli measures taken in all Arab occupied territories through a resolution passed by the General Assembly at the end of its special session. This resolution called upon Israel to accept the practice of the Geneva Convention of 1949 on the Protection of Civilians during Wartime in all occupied territories since 1967, and to comply with the Security Council resolutions according to the UN Charter.

Qatar, which headed the Arab Group in the United Nations, asked Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, to call for the holding of a UN General Assembly special session. Qatar further called upon the international community to force Israel to stop building settlements, and to stop preparing for the building new settlements in HarHoma in Arab Jerusalem, in order to make the peoples of the region avoid the hazards of such a foolish policy, which, if it continued, would completely hamper the peace process and lead the region to violence and chaos.

In his statement delivered in the 10th special session of the UN General Assembly on the Illegal Israeli Actions in Eastern Jerusalem and all Palestinian Occupied Territories, Qatar's Permanent Representative in the UN, Nasser Al Khalifa, stated:

⁷⁴(Al Raya 27-4-1997:1)

⁷⁵(Al Raya 10-4-1997:1)

⁷⁶(Al Raya 10-4-1997:1)

Israel's settlement policy represents a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 on the Protection of Civilians and their Properties during Wartime, and the Hague Convention of 1949... The unfair use of the veto right encouraged the Israeli Government to continue challenging the international community again when, on 18 March, it started the execution of its plan in settlement HarHoma, occupied Eastern Jerusalem. This has led to a delay in the peace process in the Middle East, and the international community shall address this issue immediately and force the Israeli Government to stop its irresponsible actions, which contradict logic, truth, and justice.⁷⁷

Paradoxically, the Qatari Foreign Minister, who paid a visit to the US, met Madeleine Albright and discussed the importance for the peace process of holding the Economic Summit Conference in Doha.⁷⁸ In conformity with the Qatari policy, which denounces and condemns settlement policy, the cabinet confirmed Qatar's steady position against the Israeli settlement policy in Jerusalem and the occupied Arab territories. The cabinet further welcomed the UN General Assembly resolution condemning Israeli settlement activities in the Palestinian territories.

On the other hand, during his visit to the US, Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jasssem stated to CNN that Qatar was committed to the peace process in the Middle East. He further expressed the readiness of Qatar to help in the process if it was asked to play a role, provided that the two parties would be ready to meet and provide initiatives. He further stated that the status quo of the peace process was bad.⁷⁹

In an interview with Voice of America on the peace process in the Middle East, bin Jasssem stated that:

⁷⁷(General Assembly - Tenth Special Session: 13A/ES-10/PV.1)

⁷⁸(Al Raya: 30-4-1997:1)

⁷⁹(Al Raya: 1-5-1997:1)

Peace in the region is a strategic option and Israel should believe in the principle of Land for Peace and stop building settlements, as the continuance of building such settlements is a violation of the Madrid Conference principles and Oslo Agreement, which was signed by the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Bin Jassem further stated that:

The establishment of peace in the region was inevitable, indicating that all wars in Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world had ended with peace. The Middle East region witnessed various wars and this should make everyone believe that peace is a strategic option. Qatar believes that peace means that all parties abide by the peace principles in order to reach an optimal solution that gives the rights back to its real holders.⁸⁰

Regarding freezing Qatar's relationship with Israel, bin Jassem stated that:

We wanted to let Israel know that if it slows the peace process or retracts its commitments, we, as Arabs, will retract ours. Freezing relations with Israel is an indication that it shall stop the reckless construction of settlements and if it goes forward, we will consider taking other decisions to respond to such recklessness.⁸¹

In a press conference on the sidelines of the Syrian Foreign Minister's visit, the spokesperson of the Qatari Foreign Ministry, Fawaz Al-Attayah, was asked the following questions: Did the Syrian Foreign Minister ask Qatar, during his visit to Doha, not to invite Israel to the Economic Summit, and is there any relationship between his visit to Doha and the Summit? Al-Attayah's answer was as follows:

⁸⁰(Al Raya: 2-5-1997:1)

⁸¹(Al Raya: 2-5-1997:1)

Qatar has announced that it will hold the MENA Economic Summit next November. The State of Qatar expressed its national sense by freezing its relations with Israel nine months ago, even before the League of Arab States made its recommendations to freeze relations and communication with Israel. When Netanyahu's government started execution of its settlement policy in Jerusalem, the Qatari position remained steady regarding freezing relations with Israel. Qatar denounces and condemns Israeli settlement policy, which does not encourage the continuance of negotiations. It is premature to speak about the participation of Israel in the conference, as Qatar has not invited any entity to participate in the conference.⁸²

Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassem visited Riyadh in order to participate in the 63th session of the GCC Ministerial Council. The Minister stated that:

Qatar has adopted a steady position towards the peace process in the Middle East, and Israel will not be a stumbling block to holding the MENA Economic Summit... Holding the summit was not among the matters considered by the Foreign Ministers of the GCC states during the 63th session of the Ministerial Council, which was held yesterday in Riyadh. It is difficult now to consider cancelling the Economic Summit, as only five months are left... We want to let the world know that in return for the Israeli intransigence and breach of commitments, we are going forward in the peace process but till when will we remain in such a position? This matter is under consideration right now, and analysts in Israel shall not think that we will go the same way at all times. It is premature to think about inviting Israel to the summit, as such an invitation is related to the progress achieved in the peace process... and if the peace process witnesses

⁸² (Al Raya: 19-5-1997:2)

an improvement, and the Israeli position changes. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu may be invited to the summit.⁸³

Qatar's Ambassador to Jordan, Nasser Abdul-Aziz Al Nasr, confirmed that:

Just a denunciation of the international political and economic issues represented a negative approach, whose previous experience proves that it is ineffective. We should face the opponent and defeat it on the basis of self-confidence and the ability to continue fighting with a useful weapon. We will practically support the Palestinians in Jerusalem through the speedy execution of the approved projects, using the donations collected in the Jerusalem Week, whose events were held in Doha.⁸⁴

We see a swing in the Qatari stance towards Israeli intransigence. Tension was prevailing in the Middle East region due to the intransigence of Netanyahu's government policies, which resulted in violent actions in the West Bank. Two blasts occurred in the West Bank, resulting in many being killed and injured. But the Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson confirmed that the solution was to continue with the peace efforts. He further said:

The State of Qatar monitors with great concern the developments in the occupied Arab territories in the light of two blasts which occurred in the West Bank. This resulted in the murder of many civilians, due to the faltering of the peace process in the region and continuance of Israel's intransigence in execution of the peace agreements concluded with the Palestinian National Authority and continuance of building settlements in Jerusalem and the occupied Arab territories. Qatar appeals to the peace makers to bear their historical responsibilities...Peace is the solution that ensures security for all peoples of the region... Continuance of the peace process and resumption thereof by both parties in order to establish

⁸³ (Al Raya: 1-6-1997:1)

⁸⁴ (Al Raya: 26-7-1997:1,3)

comprehensive and permanent peace ensures stability and security for the region and its peoples... Qatar's position is steady regarding denunciation and condemning all forms of violent actions against the innocent civilians, regardless of the perpetrator of such violent actions.⁸⁵

The GCC states had three viewpoints regarding participation in the Summit: supporting, boycotting, or calling for postponement. Such viewpoints were expressed by Jamil Al-Hujaylan, Secretary General of the GCC, when he stated that the participation of the GCC states in the MENA Economic Summit was decided by each state according to its vision and conviction. He indicated that the GCC states did not declare whether they would participate or not, except for the KSA. Al-Hujaylan saw that the Qatari officials were serious regarding holding the conference, as they hoped that the following three months would witness an improvement in the peace process. He confirmed that there were no external pressures on the GCC states to participate in the Summit.⁸⁶ Despite the above, the US Foreign Secretary, Madeleine Albright, interfered during her visit to the Gulf states and her meetings with the Arab foreign ministers, and stated that:

Peace is the sole option in the Middle East region as conflict will only lead to sorrow, suffering, and hatred, and this will not be accepted by the region's peoples. It is a fact that going forward in the peace process, peace makes the region's future promising if all parties respect each other, which will definitely lead to an increase in cooperation and maintaining the dignity of all peoples. The lack of trust between the parties of the peace negotiations in the region shall be addressed by the leaders of the region's countries and practical steps shall be taken to support the peace process.⁸⁷

During the visit of the Emir of Qatar to Washington, the Chief of the Emiri Diwan stated that "Washington is determined that the Summit shall be held."⁸⁸

⁸⁵(Al Raya:1-8-1997:1)

⁸⁶(Al Raya: 6-8-1997:1) See Appendix No: 10.

⁸⁷(Al Raya:15-9-1997:1)

⁸⁸(Al Raya:6-8-1997:1)

At the same time, Palestinians and Syrians saw that all Arab countries should boycott the Summit. The Palestinian Economic Minister, Maher Masri, stated in a press conference held in Ramallah that “We call upon all Arab countries in the present conditions to boycott the Economic Summit in Doha, and to provide the Palestinian people with all forms of economic and political support.”⁸⁹

Israel did not attempt to create a positive atmosphere for the Summit to be held, and in fact it escalated tension. Among other targets, it seemed that Israel was testing the seriousness of Qatar’s intention to face the challenges of the Summit and determining whether Qatar would maintain relations with Israel (albeit minimal) or not. Israel continued its military operations in South Lebanon, where it faced extreme difficulties due to fierce attacks by the Lebanese resistance forces. Through the Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Qatar denounced the Israeli aggression, which had led to injuries among civilians and caused severe damage to facilities. The spokesperson further stated to the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that:

Such aggression causes serious threat to the peace process in the Middle East and will get the region back to wars, violence, and tension. It further violates the international legitimacy resolutions and international conventions on protection of civilians.⁹⁰

As settlement activities continued, the Israeli authorities enabled a group of Israeli settlers to seize Arab houses in Eastern Jerusalem. Such action was denounced by the Qatari cabinet in its statement. The cabinet further welcomed the call upon Israel by the US to stop expansion of Israeli settlements.⁹¹

Qatar’s Foreign Minister, Hamad bin Jassem, discussed with the other foreign ministers of the Arab States the results of the intentional freezing of the peace process since Netanyahu

⁸⁹ (Al Raya: 6-8-1997:1)

⁹⁰ (Al Raya: 2-8-1997:1)

⁹¹ (Al Raya: 18-9-1997:1)

came into power as Prime Minister 15 months previously. Bin Jassem stated in an interview with QNA:

it became evident to the Arab states and the international community that such a government was not only retracting their commitments and rejecting the resumption of negotiations, but also they were adopting a persistent approach against the peace process when it started expansion of settlements in the occupied Arab lands in general, and in Jerusalem in particular... Repeated attacks against Lebanon can be added to the above. Qatar believes that the MENA Economic Summit may be successful as expected, only if there is a tangible progress in the peace process and if the Israeli Government changes its current policy as previously stated.⁹²

At the end of the interview, the Qatari State Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that “Qatar has invited the Israeli Foreign Minister to attend the Summit but it did not invite Netanyahu, the Prime Minister.”⁹³ In an attempt by Qatar to clarify its stance towards the Summit, the Qatari Foreign Minister said in its statement before the UN General Assembly:

The State of Qatar has no special interest in hosting the Summit, but its eagerness to hold the Summit stems from the belief that peace is a strategic option accepted by the Arab states since the Madrid Conference and in fulfilment of its commitment and to ensure its credibility as a state respecting its commitments...the Israeli Government shall be solely responsible for such a failure. The Israeli Government’s procrastination of implementing conventions and placing obstacles in the way of establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, through undermining the peace process by establishing settlements and retreating conventions concluded with the Palestinian Authority and

⁹²(Al Raya: 21-9-1997:1)

⁹³(Al Raya: 2-10-1997:1)

depriving the Palestinian people of their rights, and disrespect for the international legitimacy will result only in violence and counter violence.⁹⁴

At this point, we can understand that Qatar became certain that Netanyahu's government would retract every promise made by Israel. It further became certain that Israel was adopting a policy contrary to the expectations of the Arabs and the international community, but the question was why did Qatar continue the preparation for the Summit and why had Qatar invited Israel? (Later, the Qatari Foreign Minister stated that the peace process was dead).

9.7 Manoeuvres of closing the Israeli commercial office in Doha

In an interview with Al Jazeera television, Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassem responded to a question regarding the opening of the Israeli commercial office in Doha, which aimed in the first place at encouraging Israel to go forward with the peace process. Now that Israeli's stance on the peace process had become clear, why did Qatar not reconsider the existence of the Israeli office in Doha? The Foreign Minister replied:

I would like to assure you that we still have hopes that we will reach a peaceful solution for the Middle East's issue, as there is no alternative. Of course, the status quo is discouraging because of Netanyahu's government and the early Israeli elections. Qatar sees that if a positive result cannot be reached, we will close the Israeli office, as we have already opened it to encourage the peace process, but will it be closed now or after one month? This depends on the development of the situation.⁹⁵

Following Madeleine Albright's statement that the US initiative to resume the peace negotiations was in the interests of Israel, Albright called upon the Jewish leaders in the US to help the US administration make the initiative that had been rejected by Netanyahu succeed. Albright threatened that the US was about to abandon the peace process. She

⁹⁴(The General Assembly 3 :A/52/PV.21). See Appendix No.11.

⁹⁵(Al Raya:21-2-1998:1)

addressed the Jewish leaders saying, “The peace process is troubled and the US will not seek a fake process; we want to get ourselves out of this process.”⁹⁶ Shortly afterwards, the Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated that, “The Israeli office in Doha is witnessing very limited activity. The office may be closed if the peace process witnesses more deterioration.”⁹⁷ This statement was a clear threat by Qatar's government against the Israeli Government, which was in harmony with the US efforts to exert more pressure on Tel Aviv.

During the joint talks between the Foreign Ministers of Qatar and Syria, the Qatari Foreign Minister, Hamad bin Jassem, responded to the question: “To what extent will the State of Qatar keep Israel’s commercial office in Doha open?” He answered:

I think that all present Israeli practices lead us to seriously think of closing the office. The Israelis shall understand that we cannot continue in any relationship under the present circumstances, and the relationship between Doha and Tel Aviv is frozen. If the present conditions remain, we will take the necessary measures regarding the commercial office, and we are considering this matter right now. Qatar offered to open such an office because the peace process was going forward and if the process stops, there will not be cause for such an office to exist.⁹⁸

Regarding the Israeli initiative that put conditions on implementing the UN Resolution No. 425 on immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Southern Lebanon, Hamad bin Jassem responded:

The UN Security Council's resolution is clear, which is that Israel shall unconditionally withdraw, and we hope that Israel unconditionally

⁹⁶(Al Raya:3-3 -1998:1)

⁹⁷(Al Raya: 14-4-1998:1)

⁹⁸(Al Raya:18-4-1998:2)

withdraws from Southern Lebanon and the west as there is no need for conditions in withdrawal.⁹⁹

Netanyahu's government continued its escalatory measures, disregarding any regional or international reactions, as it approved new settlement expansion in Jerusalem and connected settlements already existing in occupied Jerusalem. Israel claimed that nothing had changed, as Israel already controlled such areas.¹⁰⁰ Head of the Qatari Shura Council, Mohammed Al-Khulaifi, before the 8th Conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, called upon the international community to exert pressure on Israel to stop its settlement activities in the occupied Arab land. He further stated, "The Israeli policy has caused the peace process to collapse."¹⁰¹

During the summer, the peace process severely deteriorated because of a set of policies adopted by the Netanyahu government. Such policies included the expansion of settlements in Jerusalem, changing its demographic composition, and expanding the borders of Jerusalem. For example, Israel confiscated six acres in Umm al-Fahm in neighbouring Jerusalem.¹⁰²

In September, during the meeting of the UN General Assembly, the Foreign Minister stated:

This is enough to make us more determined to exert more efforts in order to reach a just solution, which shall give back the Palestinian people their legitimate rights in establishing an independent state, whose capital shall be Jerusalem. Such a solution shall also ensure the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab lands in Syrian Golan, South Lebanon, and the Bekaa on the basis of the UN resolutions and the international legitimacy principles,

⁹⁹(Al Raya:18-4-1998:2)

¹⁰⁰(Al Raya: 22-6-1998:9)

¹⁰¹(Al Raya: 27-6-1998:2)

¹⁰²(Al Raya:15-8 -1998:1)

in order to start talking about real peace in the region based on the principles of justice, inclusiveness, mutual respect, and security for all.

I would like to say that the decision taken by the Israeli Government on 21 June 1998, by virtue thereof the municipal borders of Jerusalem will be expanded, will change the legal status of the sacred city in flagrant violation of the related UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. This step further violates the conventions concluded between the Palestinians and Israelis and breaches the principles of the peace process, which provide for leaving the Jerusalem-related matter until the two parties reach an agreement in this regard in the final negotiations. Therefore, we support the statement issued by the Security Council on 12 July 1998 on the rights of civilians during wartime.¹⁰³

9.8 Wye River

Based on the discussion mentioned above, it seemed that the Madrid and Oslo steps in the peace process had stopped. Therefore, the US decided to launch a new peace process, in which it led the negotiations. Qatar welcomed the convention, signed by the concerned parties on 23 October in Washington.¹⁰⁴

In its regular meeting, held on 28 October, the Qatari cabinet, headed by Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Deputy Prime Minister, praised the eminent role played by the US in this regard. It further praised the fruitful efforts exerted by US President Bill Clinton and His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan in order to reach an agreement. The Qatari cabinet expressed its hope to have such an agreement as a starting point to complete the peace process and withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab lands.¹⁰⁵ This agreement resulted in mutual responsibilities for the Palestinians and Israelis, but Benjamin Netanyahu

¹⁰³(Al Raya: 27-9-1998:11)

¹⁰⁴(Al Raya: 24-10-1998:10)

¹⁰⁵(Al Raya: 29-10-1998:2)

threatened to freeze the agreement or to execute it according to his own understanding, especially after the possibility of an early general election.¹⁰⁶

In the end, Netanyahu's government adopted the agreement and started executing the first stage, which included withdrawal.¹⁰⁷ In return, Yasser Arafat issued a decree to fight the incitement of terrorism.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, the Palestinian Authority received 500kilometres from the West Bank from the Israeli occupation authorities in executing the first stage of the Wye River convention.¹⁰⁹ Then, the Qatari Foreign Minister represented Qatar at the Conference of Donor Nations Supporting Peace, which was held in Washington to agree on the necessary economic assistance for the Palestinian Authority.¹¹⁰

Qatar reacted practically to the progress achieved in the peace process by allowing Israel to participate in Milipol Security, held in Doha, but the Qatari cabinet spokesperson stated:

The Israeli participation in Milipol Qatar 98, whose events will start next Saturday, will be very limited, as only three companies will participate. In a statement to *Al Raya*, the spokesperson denied the statements of the director of the Israeli commercial office in Doha, who said that dozens of Israeli companies will participate. The State of Qatar only invited three companies, but the French company organizing the conference invited other companies as it is the organizing body of Milipol in Doha as well as Milipol Paris, which is mutually organized every two years. The French company took all procedures and measures, deciding on the participation of the companies as well as the space allocated for each company.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶(Al Raya: 28-10-1998:1)

¹⁰⁷(Al Raya: 18-11-1998:11)

¹⁰⁸(Al Raya: 20-11-1998:9)

¹⁰⁹(Al Raya: 21-11-1998:1)

¹¹⁰(Al Raya: 30-11-1998:7)

¹¹¹(Al Raya: 21-11-1998:1)

In response to a question regarding the contradiction between Israeli participation and Qatar's decision to freeze its relations with Israel, the spokesperson asserted that the Qatari Government was adhering to its decision and there was no relationship between this participation and the recent developments at the Israeli-Palestinian level. It also did not mean that Qatar would start dialogues with Israel. It was merely technical participation.¹¹²

The question in this context is, had the French company had control over the Qatari territory to the extent that made the Qatari Government authorize it to invite companies without political and security revision? It can also be understood that the commercial office was still open and operating. Due to Israeli policies against Jerusalem, Qatar resorted to the UN General Assembly to get a resolution issued against the Israeli decision on Jerusalem and to protect it from the Israeli practices. The Qatari draft resolution had the majority of votes (149 votes); seven countries refrained from voting, and Israel objected to the draft resolution.¹¹³

9.9 Leaving the headquarters of the commercial office

Regarding the Israeli presence in Doha, a Qatari national who leased a villa for the Israeli commercial office to use it as headquarters filed a case to terminate the contract due to the harm they caused. The executive magistrate in the Civil Plenary Court decided to evacuate the Israeli commercial office in Doha by force. The executive magistrate further decided at the hearing of 20 June to follow up the ruling that was supported by the Court of Appeal on 8 May.

Attorney at law, Rashid Al Boanin, representing the owner of the property, which had been rented by the Israeli delegation by virtue of a subcontract concluded with a Qatari national, stated that the judgement of evacuating the property was rendered on 25 August 1998. Al Boanin followed up the judgement, but the delegation members did not leave. He indicated that after the decision the previous day to evacuate the property by force, "The

¹¹²(Al Raya: 21-11-1998:1)

¹¹³(Al Raya: 4-12-1998:2)

delegation members have no option but to leave the property leased by virtue of the subcontract.”¹¹⁴

In response to a question as to what would happen if the office members insisted on staying in the office, Al Boanin stated that “This office is not subject to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.”

One of the attorneys at law taking part in the case commented that “The Israeli office members will face great difficulties in renting a new headquarters after this decision, especially as the Qatari nation deeply resented their presence.”¹¹⁵

In a statement to Agency France Press (AFP), the Head of the Israeli Commercial Office in Qatar, Sami Rafael, denied knowledge of such a ruling and said that no measure had been taken to evacuate the building. The court rendered the ruling after considering the dispute between a residential compound composed of 15 villas and the Israeli Commercial Office, which was occupying one of the compound villas. The owner stated that he/she had rented all the villas located in Rumaila neighbourhood in downtown Doha to a Qatari businessman, who leased one of the villas to the Israeli Commercial Office.

The owner justified the complaint by the fact that since renting the villa to the Israeli Commercial Office, the compound had been subject to tight security measures. The attorney at law representing the owner stated that such tight security measures harmed the proper use of the property. The owner filed a case before a court of the first instance, which had rendered a judgement the previous October that required the Israeli delegation to evacuate the villa.¹¹⁶

Rashid Al Boanin, the attorney at law representing the owner, commented on the lack of compliance with the ruling by the Director of the Israel Commercial Office:

¹¹⁴(Al Raya: 7-6-1999:1)There are missing issues from 1999.

¹¹⁵(Al Raya: 6-7: 1999:1)

¹¹⁶(Al Raya:6-7: 1999:1)

The Director of the Office has no rights more than the rights granted by the MOU concluded between Qatar and Israel on 2 April 1996, which was classified. Consequently, such an MOU has not been given the force of law. All international conventions shall not come into effect or be executed unless a law is enacted to give it effect, and the legal form of this MOU is incomplete. Consequently, it cannot be legally invoked.¹¹⁷

Regarding the Israeli-Qatari MOU and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Al Boanin stated:

The MOU is not subject to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1963. If we refer to the Convention we will find that Article 43, Paragraph II of the Convention provides that members or officers having the rank of a consul shall not be subject to the jurisdiction of the administrative or judicial authorities of the State thereto they are delegated especially in the consular affairs. Paragraph II of the same Article excluded the civil case of the effect of Paragraph I.¹¹⁸

After a while, the Israeli Commercial Office found another place to use as a headquarters in downtown Doha.¹¹⁹ (Therefore, the comment of the attorney at law, who said that the Israelis would face difficulties in finding another headquarters due to people's rejection, turned out not to be correct.) Israeli-Qatari relations remained stagnant until they faded totally.

9.10 Conclusion

The analysis of the data contained within the newspaper coverage, and other related official documents, shows that Doha, through its foreign policies with respect to the Middle East peace process, sent messages to indicate readiness to build bridges of trust

¹¹⁷(Al Raya 23-7:1999:1)

¹¹⁸(Al Raya:20-6-1999:1)

¹¹⁹(Al Raya: 23-7-1999:1)

with a former enemy, namely Israel. To give credibility to this message, Qatar enlisted the help of a third party mediator, which was the US energy company Enron, with which Qatar signed a contract to export liquefied natural gas to Israel, despite statements from Qatar's Foreign Minister to the effect that Qatar did not have any political or trade relations with Israel. Qatar's Foreign Minister even rejected the idea of exporting Qatari natural gas through the Israeli port of Eilat.

In November 1995, Qatar announced that it had signed an agreement to export natural gas to Israel. Because of this deal, Qatar met strong political resistance from several Arab countries. However, Qatar, insisted on its stance in a clear message to both the US and Israel that Qatar was committed to the signed and ratified agreements, as well as to the implicit understandings.

Qatari-Israeli relations witnessed a surge of activity following the visit by Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres to Doha. However, the hope for progress in the peace process had almost entirely faded away following the Israeli offensive against the Lebanese territories in April 1995. Qatar's condemnation of the Israeli military offensive was immediate.

The data analysis further shows that the rise of Benjamin Netanyahu to power in Israel signalled a marked deterioration in the situation in the occupied territories. Netanyahu's government engaged in a more extreme policy towards the Palestinians, and Qatar warned the Netanyahu Government that it could be forced to reconsider its ties with Tel Aviv if the Israeli Government insisted on such extremist policies. Qatar upped its diplomatic offensive against Israel and used every international diplomatic platform and arena to condemn the Israeli policies. Qatar described the Israeli policies as acts that would quickly doom the peace process. Because of the insistence of the Netanyahu Government in continuing its expansionist policies, particularly the Abu Ghunaim settlement of HarHoma, Qatar condemned such policies before the UN. Qatar, nevertheless, eventually, invited Israel to attend the Middle East and North Africa Economic Cooperation Conference held in Doha.

In a meeting between US Secretary of State Madeline Albright and Qatar's Foreign Minister in Washington, the two officials discussed the importance of holding the conference, and Washington insisted on holding the conference despite the extremist policies of the Netanyahu government, which seemed to put the entire peace process at risk. With the imminent approach of the Middle East and North Africa Economic Cooperation Conference, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, declared that Qatar's only interest in holding such a conference was to show the world that peace was a strategic option, and this revealed Qatar's other role as a peacemaker. Qatar eventually invited Israel to attend the Middle East and North Africa Economic Cooperation Conference held in Doha. This invitation demonstrated Qatar's role as a loyal US ally. Nonetheless, and shortly after the invitation, Qatar declared that maintaining relations with Israel would not continue forever, if the Netanyahu government insisted on the same extremist policies. It must be stressed that Qatar continued to support all US efforts to revive the peace process, the last of which at that time was the Wye River Accord.

Chapter Ten will discuss a number of Qatari foreign policy stances toward the peace process including a bold initiative: to address the conflict through pushing for democratic reform in the Middle East.

CHAPTER TEN

Spreading Democracy:

Terminating the Conflict or the Peace Process?

10.1 Introduction

This chapter presents additional significant data that will help to clarify the overall picture regarding Qatar's foreign policy towards the Middle East peace process. The analysis has identified seven key issues crucial to the emergence of overall Qatari foreign policy regarding the Middle East conflict: the Second Palestinian Intifada; diplomatic, economic, and moral Qatari support of this Intifada; the intensification of the pressure on Israel during all international occasions, including the Qatari proposal to send an international investigation commission to investigate Israeli actions and policies in the occupied Arab territories and Qatar's proposal to shoulder the financial costs of dispatching this commission; the assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin; how Qatar dealt with the death of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat; and the Qatari support of the new Palestinian government. The presentation in this chapter is structured around these core issues.

The chapter also deals with how Qatar dealt with US political reform initiatives, and how it proposed its own Middle East political reform initiative to bring democracy in Arab countries into its foreign policy goals, which was a major cause of the crisis that occurred in the GCC, a crisis that was exacerbated later.

The chapter analyses the data from the following documents in order to discern clear policy patterns illustrating the relevant Qatari foreign policy: first, the verbatim transcriptions of UN Security Council meetings, which include the addresses delivered by Qatari diplomats and the Qatari Foreign Minister during the deliberation on issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East peace process; second, the UN General Assembly documents, both during the ordinary and extraordinary sessions, which include

the addresses delivered by the Emir of Qatar, the Qatari Foreign Minister, and Qatari diplomats; third, the statements of Qatari officials and diplomats published in Qatari newspapers on issues related to the subject of the study; fourth, the addresses delivered by the Emir of Qatar on various occasions, using various diplomatic platforms and dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East peace process.

10.2 The Second Intifada

The analysis of the related documents shows that less than a month before the outbreak of the Second Intifada, which erupted as a direct result of Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount guarded by hundreds of Israeli forces soldiers, and also for many other complicated reasons within the Palestinian territory, the Emir of Qatar delivered a statement before the UN General Assembly in the Millennium Summit, concluding the situation and giving Qatar's perception of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the rights of Arabs:

We further welcome any efforts exerted outside the UN, provided that the rights of the Palestinian and Syrian peoples shall be respected as per the international resolution. In the same context, we see that the issue of Jerusalem shall be given the highest priority because of its importance to the Arabs and Muslims, and as it is the cornerstone in any prospective peace in the Middle East.¹

After the eruption of the Intifada and the start of violent actions, Qatar condemned the brutal attacks. A Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated that Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount was "a desecration of the holy places and an act of defiance of the feelings of the Muslim Ummah."²

In a statement delivered in a meeting held by the Islamic Group at the UN on the ambassadors' level to review the Israeli aggression against the Temple Mount and the attack against the Palestinian civilians by the Israeli security forces, Qatari Ambassador

1 (Hamad bin Khalifa: 7-9-2000)

2(Al Raya: 2000-10-1: 1)

Nasser Abdul-aziz, the permanent representative of Qatar at the UN, expressed Qatar's condemnation of the Israeli actions at the Temple Mount. He further said:

We hold the Israeli Government responsible for the Jerusalem massacre. We assure you that Jerusalem is an Arab city and it is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian land, and it is subject to international law like other land under Israeli occupation. We confirm that Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian State and peace cannot be established without giving Jerusalem back to the Arabs. ...The State of Qatar calls upon the UN Security Council, sponsors of the peace process, and all peace-loving states to immediately intervene to put an end to the Israeli provocations, condemn the brutal Israeli massacre, and stop violence and bloodshed, which go against the peace process. ...Qatar calls upon all parties to resume the peace negotiations with good will and transparency in order to reach a just, inclusive, permanent settlement and to apply international legitimacy and enable the Palestinian people to get back their legitimate rights and establish their own independent state, whose capital shall be Jerusalem. Ariel Sharon's visit was a means to stop the peace negotiations. Such tactics may succeed and may have negative results. ... We see that this action is a defiance of the feelings of the Palestinians and the Muslim Ummah, and a violation of the international legitimacy resolutions and desecration of the holy places.³

The International Human Rights Commission formed an international investigation committee to investigate the Israeli actions in the occupied lands. The Emir of Qatar decided that Qatar would bear the cost of the committee, which amounted to US\$ 850,000.⁴ Israel refused to receive the committee or to cooperate with it. Qatar responded to the Israeli refusal on two levels. The first was before the UN General Assembly and the

³ (Al Raya:4-10-2000:2)

⁴ (Al Raya: 21-10 -2000:1)

second was before the Islamic Summit Conference, which was held in Doha in early November and in which the Emir of Qatar held the Islamic states and the international community responsible for maintaining the safety and security of the Palestinians and their legitimate rights. He further addressed the Israeli Government and presented what he saw as the only two ways that Israel had to proceed: whether to continue occupying the Arab lands and lose any opportunity to establish peace or to seriously engage in the peace process negotiations, which would result in maintaining security in the region. The Emir of Qatar stated:

While the Summit is held, the Islamic and Christian holy places in Palestine have been desecrated and many Palestinians murdered, and thousands have been injured in the blessed Intifada just for calling for their rights in life, their existence and national sovereignty. ... I would like to tell you that we should all support the strong and determined people who face daily difficulties resulting from the occupation. I call upon the Summit to develop a practical strategy that helps the Palestinian people get back their legitimate rights. No solution can be reached in the Middle East region if Israel does not withdraw from all occupied lands in Palestine, Golan, and Lebanon. Israel shall also execute all the UN resolutions and abide by international legitimacy principles. Israel shall choose whether to stay in the region safely and securely or to continue in such a conflict for decades and bear all the disasters that will be inflicted upon the region's countries and its peoples.⁵

Later the Emir of Qatar asked the Foreign Minister to pay a visit to the Palestinian territory in order to show sympathy and support for the Palestinian people and its leadership. The Minister also visited some Palestinian organizations and hospitals.⁶ After he came back from the Palestinian territory, the Minister held a press conference to let the

⁵(Hamd bin Khalifa alThani 02-11-2000)

⁶(Al Raya:6-11-2000:1)

journalists know the result of the meetings of the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) members, which at the time of writing are currently being held in preparation for the 9th Islamic Summit, which will be held in Doha.

In this press conference, the Foreign Minister announced the closure of the Israeli Commercial Office and confirmed the non-existence of any diplomatic relations with Israel. He said, “We keep the ball rolling in the peace process and tried to keep the relations with Israel before issuing the Qatari statement. The State of Qatar still tries to maintain international relations.”⁷

Regarding Qatar’s relations with Israel, the Foreign Minister stated that:

Qatar started its relationship with Israel two years after the Madrid Summit. Before that time, i.e. before the Arabs launched the peace process with Israel to get back Arab rights, there was no cooperation with Israel. The Arabs agreed, through the peace process, to get back the lands occupied since 1967, which means getting back only 22 percent of Palestine.⁸

In response to a question regarding Qatar’s stance towards the peace process, the Minister said, “Qatar has no plan. Washington has the plan, as the US is the sponsor of the peace process.”⁹

The Foreign Minister, Hamad bin Jassem, called upon the US Foreign Minister, sponsor of the peace process, to be just. He further stated, “The US biased stance for the interest of Israel is frustrating.”¹⁰

The Minister clarified his point, stating that “The peace process sponsor is required to stop murdering the Palestinians through exerting pressure on Israel.”¹¹

⁷(Al Raya:10-11-2000:2)

⁸(Al Raya:10-11-2000:2)

⁹(Al Raya:10-11-2000:2)

¹⁰(Al Raya:10-11-2000:2)

¹¹(Al Raya:10-11-2000:2)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs denied press information that Qatar had previously informed the US of the decision to close the Israeli office. He indicated that Qatar had good relations with the US but said, “This does not mean that we agree with the US in everything. We are keen to maintain such good relations, not out of fear, and we thank them due to what they do regarding the Palestinian issue but it is not enough and the US should play a greater role.”¹² He also stated that “Peace is a strategic demand and I assure you that Qatar wishes to see peace established everywhere.”¹³

After Israel rejected cooperation with the committee, it further refused to allow the committee inside the occupied lands. Therefore, Qatar escalated the level of political response as it called upon all UN member states to bear their full responsibility and send international protection forces to ensure maintenance of the peace process in the Middle East. The State of Qatar further asked the UN to exert pressure on Israel to cooperate with the Human Rights Committee, which had been formed as per the resolution passed in the previous October in the 5th Session on Human Rights in Geneva.

This was expressed in a statement delivered by Abdullah Sulaiti, the Secretary in the permanent delegation of the State of Qatar in the UN before the General Assembly, 25th Session, Item 6 of the Agenda “Bethlehem 2000”. He stated that:

As the State of Qatar strongly believes in the establishment of peace in the Middle East, it has announced its readiness to bear the costs of the Fact Finding Committee of the Human Rights Commission. The escalation of violence prevailing in the region, and the use of various weapons by the Israeli forces and the killing of the Palestinian civilians, is a flagrant breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and it would lead to uncontrollable violent reaction by the Palestinian people.¹⁴

¹²(Al Raya: 10-11-2000:2)

¹³(Al Raya: 10-11-2000:2)

¹⁴(Al Raya:9-11-2000:2)

Following the meeting in Brussels with the EU's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, Qatar's Foreign Minister said that he had:

...discussed with the EU diplomat ways in which the EU can contribute in halting the Israeli violence against the Palestinian people.... After consultations with the Kingdom of Morocco, the chairman of the Jerusalem Committee at the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Arab Republic of Egypt, which chaired the Arab Summit, it was decided to send a foreigner ministers' envoy from the Organization of Islamic Conference member states to establish direct contact with the UN Secretary General, the US Security, and the Security Council member states... This is not a situation of friction but is a war situation against unarmed people, and a situation of inhuman and illogical murder...The international community that once backed and supported the peace process should now back and support the stopping of the bloodshed of people who cannot defend themselves.¹⁵

The foreign ministerial delegation commenced its visit to New York on 27 November 2000.

At the level of the UN General Assembly, the State of Qatar stressed the gravity of Israel's violation of international law, international human rights conventions, and the pertinent international legitimacy resolutions, pointing out that this represented a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Geneva Convention relating to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the responsibility of the occupying power to protect civilians.

Qatar's permanent UN Ambassador, Nasser Al Nasr, reminded the international community of the resolution passed by the Geneva Convention held the previous year, which clearly declared the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Palestinian

¹⁵(AIRaya:23-9-2000:2)

occupied territories including Eastern Jerusalem, and stressed the need to fully respect the provisions of this convention on the Palestinian territories.

Nasr told the UN General Assembly session held to discuss Article No.41 that:

The Palestinian people in their occupied territories are currently being subject to the most heinous and most cruel sort of assault, oppression, and torture by the Israeli occupying force...All the talks aimed at stopping the violence and restoring calm to the area ...all the ceasefire agreements that resulted from such talks were never upheld by the Israeli side.... The political negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides have been transformed into violent engagement on the ground, where Israel is trying through the use of its barbaric military force to force the Palestinians to accept what they rejected during the political negotiations.¹⁶

Following the visit by the foreign ministerial delegation for the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Qatar's envoy to the UN Security Council deplored the Israeli human rights violations and the violations against the Palestinian people's right to free and safe living, and he blamed the Israeli Government for its policies on the ground.¹⁷

The Emir of Qatar addressed the Ordinary Arab Summit held in Amman, Jordan and condemned the Israeli policies, saying that the situation seemed to be almost completely devoid of the precepts of international law, and respect for sovereignty and human rights, in the light of the past and ongoing acts committed by Israeli Governments through their war machines, and that it constituted a flagrant violation of all international conventions and treaties:

We have reached a strong conviction that the more statements of condemnations there are, the more careless Israel becomes. Such arrogance and intransigence even led Israel to issue explicit threats to the security of a

¹⁶ (Al Raya: 2-12-2000: 1)

¹⁷ See Appendix No. 12. Documents: UN Security Council 21/3/2001:29. P/SV.4295

sovereign Arab state, which is by consequence a threat to our Arab national security. ... Therefore, I call on the sponsors of the Peace Conference and the other permanent UN Security Council member states and the EU states, and all the peace-loving world states, to remind them that injustice is an omen for the destruction of nations and the birthplace of despair and the repellent of moderation. Maintaining stability in our region requires immediate commitment to guaranteeing international protection to the unarmed Palestinian people and to put an end to the Israeli arrogance in the same manner that the international community acted in other world spots that experienced less tense circumstances... a just and comprehensive peace requires the return of all Palestinian rights, withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan Heights until the line of 4 June, and the completion of the withdrawal from the Lebanese territories until the internationally recognized border lines.¹⁸

As a continuation of Qatar's diplomatic efforts to pressurize Israel on the diplomatic front and push the international community to shoulder its responsibility to establish peace and security, on the occasion of the Israeli army raid on Orient House in Jerusalem, Qatar's Ambassador to the UN Security Council stated before the Council the difficulties that the Palestinians are suffering to restore their rights, due to the actions of the Israelis. The Emir called for respect of the UN resolutions, and he referred also to the Fourth Geneva Convention relevant to protecting civilians in wartime and other Israeli practices in East Jerusalem. The Israeli forces had seized a historic manuscript from Orient House and eventually he urged Israel to comply with all the international legitimacy resolutions and treaties.¹⁹

Using language of a calmer tone, on 10 November 2001, the Emir of Qatar called on the UN General Assembly to end the ordeal of the Palestinian people, and thanked the US for

¹⁸ (Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 27-3-2001)

¹⁹This document is long, and is therefore included as an appendix. For more details, see Appendix No, 13 (S/PV.4357: 28-29).

its efforts while making a brief reference to Israel and holding it responsible for the oppression and massacres carried out against the Palestinians. In his address, he said:

We believe the time has come in an urgent and critical manner to put an end to the ordeal suffered by the Palestinian people as exacted by the Israeli occupying forces and for the international community to provide the needed and necessary international cover and protection for the Palestinian people against the daily unjustified and unacceptable assaults it is subjected to. Therefore we encourage all parties to respond to the calls of their leaders to exercise self-restraint to protect innocent civilian lives to create the right environment to achieve a just peace in this region. In this context, we must laud the positive stance adopted by US President George Bush and his administration with regard to the establishment of the Palestinian State. We also hail the efforts in this field exerted by the governments of friendly European countries and the other international entities concerned with the crisis.²⁰

At the inauguration of the ordinary 30th session of the Qatari Consultative Council on 17 November 2001, and in reference to the international pressures to arrive at a definition of terrorism that includes armed struggle against occupation (a definition required by Israel and the United States, and rejected by Qatar), the Emir of Qatar said, “The Arab and Islamic states hold a fundamental position involving the need to differentiate between terrorism as a criminal phenomenon and the right of people under military occupation to liberate their nations and exercise their fundamental right to resist occupation.”²¹ This principled position of the State of Qatar saw some changes in the future when the US put forward its initiative for democratic reform in 2003.

In his address before the emergency meeting for the foreign ministers of Islamic states held in Doha, the Emir of Qatar, Hamad Bin Khalifa, spoke of the increasingly

²⁰(Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 10-11-2001)

²¹(Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 17-11-2001)

complicated situation, and the ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinians and their national institutions. He called on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities towards the Palestinians and their rights, and to keep pressuring Israel to comply with international laws, to abandon its aggressive policies, to end its attempts at the Judaization of Jerusalem and changing its architecture, and eventually to end the occupation of the Syrian Golan and the complete and actual withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Lebanese territories in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions, most importantly UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242, 338, and 425.²²

With the increasing intensity of acts of resistance and Palestinian protests using all means during the Second Intifada, the Israeli authorities escalated their campaign against Palestinians, the Palestinian Authority, and Yasser Arafat, which culminated in a siege of the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority amid increasingly vocal demands from within Israel to remove Arafat and replace him with a new leadership that was capable of controlling the security situation and curtailing the capabilities of Hamas.

Qatar expressed its official stance in the following statement for the Council of Ministers:

The Council of Ministers strongly condemns the barbaric Israeli assaults against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, and the intransigent acts that are a stark violation of international conventions and treaties. The Qatari Council of Ministers calls on the international community as a whole with regard to this situation and to work to protect the Palestinian people, lift the siege, support the Palestinian Authority, stop the violence and oppression which is derailing the peace process and which is increasing the tensions, and exert efforts to resume the negotiations between the two sides in the hope of achieving a just peace in the region.²³

In the same context, in Washington, Qatar's Foreign Minister, stated that:

²²(Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 10-12-2001)

²³ (Al Raya: 24-1-2002:1)

The Palestinian people are subjected to a process of mass killing by the Israeli forces under flimsy excuses...The Israeli calls to replace the Palestinian President Yasser Arafat cannot be accepted nor understood...Arafat is an elected president who represents the Palestinian people...I believe the only way out of this crisis in the Palestinian territories is for the Palestinian and Israeli parts to work diligently with US envoy General Anthony Zinni to diffuse the tensions, then start serious and direct talks between the two sides under US sponsorship and the backing of all the states of the region, because this is the only way to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people. ²⁴

10.3 Arafat's siege: Terrorism or right of armed struggle

According to the newspaper coverage, during the siege of Yasser Arafat's presidential compound in Ramallah, the Israeli authorities deliberately destroyed the essential infrastructure, which were the facilities of the Palestinian Interior Ministry. Consequently, Qatar donated US\$ 1 million to rebuild these facilities. Qatar's Minister of State for Internal Affairs, Hamad Bin Nasser, told the second session of the 19th round of the Arab Interior Ministers Council in Beirut that:

The Ministry of the Interior in Qatar is currently working to provide material aid for these facilities, as it is important to provide the necessary support to the Palestinian police to enable them to protect the security of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian internal front. Qatar's fundamental and declared stance is to condemn terrorism of all types and forms...The state of Qatar hopes to formulate an international anti-terrorism treaty that stipulates a clear definition of terrorism that is consistent with the objectives of the UN charter and the provisions of international human rights conventions and the pertinent UN General

²⁴ (Al Raya: 24-1-2002: 1-3)

Assembly resolutions, while taking into consideration the need to distinguish between terrorism as a criminal phenomenon and the right of people suffering under occupation to fight to liberate their land and exercise the right of self-determination.²⁵

In an effort to bolster the Palestinian Authority, Qatar's Foreign Minister conducted a short visit to the besieged Yasser Arafat at the presidential headquarters in Ramallah and told reporters after the visit:

It is important to exert efforts to stop the violence and the counter-violence...There is no other option but to return to the negotiations table and discuss all the pending issues to spare the region further escalation and tensions and to create the right environment for the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace...This crisis will not be resolved through violence and the killing of women and children whether on the Palestinian or the Israeli side, and at the same time, we cannot say that the acts of the Palestinian side are violence. In fact, it is a natural reaction to the Israeli violence.²⁶

The Qatari Foreign Minister handed a cheque for the donation to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat during the Ramallah visit, and a spokesperson for the Qatari Foreign Ministry said, "This amount is part of the exceptional relief assistance to help the Palestinian leadership meet the requirements of its day-to-day affairs."²⁷

On the day after the visit, the Emir of Qatar, in his capacity as the chairman of the 9th Summit for the Organization of Islamic Conference sent letters to the US Security Council permanent member states on the tragic situation suffered by the Palestinian people as a result of the ongoing Israeli violations and the recent escalation of these violations, and called for immediate action from the leaders of permanent members to stop the spiralling

²⁵ (Al Raya: 30-1-2001:1)

²⁶ (Al Raya: 9-3-2002: 1-2)

²⁷ (Al Raya: 13-3-2002: 1)

violence, end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, and lift the siege imposed on the Palestinian president to enable him to perform his duties towards his people and the peace process. The Emir of Qatar reiterated that there was no way to end the violence except through going back to the negotiating table based on international legitimacy resolutions, the Madrid Conference formula, and the Land for Peace principle.²⁸

Qatar submitted a draft resolution to the UN Security Council with regard to the Israeli siege of Arafat and the overrunning of the Aqsa Mosque. The draft resolution called on the international community to stop the Israeli violation of international law and ethics.²⁹

In addition to the letters sent by the Emir of Qatar to the heads of UN Security Council permanent member states, the Emir met with the US Ambassador in Doha, Maureen Quinn, to discuss the serious developments affecting the Palestinian people and leadership as a result of the Israeli assaults on Palestinian cities and the headquarters of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

The Emir of Qatar called for the immediate intervention by the US administration to stop these assaults and called on Israel to withdraw its forces from the Palestinian territories and to implement the relevant UN Security Council resolution, and warned of the consequences of the continued Israeli aggression, and the harm caused by the demeaning treatment of the Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat.³⁰ Meanwhile, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, in a telephone call with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, renewed his demands for the immediate lifting of the siege imposed on the Palestinian president, the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces, and work towards defusing the tensions in the region.³¹

At the same time, Qatar's Ambassador to the UN Security Council raised a number of issues during the session held on the same day as the telephone conversation between

²⁸(Al Raya: 10-3-2002:1)

²⁹(Security Council documents, S/PV.4503: 29:3:2002)

³⁰(Al Raya: 1-4-2002:1)

³¹(Al Raya: 3-4-2002:1)

Hamad Bin Jassem and Condoleezza Rice, namely the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, the siege of Arafat, and the failure of the UN Security Council in its duties to maintain peace and security and protect civilians living under military occupation, as well as the double standards. Qatar's Ambassador to the UN Security Council ridiculed the idea that the security of Israel could be achieved through military means, and reiterated that the security of Israel would only be achieved through negotiations to achieve a comprehensive peace that led to the establishment of a Palestinian state. With the eruption of a series of acts of violence planned and executed by the Palestinians in the heart of Israel, countries around the world differed on whether these operations were resistance operations or acts of terror. Qatar expressed its point of view through its foreign minister, who said the following in his address before the extraordinary session for the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Conference on terrorism, which was held in Kuala Lumpur:

The right to resist occupation must be the other face of the fight against terrorism; otherwise, any efforts that do not take into consideration this right will only feed the state of public rage in the Arab world against the West. We warned that this state cannot be avoided except if the international community agreed on a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242, 338, and 425...Qatar calls on the international community to focus the efforts to narrow the economic, technological, and social and other gaps between nations as a key step in the right direction to remove the causes that lead to the frustration of marginalized classes...The fact that Islamic nations have different customs and traditions compared to the West does not mean that we must be the scapegoat for all the repercussions of terrorism or the acts of terror that took place on September 11.³²

³² (Al Raya: 2-4-2002: 1-3)

In a separate statement to the AFP news agency, Hamad Bin Jassem reiterated that it was the Israelis who were terrorists, not the Palestinians, who were fighting to liberate their territory.³³

In the light of the international debate over terrorism and its definition, Qatar submitted the treaty adopted by the Doha Conference on the definition of terrorism for ratification. Before the emergency conference for foreign ministers that was held in Doha in October 2001, Hamad Bin Jassem said, “We condemned these heinous acts”. He said, “We must be able to conclusively differentiate between the struggle of oppressed and occupied nations and their right to resist to liberate their nations, and acts of terror.”³⁴

At the UN level, Qatar urged the international community to protect the Palestinians. Qatar’s Permanent Envoy to the UN in Geneva, Fahad Bin Owaida, told the 58th session of the Human Rights Commission, which convened to discuss human rights violations in the occupied Arab territories, that:

The State of Qatar, in its capacity as the chairman state of the Organization of Islamic Conference, had condemned the serious Israeli escalation in the form of the overrunning of Palestinian cities, the headquarters of the Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, and acts of terror committed by the Israeli occupying forces in a flagrant violation of the obligations, undertaking, and treaties the Israeli authority is a signatory to, and the principles of international legitimacy and resolutions.³⁵

Following the Israeli attack on the Jenin refugee camp and the near complete destruction of the camp, which led to the death and injury of hundreds, the UN Security Council held a meeting that concluded with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution No. 1,405, calling for the formation of an investigation committee to investigate the extent to which Israeli forces adhered to international standards for the treatment of civilians under

³³ (Al Raya: 2-4-2002: 1)

³⁴ (Al Raya: 2-4-2002: 1-7)

³⁵ (Al Raya: 3-4-2002 : 1, 7)

occupation. Qatar's Council of Ministers welcomed the resolution to send the fact-finding commission to investigate the actions of the Israeli force in Jenin, and the heinous carnage and the flagrant violations of Palestinian human rights. (The UN resolution stipulated the collection of specific information on the recent incidents in the Jenin refugee camp by the fact-finding commission, and required that the UN Security Council be kept informed.) The Council of Ministers called for the finding of a mechanism to implement the resolution, and voiced hopes that the fact-finding commission would be able to complete its mission soon. It also backed the UN Secretary General's calls to send multinational troops to be deployed in the occupied Palestinian territories to protect the Palestinians and to ensure the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian territories and cities, and to establish a stable atmosphere that permitted the resumption of negotiations between the two sides. The Council also called on the international community to work hard to provide protection to the Palestinians and put an end to Israel's repeated barbaric assaults against the Palestinian people, while stressing that compliance with the rules of international legitimacy and the performance of obligations and undertakings were the best way to achieve peace and security in the region.³⁶ Israel's decision to impose conditions on the fact-finding mission angered Arab states, while the Europeans expressed hopes that the task of the fact-finding commission would begin soon.

Qatar continued its anti-Israeli diplomatic efforts. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al Mahmoud, addressed the Non-Alignment Movement Summit in Durban, South Africa, by stating that the requirements of peace and security in the Middle East would only be met by implementing international legitimacy resolutions that guaranteed the restoration of all the national and legitimate Palestinian rights, led by the right of self-determination; the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital; the withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights to the line of 4 June 1967; and the withdrawal from the remaining occupied part of the Lebanese territory. Al Mahmoud held Israel responsible for the erosion of the peace prospects in the region, stressing that this

³⁶(Al Raya: 25-4-2002:1)

required a tough international stance in the face of Israeli intransigence.³⁷ The chairman of the Qatari delegation to the Non-Alignment Movement Summit voiced hopes that the fact-finding commission formed pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution No. 1,405 would be able to expose the Israeli crimes against civilians in the city of Jenin as soon as possible.³⁸

Al Mahmoud called on the Non-Alignment Movement member states to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people and to focus efforts to support an end to the Palestinian occupation by pressuring Israel to comply with the peace process and implement the relevant UN resolutions. He stressed the urgent need to arrive at an internationally agreed upon definition for terrorism, while taking into account the differentiation between terrorism and the legitimate resistance to foreign aggression and the struggle of people living under foreign occupation to liberate their land and for self-determination.³⁹

During their meeting in Paris, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, stressed to his Israeli counterpart, Shimon Peres, the need for Israel's compliance with the treaties and undertakings signed with the Palestinian Authority and to make an effort to restore the peace process and to establish adequate mechanisms to implement the positive proposals, as per the statement issued by US President George Bush, through the Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories re-occupied by Israel. Jassem reiterated to Peres the need to stop all intransigent acts by the Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians, and to ease the siege imposed on Palestinian territories and recognize the legitimate rights of Palestinians, including their right to establish an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. Jassem reiterated his condemnation of the killing of innocent civilians on both sides, stressing that there would be no peace or stability in the Middle East except through recognizing the

³⁷(Al Raya: 30-4-2002:7)

³⁸ (Al Raya: 30-4-2002:7)

³⁹ (Al Raya: 30-4-2002:7)

legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Jassem concluded his statement by reiterating Qatar's fundamental support of the Palestinian people and its legitimate leadership.⁴⁰

Following the issuance of the fact-finding commission's report pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution No. 1,405, which Qatar criticized for bias towards Israel, Qatar exerted further diplomatic pressures through Abdullah Al Hanzab, the acting chairman of Qatar's delegation to the UN General Assembly, who told the Assembly:

Initiatives and negotiations pertaining to the Arab-Israeli struggle must succeed in the establishment of all facets of Palestinian and Arab rights, and the State of Palestine must be able to have a seat as a full member of the UN with complete and intact sovereignty and with its capital as Jerusalem based on international legitimacy. The State of Qatar calls on the UN to condemn state-sponsored terrorism exercised by Israel against the Palestinian people. Qatar has found that the report prepared by the fact-finding commission contains many discrepancies and that it relied heavily on the version presented by the Israeli Government, while undermining the version presented by the Palestinian Authority and the international and human rights organizations, which renders the report unbalanced and unfair to the Palestinians.⁴¹

Within the same UN perspective, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, addressed the ordinary session of the UN General Assembly saying that:

Qatar rejects double standards or selective UN Security Council resolutions that allow Israel to evade the implementation of any resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council or the UN General Assembly. Qatar is extremely regretful of the failure of the UN Security Council and the other UN components to put an end to the barbaric Israeli assaults in the Golan

⁴⁰(Al Raya: 29-7-2002:1)

⁴¹(AIRaya: 6-8-2002: 1-7)

Heights and Southern Lebanon...Qatar also regrets ... the siege imposed on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in flagrant defiance of the international community and international laws and customs, in addition to the targeting of civilian houses and the killing of innocent women, children, and the elderly...The massacres in Jenin and Gaza represent a flagrant violation of modern international laws... Israel will not achieve peace except through pursuing peace by respecting international legitimacy resolutions.⁴²

Qatar called on the UN Security Council to issue a binding resolution stipulating the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the city of Ramallah, and the lifting of the siege against Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and members of the Palestinian Authority following the massacres by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people and the assaults against the Palestinian leadership.

Qatar's Permanent Envoy to the UN, Nasser Abdulaziz Al Nasr, spoke during a session held by the UN Security Council to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian issue:

You are well aware of the events and well aware of the losses to life and property. The aim is to undermine the Palestinian Authority and Palestine's national security. This is happening at a time when Israel is calling on the Palestinian Authority to deter and stop the suicide bombings and violence. What kind of logic is that? How can the Authority play its role in maintaining security and deterring suicide attacks when Israel is destroying the infrastructure of the Palestinian security forces, apprehending and killing its members? Israel's justifications for its acts of aggression against Ramallah and the Palestinian Authority compound, using the pretext of the

⁴² (Al Raya: 18-9-2002:1)

Palestinian Authority's failure to stop the suicide bombings against Israel, are totally unacceptable.⁴³

Meanwhile, Hamas-affiliated Al Qassam Brigades militiamen ambushed Israeli settlers near Al Khalil and injured five in retaliation against the Israeli military operation in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, which resulted in an Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip and the killing of 14 Palestinians during an expanded military campaign, in which tanks and fighter jets were used. In a statement, Hamas described the incursion as a barbaric massacre, and called for a harsh response from Palestinian factions.⁴⁴

For its part, the Qatari Council of Ministers deplored what it described as a heinous massacre and the barbaric acts committed by the Israeli forces in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip against the unarmed Palestinians and that led to the killing of tens of martyrs. The Council of Ministers reiterated during its ordinary session, chaired by Prime Minister Abdullah Bin Al Khalifa, that the latest massacre and the inhuman assaults against the Palestinian people represented a continuation of the oppressive policy maintained by Israel in a flagrant defiance of international legitimacy and international treaties and conventions and human rights laws. The Council of Ministers stated that these barbaric and inhuman practices committed by Israel required that the Arab world embody an effective solidarity with the Palestinian people going beyond mere rhetoric, which is of no use to the Palestinian people and which only serves to undermine the status of the Arab nation, but instead to cause concrete actions on the ground to defend the Palestinian cause, which is the common cause of all Arabs. The Council of Ministers called on the international community to shoulder its responsibility, provide international protection for the Palestinian people and put an end to the repeated Israeli assaults, while reiterating that compliance with the rules of international legitimacy and the performance of obligations was the best way to achieve peace and security in the region.⁴⁵

⁴³Security Council Documents S/PV.4614 P 19.Appendix No.14.

⁴⁴(Al Raya: 8-10-2002:1)

⁴⁵(Al Raya: 10-10-2001:1)

During the US Islamic World Forum held in Doha, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad bin Jassem, criticized what he described as the contradictions in the statements used by the US administration to justify the military strikes against Iraq, and which ranged from toppling the Iraqi regime to the acquisition by Baghdad of weapons of mass destruction and links with terrorism. The Qatari Foreign Minister said in his address before the last session of the forum that he fundamentally disagreed with the principle of changing the regime in Iraq:

We as a government, and myself as a person, stress the seriousness of this principle, because changing the regime must be through UN resolutions or through the International Court of Justice... I believe that linking Iraq with terrorism is wrong, since Iraq lacks the motives for such a link in addition to the ideological contradictions between the ruling Baath regime in Iraq and Al Qaeda... Why can't there be an international coalition to force Israel to comply with UN resolutions just like the international coalition against Iraq? If the issue is that the Iraqi regime is oppressing its people and attacking its neighbours, then the same applies to Israel, who is oppressing the Palestinians on the land they gained through the Oslo Accord. We have two identical cases here that warrant identical action.⁴⁶

(This marks the beginning of a significant change in Qatari behaviour with regard to Israel since Qatar assumed the chairmanship of the Organization of Islamic Conference.)

In his address to the opening session of the Conference on Arab-US Relations in Doha, the Emir of Qatar called on the US to:

...exercise greater balance, fairness, and equity in dealing with Arab and Islamic issues. Let me be clear on this, we do not call on the US to abandon its special relationship with Israel, but we call on the US, in its capacity as a superpower, to rise up to its international political and moral

⁴⁶ (Al Raya: 22-10-2002: 1-12)

responsibilities with regard to the Palestinian issue and the Israeli-Arab conflict in accordance with the rules of international legitimacy, and to exert the needed efforts and to pressure Israel into ending its occupation of the Arab territories.⁴⁷

There was another push. As part of the continuous efforts exerted by the chairmanship of the Organization of Islamic Conference with the world community to urge the countries of the world to rise to their responsibility with regard to the implementation of international legitimacy laws to avert further deterioration in the occupied Arab territories in particular, and the Arab region in general, the Emir of Qatar, in his capacity as the chairman of the 9th Organization of Islamic Conference Summit, sent letters to the UN Security Council permanent member states, the UN Secretary General, and Pope John Paul II. Qatar's official news agency said the letters were related to the serious developments and the deteriorating situation in the Arab occupied territories. The letters also called on UN Security Council permanent member states, the UN secretary general, and His Holiness the Pope to exert efforts to confront the Israeli assaults against the Palestinian people and Israel's continued violations in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, and particularly the Israeli attempts to change the Christian and Islamic historic identity and features of the city of Jerusalem. For his part, Ambassador Saif Al Mokadem Al Buenain, the General Coordinator for the Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Conference, said:

His Highness the Emir of Qatar gives utmost priority to the Palestinian cause, and particularly the issue of Jerusalem, as the number one issue for Arabs and Muslims. In this context were His Highness' letters to direct the world's attention to the gravity of the situation in the occupied territories and Israel's aggression against the Palestinian people, as well as the process carried out by Israel for the purpose of the Judaization of Jerusalem

⁴⁷ (Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 21-12-2002)

by causing demographic changes to the city, which is a violation of the UN resolutions.⁴⁸

In a letter submitted to the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights,⁴⁹ on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Emir of Qatar called on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities to provide international protection to the Palestinian people and called on the UN to take the necessary punitive actions against Israel in application of the partnership treaty signed with Israel. The Emir urged the UN Security Council to take the necessary measures to pressure Israel to implement international legitimacy resolutions leading to the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace enjoyed by all the states of the region and the people of the region who aspire to having peace and stability. In marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, the Emir pointed out that it came during extremely difficult and delicate circumstances overshadowing the peace process in the Middle East. Most importantly, there was the very serious situation in the Palestinian occupied territories due to the incursions, the siege, the massacres, the assassinations, the kidnapping, and the oppressive acts committed by Israel against the Palestinian civilian population, in addition to the destruction of the Palestinian Authority's infrastructure with the aim of undermining this authority.

In his letter, the Emir voiced confidence in the UN as an intrinsic, fundamental, and impartial point of reference for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He held Israel and its allies responsible for the failure of the peace process. At the end of his letter, he also called on the international community and the UN to shoulder their obligations with regard to the establishment of international peace and security.⁵⁰

Following the Israeli attack on the Al Braij refugee camp in Gaza, which left five Palestinians dead and 35 others arrested, the Qatari Council of Ministers, in its meeting

⁴⁸ (Al Raya: 30-10-2002:1)

⁴⁹ Appendix No. 15

⁵⁰ (Al Raya : 30-11-2002: 1-3)

presided over by Prime Minister Abdullah Bin Khalifa Al Thani, condemned these attacks. Al Thani called on the international community to protect the Palestinians and put an end to the Israeli attacks and threats, which were derailing the peace process, and to work on the resumption of the negotiations between the two sides in the hope of achieving a just peace in the region.⁵¹

In his address before the opening session of the Supreme Gulf Cooperation Council, the Emir of Qatar lamented the deteriorating Arab situation and specified a strategic Arab choice for the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian cause, which was at the heart of this conflict:

We are witnessing a tragic situation in Palestine. The Arab world finds itself completely helpless, while the Israeli occupation forces continue with the hostilities against the people of Palestine and their leaders in a serious escalation of the situation in the region, which jeopardizes international peace and security, and makes the peace aspired for by the people of the region an unattainable dream... However, the Israeli escalation proves that Israel has chosen might and force over negotiations that are based on international legitimacy resolutions, which call for the Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories to the line of 4 June 1967, and the recognition of all the legitimate Palestinian rights led by the right to establish an independent state on Palestinian national soil with Jerusalem as its capital.⁵²

Israel raided Bait Hanoun, in what the Qatari Foreign Ministry called the Massacre of Bait Hanoun, which left 11 dead and scores injured. An official Foreign Ministry spokesman told the QNA official Qatari news agency:

⁵¹ (Al Raya : 2-12-2002: 1-7)

⁵²(Hamad Bin Khalifa : 21-12-2001)

These attacks represent a flagrant violation of international conventions and international and human rules and are an attempt by Israel to exploit the current regional circumstances to execute its plans that aim to destroy any prospects for peace in the region. We call on the international community to shoulder its responsibility and take the necessary measures to protect the Palestinian people against these attacks. Qatar's fundamental stance is based on the premise that a comprehensive and just peace will never be achieved except by implementing international legitimacy resolutions and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate rights and establish their independent state on their national soil with Jerusalem as its capital.⁵³

At the beginning of his visit to Egypt to attend the 15th Arab Summit meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, the Emir said:

My biggest hope is that we will all be able to unite our efforts towards unified stances for a correct vision, through which we can address the international community in order to reach acceptable and peaceful solutions that comply with the international resolutions adopted by the UN with regard to the national issues, led by the situation in Iraq and the occupied Palestinian territories.⁵⁴

The Emir seemed to be criticizing the past Arab vision and indirectly hinting that it was flawed. He also made a reference to the UN reference points, and the reference points for the Madrid and Oslo process, hinting that they no longer served as an adequate basis to rely on.

The Emir returned to Doha after one day spent participating in the Arab Summit. In Doha, he began preparing for the Organization of the Islamic Conference Summit, planned to be

⁵³ (Al Raya: 25-2-2003:1)

⁵⁴ (Al Raya: 1-3-2003:1)

held in Doha, which was to be chaired by Qatar. This summit's agenda focused on supporting clear ideas and fundamentals on the Iraqi and Palestinian issues.⁵⁵

10.4 The Roadmap

The Roadmap was agreed upon in December 2002 to identify the practical measures required to resume the peace process and the establishment of a viable Palestinian state that could survive side by side with Israel. US President George W. Bush declared the US commitment to continue with the peace process through the Roadmap, which the US considered to be a step in the right direction towards establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region. Qatar welcomed the joint statement issued by Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair on the Roadmap. An official foreign ministry spokesman told Qatar's official news agency, QNA:

The US must take immediate and active steps to implement the Roadmap, and take positive steps to advance the peace process in accordance with the grounds on which that process was established, namely, international legitimacy resolutions and the Land for Peace principle to end the Israeli occupation of all the Arab and Palestinian territories and recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, led by the right to establish an independent state on the Palestinians' national soil with Jerusalem as its capital.⁵⁶

During the second emergency summit for the Organization of Islamic Conference in Doha, and before the invasion of Iraq, the Emir of Qatar identified Israel as the main threat to the Palestinians, and the cause of the continued escalation against Palestinians. He also pointed out the siege of Arafat, and he demanded that the international community in general, and the US in particular, shoulder their responsibility to bring a fair and just settlement to the Middle East conflict. He referred to Israel's insistence on achieving peace

⁵⁵ (Al Raya: 6-3-2003:1)

⁵⁶ (Al Raya: 18-3-2001:1)

and stability through military force, but only through the UN resolutions would a fair peace be achieved.⁵⁷

The Emir of Qatar reiterated the same approach and vision, in addition to welcoming the US administration's stance with regard to the establishment of a Palestinian state during Qatar's Third Democracy and Free Trade Conference:

We believe that it has become necessary to embark on a swift and effective international move to put an end to the hostilities and to enable the Palestinian people to attain their national and legitimate rights, including the right of self-determination and the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. In this juncture, I laud the stance declared by US President George W. Bush to support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state as part of a final solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁵⁸

Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, held a meeting in the French capital, Paris, with Silvan Shalom, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel. Following the meeting, Al Thani told reporters:

The state of Qatar is attempting to play a role to return the Israeli and Palestinian sides to the negotiating table, and we believe the only solution to this crisis is through the mutual recognition of rights based on international laws and UN Security Council Resolutions, particularly Resolution No. 242. The State of Qatar is optimistic about the Roadmap, and particularly about US President George W. Bush's stance in this regard. We believe both sides need to make sacrifices in order to achieve peace.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ (Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 5-3-2003)

⁵⁸ (Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 14-4-2003)

⁵⁹ (Al Raya 15-5-2003: 1,7)

Speaking about relations with Israel and the Israeli liaison office in Doha, Al Thani said, “I believe the march for the normalization of relations has begun and Arabs announced a decision in Beirut to normalize relations with Israel. I stress that Qatar is working in favour of the peace process.”⁶⁰

In response to questions on the agreement with Israel, Al Thani said:

We do not object to making a deal with Israel. However, we don't see this as necessary at the moment as we do not have direct borders with Israel. However, when we do have peace, everything will be possible. In Qatar, we have an open view with regard to establishing good relations with everybody including Israel, but there are many conditions that must be met before that.⁶¹

Speaking on the Palestinian situation, the Foreign Minister referred to how difficult it was, saying that the news of the Palestinian fallen was heart-wrenching, and that the situation needed the pooling of all efforts to find a way out of the situation and a peaceful and just solution to the Palestinian cause.⁶²

After the meeting, the Israeli cabinet ratified the draft of the Roadmap, and the official spokesman for the Qatari Foreign Ministry commented in statements to the official Qatari news agency, QNA, saying:

We stress that it is important for the Israeli Government to effect a practical implementation of this ratification on the ground in accordance with the Land for Peace principle and the international legitimacy resolutions, and the vision of US President George W. Bush to establish an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. We appreciate the effort

⁶⁰(Al Raya: 15-5-2003: 1, 7)

⁶¹(Al Raya: 15-5-2003: 1, 7)

⁶²(Al Raya: 15-5-2003: 1,7)

exerted by the US president to push the Middle East peace process and peace and stability for the region's states and people.⁶³

In Qatar's address before the Economic and Social Forum in Geneva, Abdullah Al Slayty, the first secretary of Qatar's permanent delegation to the UN said:

The State of Qatar hopes that the Roadmap will create a new and real opportunity to achieve a conclusive and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Israel must perform its obligations under the Roadmap in a practical way in accordance with the Land for Peace principle and the international legitimacy resolutions and the vision of the US President George W. Bush to establish an independent Palestinian state.⁶⁴

On the sidelines of his participation in the Detroit Economic Forum in the US, First Deputy to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, told the Al Jazeera channel, "I hold Israel responsible for obstructing the Roadmap."⁶⁵ He also stressed the importance of keeping the Roadmap on the negotiating table:

The key question now is: Who derailed the Roadmap? I believe that Israel's policy during the truce, which lasted for 51 days, is to be blamed for foiling the Roadmap... Who broke the truce?...It is the Israeli side that broke the truce. Nevertheless, no one held the Israeli side responsible, or at least attempted to blame the Israeli side for derailing the Roadmap... It is important now to know how to keep the Roadmap on the negotiating table, even without the impetus, until the right time comes to move it forward. Unfortunately, this is the reality of the situation right now.⁶⁶

⁶³ (Al Raya: 26-5-2003: 1)

⁶⁴ (Al Raya: 25-7-2003: 1,3)

⁶⁵ (Al Raya: 30-9-2003: 1, 13)

⁶⁶ (Al Raya: 30-9-2003: 1,13)

After the Foreign Minister's interview with Al Jazeera, the Israeli Government ordered an airstrike against a site near Damascus. It claimed the site was a terrorist training camp. Qatar condemned the air raid by the Israeli forces on Syrian territories. The official spokesperson for the Qatari Foreign Ministry told Qatar's official news agency, QNA, that "These acts represent a serious threat to peace in the Middle East and drag the region back to the atmosphere of war, violence, and tensions." The spokesperson reiterated Qatar's support of Syria, and called on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to stop these hostilities and to respect international legitimacy rulings stipulating the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories.⁶⁷

In his address to the 10th round of the Islamic Summit Conference in Putrajaya, Malaysia, the Emir blamed the Israeli Government for failing to comply with the Roadmap. He said:

We reiterate our rejection of any attempts by the Israeli Government not to comply with the Roadmap and limiting the approach to this Roadmap to the security dimension only. We also reject Israel's decision to isolate the legitimately elected Palestinian President Yasser Arafat as undermining the entire peace process...We call on the international community and the Middle East Quartet to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and enable the Palestinians to exercise their fundamental and legitimate national rights, and to stop all that could derail the peace efforts in accordance with international legitimacy and the Roadmap and to pressure Israel to comply with its obligations and withdraw from the Golan Heights and the rest of the Lebanese territories.⁶⁸

On the other side, when a group of Palestinians attacked a US diplomatic vehicle, leaving three people dead, Qatar condemned the action and said it regretted the attack, describing it as criminal. An official spokesperson for the Qatari Foreign Ministry told Qatar's official news agency, QNA, that Qatar expressed condolences to the families of the

⁶⁷ (Al Raya: 6-10-2003:1)

⁶⁸ (Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 11-10-2003)

victims, and the government and people of the United States, and reiterated Qatar's fundamental stance to condemn terrorism of all forms and sources. Furthermore, the Qatari Council of Ministers strongly condemned the loss of lives during its ordinary session chaired by Prime Minister Abdullah Bin Khalifa Al Thani.⁶⁹

In his address to the 32nd ordinary session of the Qatar Consultative Council, the Emir of Qatar said that the Palestinian cause was Qatar's first national issue.⁷⁰ The Emir held Israel responsible for thwarting any opportunity to achieve peace, and he demanded that the international community and the Middle East Quartet provide international protection for the Palestinian people.⁷¹

The escalating violence and counter violence gave a clear indication that the peace process was doomed to fail. Israeli forces invaded Ramallah, and Qatar called on the international community and all peace-loving nations to promptly intervene to push for an immediate stop to the massacres committed by the Israeli forces and the barbaric attacks by Israel on Palestinians, particularly the most recent attack on the Nusairat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. In a statement to QNA, an official spokesperson for the Qatari Foreign Ministry called on the international community to shoulder its responsibility and take the necessary measures to protect the Palestinian people against these assault , calling on the Middle East Quartet to promptly intervene and calling for the quick intervention of the US, in particular in its capacity as the sponsor for the peace process, to pressure Israel into putting an end to these assaults and to perform the obligations of the Roadmap to achieve peace and stability in the region.⁷²

Qatar condemned the Israeli acts that violated Palestinian human rights on an ongoing and daily basis, which have been witnessed by the entire world. The Third Secretary at the Foreign Minister's Office, Khalid Ibrahim Abdulrahman Al Hamr, told the fourth committee for the 58th UN General Assembly round on Article 84, "The Report by the

⁶⁹(Al Raya: 16-10-2003:1)

⁷⁰Appendix No.16

⁷¹ (Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 18-11-2003)

⁷²(Al Raya: 22-10-2002:1)

Special Commission Appointed to Investigate the Israeli Practices that Affect Palestinian Human Rights and the Arab Population in the Occupied Territories”, that these illegitimate acts must be condemned so as to uphold the legitimacy of the Palestinians’ struggle to liberate their land and resist the occupation that seized their lands and displaced their people. Al Hamr reiterated the legitimacy of this resistance under international laws, which recognize resistance to liberate occupied land from occupiers.⁷³

10.5 The assassination of Ahmed Yassin

On 22 March 2004, Israel assassinated Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, and Qatar’s Council of Ministers expressed its strong condemnation of the heinous crime committed by the Israeli forces, and the targeting of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and his entourage.

In a statement to the international community as a whole, the Council of Ministers called for the community to bear its full responsibility for the tragic suffering of the Palestinian people due to the ongoing Israeli escalations and the relentless campaign to target innocent and unarmed civilians.⁷⁴

Qatar used the assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin to intensify the diplomatic rhetoric against Israel, and took the case to the UN Security Council, where Qatar’s Envoy to the UN Security Council expressed the State of Qatar’s condemnation and denunciation of this heinous crime, and blamed Israel for the deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories.⁷⁵

Before another international organization, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Qatar reiterated calls for finding a just and permanent solution in the Middle East on the basis of international legitimacy resolutions, and called for breaking the stalemate in the peace process, and for the return of the parties to the negotiating table.

⁷³ UN General Assembly documents A/C.4/58/SR.19 5-11-2003 p.10

⁷⁴(Al Raya: 25-3-2004:1)

⁷⁵UN Security Council documents : 4929S/PV. 5-11-2003:10 .Appendix No. 17

Discussing Article No.8 of the agenda on the issue of the human rights violations in occupied territories, including the Palestinian territories, Jassim Abdulaziz Al Bouenain, the Minister Plenipotentiary of Qatar's permanent delegation to the 60th Session for the Human Rights Commission, said:

The State of Qatar condemns the assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin...These operations only indicate Israel's attempts to drag the region into a spiral of violence and counter violence and to abort any prospects for peace...Qatar calls on the international community to bear its responsibilities and to move immediately and effectively to put a stop to the repeated Israeli crimes and attacks and to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and its leadership...Qatar calls for putting an end to the spiral of violence and backing the efforts to revive the peace process and return to the negotiating table on the basis of the Roadmap, for the purpose of ending the occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital...the Government of the State of Qatar appeals to the international community and the Human Rights Commission to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and to push for an Israeli withdrawal from Arab occupied territories including Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan Heights, and Lebanon's Shebaa farms, and for finding a solution that guarantees an end to the occupation.⁷⁶

In his address before the 4th Doha Forum for Democracy and Free Trade, the Emir of Qatar deplored the assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and defended Palestinian and Arab rights. He said:

One of our strategic fundamentals is to defend the right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state, which restores to these people

⁷⁶(Al Raya: 29-3-2004: 1, 7)

all their legitimate rights and protects them from the insolence and barbarism of the Israeli actions. The failure to resolve the Palestinian cause has led to a build-up of rage in our region that cannot be ignored. This was recently confirmed by the Arab frustration over the use of the veto right in the UN Security Council against a draft resolution to condemn the Israeli assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.⁷⁷

10.6 The separation wall and the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza

In 2002, in an attempt by the Israeli Government to control the security situation in the West Bank and to increase the pressure on Palestinians there, the Israeli Government sanctioned the plan to build a separation barrier to seal off Palestinian cities and towns, and to separate these towns and cities from Israeli settlements. The Separation Barrier had a major negative impact on the lives, and the economic and transportation activities, of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and it created immense suffering for students, farmers, and people requiring medical treatment.

The Palestinian Authority took the case of the Separation Barrier to the International Court of Justice, which rendered a consultative ruling to the effect that the construction of this barrier was illegal. Qatar called on Israel to respect the ruling of the International Court of Justice on the barrier, which Israel had begun constructing two years earlier at the heart of the West Bank and around Jerusalem. Qatar stressed that Israel's failure to abide by the ruling rendered by the International Court of Justice constituted a violation of international conventions and a devastating blow to any prospects for peace in the region.

Acting Charge D'affaires for Qatar's Permanent UN Delegation, Jamal Nasser Al Badr, spoke before the General Assembly's 10th Emergency Session on the legal consequences of the construction of the Separation Barrier by the occupation authorities in Palestinian occupied territories, including Eastern Jerusalem and its peripheries.⁷⁸

⁷⁷(Hamed Bin Khalifa AlThani: 5-4-2004)

⁷⁸General Assembly Emergency Special Session A/ES-10/PV.24 p 23, Appendix No. 18.

Meanwhile, Minister of state for Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al Mahmoud, warned in his address to the Islamic Conference ministers' meeting in Istanbul that Israel was attempting to execute its plan to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza without making any specific arrangements with the Palestinian Authority for the purpose of facilitating its plan to freely expand the settlement activities in the West Bank:

Israel is attempting to exploit the international community's preoccupation with Iraq to execute its unilateral withdrawal from Gaza for the purpose of being free to expand its settlement activities in the West Bank and extinguish the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their land. This is a serious development that poses a serious threat to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and creates very significant political changes on the ground that undermine the security and stability of the region...The State of Qatar reiterates its solidarity with Syria and Lebanon, and calls for an end to the hostile campaigns against them... The Government of the State of Qatar expresses regret over the US decision to impose economic sanctions on Syria.⁷⁹

In his address to the 59th Round of the UN General Assembly in New York, the Emir of Qatar spoke in support of Palestinian rights and criticized the Israeli actions:

The Palestinian issue is a model that embodies the suffering of a people who were denied their political and economic rights and who are trying, despite all the difficulties...the Israeli occupation remains a heavy burden and a major obstacle against the legitimate Palestinian dreams of liberty and development ... the international community needs a serious pause to reflect and to awaken its consciousness with regard to a cause ... It is of paramount importance and an undeniable duty to keep Israel under obligation to enforce international legitimacy rulings, which in my opinion,

⁷⁹ (Al Raya :16-6-2004: 1-7)

cannot be viewed selectively or as optional, to be respected by some while disrespected by others. Furthermore, Israel must comply with all its previous undertakings including the Roadmap. Israel must also halt the construction of the Separation Barrier, which has a detrimental effect on the livelihood of Palestinians as ruled by the International Court of Justice on 9 July... Israel must recognize the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people and their right to establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital under a peaceful coexistence with Israel.⁸⁰

Addressing the UN Security Council, Al Badr condemned Israel's decision to continue the construction of the separation wall, which the entire international community had denounced, including a large proportion of Israeli society.⁸¹

10.7 Arafat's death

Despite the Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO) stance with regard to the invasion of Iraq, and its support of Saddam Hussain at the expense of Kuwait, which is a Gulf Cooperation Council member state, Qatar downplayed this stance and forged strong relations with Arafat, the PLO, and, later, the Palestinian National Authority. Qatar supported the Palestinian Authority fully.

Qatar's stance with regard to the death of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat reflected clear respect and sadness. The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa, offered condolences on the death of Arafat in the following statement issued by the Emiri Divan:

With hearts filled with sorrow, we received the news of the death of His Excellency and our dear brother, freedom fighter, President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization Yasser Arafat...The Arab and Islamic nations have lost one of the most distinguished leaders, who dedicated his life and efforts to fight for the

⁸⁰(Hamad Bin Khaifa: 31-9-2004)

⁸¹UN Security Council documents. S/PV.4841, 14-10-2003. Appendix No. 19.

cause of his people and to realize the aspirations of the Palestinians for liberty, independence, and the right of self-determination.⁸²

The Emir of Qatar declared a state of public mourning in Qatar for three days.⁸³

The Emir of Qatar also sent cables of condolence to interim Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Rouhi Fatouh; Mahmoud Abbas Abu Mazen, the Chairman of the executive committee of the PLO; and Ahmed Qurea, the Palestinian Prime Minister.⁸⁴ Crown Prince Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani also sent cables of condolence to Rouhi Fatouh, Mahmoud Abbas, and Ahmed Qurae.⁸⁵ His Highness Sheikh Prime Minister Abdullah Khalifa Al Thani sent similar cables of condolence to the head of the Palestinian Authority.⁸⁶

10.8 Qatar and the democratic reform initiatives and the Middle East peace process

In late 2002, US Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that US\$29 million had been allocated for the US-Middle East partnership initiative, aiming to produce strong US support for change and reform, and a future of modernity in the Middle East. Powell vocally called for the emergence of a replacement Palestinian leadership in a reiteration of Washington's implied wish to exclude Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, a wish that was rejected by the Palestinian leadership, who argued that it was the Israeli occupation, and not the Palestinian leadership, that was denying the Palestinians their political rights.⁸⁷

Despite strong opposition from many Arab states, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the Palestinian Authority against this US initiative, Qatar welcomed the initiative and began to build on it. Meanwhile, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem stated during his participation on the first day of the Dead Sea Forum that:

⁸²(Al Raya: 12-11-2004:1)

⁸³(Al Raya: 12-11-2004: 1)

⁸⁴(Al Raya: 12-11-2004:1)

⁸⁵(Al Raya: 12-11-2004:1)

⁸⁶(Al Raya: 12-11-2004:1)

⁸⁷(Al Raya: 18-2-2002:1)

Change in the Arab World has become inevitable and an urgent requirement that must stem from the internal needs of societies... We have to exercise more transparency and tell the truth to our people. The steps for qualitative change taken by the Emir Hamad Bin Khalifa since rising to the helm of power in 1995, and which were within the framework of his policy of openness, aim to consolidate the democratic alternative. This became clear through the abolition of censorship; the abolition of the Ministry of Information; recognizing the freedom of the press; conducting the elections for the Municipal Council; recognizing women's suffrage and the preparation of the permanent constitution and the referendum on it, as it is a prelude to conducting the first parliamentary elections, which is an unprecedented move... The steps for change also included the education system, through the modernization of curriculums to be compatible with international changes in this area.⁸⁸

In what was seen as a new Qatari vision that developed over the previous year after the Middle East reform initiative announced by Colin Powell, and in what seemed a quick response to the policies of US President George W. Bush's administration to review the sources of tensions in the region and to review the methodology for resolution, Qatar announced the adoption of a new strategy. It was announced by Foreign Minister Hamad Bin Jassem in his address before the first session of the Doha International Forum, under the title of international political developments and regional challenges. Jassem explained the approaches adopted by Qatar, and the priorities dictated by these approaches:

We cannot achieve developmental goals in a satisfactory manner in isolation from political circumstances, and the surrounding strategic and security conditions. The challenges facing the region in the form of the ongoing conflicts and regional crises continue to represent a source of instability, and obstruct democratization efforts and derail any effective

⁸⁸ (Al Raya : 22-6-2003)

public participation in the political process and the march for democratization. This entails weak economic performance, cultural and scientific backwardness, and generates sentiments of public frustration and rage, in addition to providing an environment conducive to the emergence of radicalism, violence, and terrorism. The identification of these challenges and risks is the first step towards a serious and effective solution, which will be followed by actions to reverse the consequences of these risks and the negative repercussions thereof, through a process of development and modernization... The most important and most threatening conflict in the region is the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁸⁹

For his part, US Envoy Mark Grossman sought to dissipate fears that Washington was seeking to impose democratic reforms on Arab and Islamic countries, saying “The best ideas on change are expected to stem from within the region.”⁹⁰

Following talks with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher, the US Deputy Secretary of State for Political Affairs said reform must not wait for the reaching of a settlement by the Palestinians and the Israelis. Grossman added that “Reform efforts in Arab states must not wait for comprehensive peace.”⁹¹ There seemed to be a US-Qatari understanding with regard to the US Middle East Reform Initiative, proposed by the US between late 2002 and early 2004. In response to questions on the US initiative, which was called the “Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative”, Qatar’s Foreign Minister Hamad Bin Jassem said:

We want to know about this initiative and whether it will contribute in changing the situation in the Middle East with regard to public participation and improving the economy...This would be good, and we must hold discussions with those proposing the initiative and develop this initiative if

⁸⁹(Al Raya: 16-2-2004:1)

⁹⁰ (Al Raya: 3-3-2004: 1,3)

⁹¹(Al Raya: 3-3-2004: 1,3)

it is in the interest of our region... We do not want to continue to reject; we do not have an alternative solution... Naturally, each state will do what it can in accordance with its internal circumstances... However, I am against any unjustified rejection before we know the content of the US or the European initiative. We must first know the details, and if such details are good, we will work with them on how to further and develop this work.⁹²

Responding to questions about beginning the reform without waiting to raise the issue of the Middle East Peace Process, the Foreign Minister said, “Why wait for the peace process to start reforms? If the peace process took another twenty years, then should Arabs wait for all this time to begin the reform process? Are we using the peace process as an excuse? We must begin the reform, then make demands.”⁹³

Bin Jassem then began to covertly criticize Arab states that rejected the US initiative, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt:

We must admit that the Arab prejudice against the US initiative reflects a state of political bankruptcy. There is no harm in benefiting from the positive aspects of the initiative.

The Foreign Minister pointed to the core issue by saying:

We cannot reject something we are not acquainted with yet, and which we did not discuss. We must identify the pros and cons. There is no reason to reject the initiative if it would help with reform efforts. ...What is important is to deal with the ideas being proposed, and not to preoccupy ourselves with the origin of these ideas. If we can combine the positive aspects of the US and Arab initiatives, then why must we adopt a negative stance under the pretext of rejecting foreign intervention? Arabs have

⁹² (Al Raya: 3-4-2004:1)

⁹³ (Al Raya: 3-4-2004:1)

continued to reject this for the past fifty years and this has not led to any positive results.⁹⁴

Speaking before the Fourth Doha Forum for Democracy and Free Trade, the Qatari Foreign Minister spoke of the relationship between democratic reform and resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict:

There is an approach that has been prevalent in our region for many years now, to excessively seek excuses in what others do to justify neglecting reforms and to offer justifications for the failure to join the march for advancement. Some blame the Ottoman dominance, while others blame Western colonialism and its consequences for our current status, or say that reform has to wait until a peaceful resolution to the conflict with Israel is reached, especially since Qatar has made significant advances during the last few years on the road to promote public participation in the political and reform process, which materialized last April in the referendum on the permanent constitution. The articles of this constitution act as safeguards to rights and freedom, and build a state of institutions and promote the rule of law. The articles of this constitution pave the way for parliamentary elections in the near future, where citizens will vote to form the Consultative Council, which will greatly improve the participation of the public in the political process.⁹⁵

Before the closing session of the Fourth Forum of Free Trade and Democracy, the Foreign Minister addressed the forum on behalf of the Emir of Qatar, about the Qatari vision of the relationship between reform, democracy, and making peace in the Middle East:

We must state that the roots of anger in our region not only stem from the Palestinian cause but go even further and are due to problems we have that

⁹⁴ (Al Raya: 4-3-2004: 1, 3)

⁹⁵ (Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 5-4-2004)

are not related to the outside. We let those problems accumulate without attempting to find remedies... We plan general elections in the near future to establish the Consultative Council, which is an elected parliament in accordance with the permanent constitution, which grants equal rights to women, freedom of expression and freedom of the press, religious beliefs, assembly and education and other essential civic rights...A trend has been growing in our region for many years now based on a rationale to blame the actions of others to justify neglecting reforms. Some blame the Ottoman dominance, while others blame Western colonialism and its consequences for our current status, or say that reform has to wait until a peaceful resolution to the conflict with Israel is reached.⁹⁶

Addressing the US Islamic World Forum held in Doha, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, commented on Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, saying:

The withdrawal from Gaza under the pretext that Gaza is of no use to Israel aims at starting Palestinian infighting... I doubt the ability of Arab states to offer anything to the Palestinians or to control them, because the Palestinians have no future prospects nor logic...What is happening in the Arab states now is an obsession with democracy. The Palestinians do not need the Arab role as much as they need to depend on themselves.⁹⁷

At this point, it seems that Qatar realized that there were limits to the role it could play, particularly after the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, and that it was better for Qatar to stop making new proposals and let things proceed without intervention between the Palestinians and Israel and in the presence of an American role.

This was the beginning of a new and major change in the Qatari role. After a few months, the Doha Declaration was announced. Among other things, Qatar called on regimes in

⁹⁶ (Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 5-4-2004)

⁹⁷ (Al Raya: 11-4-2004: 6-7)

Arab states that had not drafted constitutions or political laws to immediately commence creating these constitutions or laws. Qatar called on regimes of states that have constitutions to reform or amend these constitutions so that monarchies would be changed into constitutional monarchies to cause a separation between hereditary rule and the executive authority. The Doha Declaration also called on regimes in states with republic political systems to amend the constitutional articles pertaining to the selection of the president to stipulate direct competitive elections, to curtail the authorities of the president, and to introduce constitutional articles that expressly stipulate mechanisms for supervising and holding presidents accountable and to regulate the withdrawal of confidence.

In correspondence with the new Qatari proposals with regard to the Arab reform initiative, and during the opening session of the Democracy and Reform Conference, the Emir of Qatar, Hamad Bin Khalifa, said:

It is no longer acceptable to take either the Arab-Israeli conflict or waiting for peace with Israel as an excuse to justify neglecting reforms, because the Arab-Israeli conflict or peace with Israel may take a long time to achieve, especially given that the sense of public resentment, rage, and frustration are not driven by the Palestinian cause alone. There are other, deep internal sources, having to do with the core issues of political and economic performance in the region...It is no longer logical or tenable to make excuses before the whole world that Arab states are maintaining the world's interests in the region, and that if reforms were to take off, then this would destabilize the region. The world has realized over the course of the past few years that the risk of failing to carry out reforms far outweighs the risk associated with reforms.⁹⁸

⁹⁸(Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani: 3-4-2004)

The text of the Doha Declaration is stated hereunder.⁹⁹ The Doha Declaration was announced during a non-governmental press conference. However, this conference would not have been held without the approval and blessing of the Government of the State of Qatar. The name of the attendees of the Reform and Democracy Conference, and the press conference that followed, reveal the extent of the close relationship of the attendees with those in official government circles in Qatar. The attendees were: the Director of the Gulf Centre for Studies, Qatar University, Professor Hassan Al Ansary; Professor Saadeldin Ibrahim; and Director of the Office of the Emir of Qatar for Follow up Affairs, Dr Saad Al Rumaihi. The text of the final declaration suggests a political orientation mainly towards states that are outside the Gulf bloc. Nearly one hundred thinkers and politicians from various Arab countries and Arab migrants abroad deliberated over the obstacles to political progress in Arab states, and issued the following declaration to Arab leaders and people:

Democratic change has become a non-negotiable choice which cannot be postponed. It has become unacceptable to confiscate the political and civic rights of the Arab people, which under diverse pretexts have been delayed at a time when most of the peoples of the world, including a number of Islamic countries, have undergone important democratic changes. Experiences throughout the world in recent decades have proven that politically free multi-party systems inclusive of political freedom are not the sole monopoly of any given culture or civilization. Hence any excuses to resist or delay democratic change in our Arab countries are but poor excuses.¹⁰⁰

The history of some of the Arab countries during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century proves the possibility of applying democratic

⁹⁹ Appendix No. 20

¹⁰⁰ (Al Raya: 5-6-2004: 1-13)

practices quite successfully whenever the opportunity arises, notwithstanding the varying economic and cultural differences within these countries.

Hiding behind the necessity to resolve the Palestinian question before implementing political reform is obstructive and unacceptable. Historical experiences have proven beyond doubt that liberation movements throughout the world, and democratic reform movements that grant people their freedom of expression, are the best way to liberate the land and the nation. Autocratic regimes are unable or unwilling to deal seriously with outside threats and hegemonic designs. There is ample evidence that these same regimes are sometimes ready to surrender their sovereignty to ensure their own survival. Democratic practice hence becomes the primary rule for peace between nations, and an a priori condition for fulfilling true and real development. Democracies generally prefer peace and avoid aggression. Rarely do democratic countries go to war with one another. From this perspective, we observe that regimes that tyrannized their own people and ventured into irresponsible military forays ultimately led to foreign occupation of their country.¹⁰¹

This declaration seemed to be more than merely an initiative launched by a group of intellectuals. Rather, it was a preparation for something that was acquiring increasing input in the Middle East, and an approach supported and sponsored by the state. This trend expressed itself later in the support of the Arab Spring, and perhaps contributed to some of these uprisings at a time when the Arab Gulf states had their reservations and concerns about these uprisings.

In the same context, First Deputy to the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hamad Bin Jassem, at the Conference of Arab World Reforms and the Challenges Faced by the EU Polices in Helsinki said (in a speech delivered on his behalf by Nasser Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Qatar's Ambassador to the UK):

¹⁰¹ (Al Raya 5-6-2004: 1-13)

Reform is not an option but a law, considering it is a basic principle dictated by the logic of human life... Qatar has adopted reforms based on this approach since His Highness Hamad Bin Khalifa rose to the helm of power in 1995.¹⁰²

Hamad Bin Jassem said that the adoption by Qatar of reforms based on democratization was due to Qatar's belief that reform is the ideal way to achieve peace, security, justice, and all-inclusive development. This seems to demonstrate Qatari agreement with the new US vision of the Middle East dilemma, to the effect that the Arab-Israeli conflict will not be resolved except through democratization in Arab states.¹⁰³

No changes in the Qatari approach to dealing with the peace process occurred throughout 2005. In March 2005, Doha hosted a conference attended by various Islamic movements, with the majority of these movements representing the Muslim Brotherhood movement. This conference was entitled the Founding Conference for the International Anti-Aggression Campaign and aimed at discussing alternatives to responding to the aggression against the Islamic world, using peaceful and legal means.¹⁰⁴

In Geneva, the State of Qatar called for the intervention of the international community and the UN Human Rights Commission to enforce international legitimacy resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict, and to pressure Israel into withdrawing from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and Shebaa farms.

Qatar called for the recognition of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their land and property in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution No. 194, and the recognition of all national, political, and economic Palestinian rights, including the right to establish an independent Palestinian state of all the national Palestinian territories with Jerusalem as the capital.

¹⁰² (Al Raya: 17-9-2004: 1, 7)

¹⁰³ (Al Raya: 17-9-2004: 1)

¹⁰⁴ (Al Raya: 24-2-2005:1)

Qatar expressed deep concerns over the ongoing Israeli violations in the Arab occupied territories, pointing out that the construction of settlements was still ongoing and at an even more accelerated pace, in addition to the destruction of farmland, the demolishing of houses, banishment, forced deportation, and assault on educational and health facilities. This was during a statement delivered by Jassem Abdulaziz Al-buenain, the Minister in Charge of Qatar's Permanent Delegation in Geneva, to the 61st round of the UN Human Rights Commission on Article 8 of the agenda on human rights violations in Arab territories, including Palestine.

Al-buenain said that Qatar had always sought to push the peace process forward through the negotiations path, by encouraging the two sides to forge ahead with these negotiations despite all emergent obstacles. He called on Israel to take more practical steps to prove its good intentions, to accept the Land for Peace principle, and to halt the construction of the Separation Barrier and all settlements in Arab territories occupied since 1967.

During his visit to the US, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, called on Arab states to send a message to Israel to confirm that all problems with Israel could be resolved if Israel returned the Arab occupied territories and recognized Palestinian rights. Jassem called on Arabs to abandon double standards when dealing with Israel, and warned against misinforming the Arab people, especially after the past practices of many Arab governments had been exposed, which led to further Arab deterioration and weakness.¹⁰⁵

Jassem reiterated the fact that Israel had a commercial representation office in Qatar, stating that:

While Qatar adopted a public stance in this regard[relation with Israel], many other Arab and Islamic nations had secret contacts with Israel, while declaring the contrary before their people and international public opinion to claim political heroism...Israel's intransigence and escalations since the Al Aqsa Intifada, which began in September 2000, have derailed the peace

¹⁰⁵ (Al Raya: 24-9-2005: 7-8)

process. Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza was a marked development that breathed some hope into the peace process. But this step is not the end of the line and must be followed by other steps to restore Palestinian rights, leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. This requires withdrawal from the West Bank, the dismantling of settlements there, the removal of the Separation Barrier, and resolving the refugee crisis in accordance with UN resolutions. All this requires serious dialogue between the Palestinians and Israel under Arab and international sponsorship.¹⁰⁶

10.9 Conclusion

This chapter contains the data analysis for a number of issues related to the formation of Qatar's foreign policy with respect to the Middle East peace process from 2000 to 2005.

Data analysis of the documents used throughout this chapter, such as those from the Prince of Qatar, ministers, and diplomats, and officials' statements and UN documents, revealed that Qatar chose to adopt a policy based on defending and supporting Arab and Palestinian rights as unanimously expressed by all Qatari diplomats and that are: Israeli withdrawal from Arab occupied territories, the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, stopping the Israeli settlement activities, and dismantling the settlements constructed on occupied Arab territories.

Qatar unequivocally expressed its stance with respect to the Middle East peace process by declaring that there would be no solution to the Middle East conflict except thorough the full withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories in Palestine, the Golan Heights, and Lebanon, and that Israel must choose between the possibility of peaceful coexistence in the region and the continuation of this conflict for decades and generations to come with all the tragedies such a continuation would entail.

¹⁰⁶ (Al Raya: 24-9-2005: 7-8)

On the other hand, Qatar insisted on encouraging the Israelis to move forward with the peace process by maintaining trade and diplomatic ties with Israel despite the pressures from several Arab states and, therefore, Qatar was wishing to be able to play the role of peacemaker.

Despite encouraging the Israelis towards peace, Qatar never stopped using all the diplomatic and economic tools at its disposal, despite the limitations on such tools, to pressure Israel into stopping its extremist policies with respect to Arab rights in general, and Palestinian rights in particular. Qatar called on the international community in general, and the US in particular, to guarantee Palestinian rights and to attempt to change the direction of Israeli policies towards the occupied territories and the Palestinians living under occupation, and to stop what Qatar described as the “policies of killings and destruction being exercised against the Palestinians.”

Qatar also warned of the consequences of undermining the safety and security of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat while under Israeli siege, and called on the US to exert efforts to guarantee the safety of Arafat and lift the siege imposed on the Palestinian presidential headquarters.

After the collapse of the peace process and the announcement of a new US initiative to revive the Middle East peace process, which the US called the Roadmap, and due to the complex guarantees Israel demanded from the US to execute this initiative, Qatar accused Israel of attempting to empty the initiative of its content and transforming the initiative into a mere security agreement through the guarantees requested. Qatar held Israel liable for sabotaging the Roadmap initiative. Qatar also described the assassination by Israel of Palestinian leader Ahmed Yassin as an Israeli attempt to drag the region into a new spiral of violence and to eliminate any chances of achieving peace.

With regard to terrorism and national liberation movements, Qatar exerted efforts to define terrorism and to distinguish between terrorism and movements of armed struggle. Qatar, in its capacity as the Chairman of the 9th Islamic Summit Conference, called for the

condemnation of all forms of terrorism, including state sponsored terrorism. In doing so, Qatar was referring to the Israeli polices in the occupied Arab territories against Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority, which Qatar described as state-sponsored terrorism.

The analysis of the documents set forth in the introduction of this chapter also revealed that Qatar adopted the US political reform initiative, known as the Colin Powell Initiative, despite opposition from a large number of Arab states. Qatar also adopted the US approach based on the belief that there was hope in achieving progress in the peace process if Arab states adopted the political reform initiative. Furthermore, Qatar not only settled for adopting the US political reform initiative, but also launched its own initiative in 2005, known as the Doha Declaration, which called on Arab states to introduce significant changes in ruling regimes for the purpose of democratization. Qatar insisted that the Arab-Israeli conflict was no excuse for reluctance in the reform process. This declaration was negatively received by many Arab states, and strained Qatar's relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Qatar introduced major changes to the priorities of its foreign policy objectives, and introduced the promotion of democracy in the Middle East to its list of foreign policy objectives. Paradoxically, this objective was also one of the chief US foreign policy objectives for the Middle East and therefore, through the Doha Declaration, Qatar became the "loyal ally" of the United States in the region.

Qatar also stressed that no one but the Americans and the Palestinians themselves could help the Palestinians; in doing so, Qatar thus stopped the proposal of any new initiatives to push the Middle East process forwards and settled for the US role in this regard. This stance was summed up by the Qatari Foreign Minister's declaration that "We do not have a plan. Washington has the plan."

This new Qatari orientation in its foreign policy objectives represented the hallmark of the new distinctive and divergent Qatari foreign policy, not only towards the Middle East

peace process but even more towards the entire region, which led later to a deep and negative impact on the relationship between Qatar and the GCC on one side, and the relationship with the PLO and Israel on the other side.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Discussion of the Findings

11.1 Introduction

This chapter will highlight the key findings of the study revealed by the data analysis chapters and will discuss them further. These are: the prominent features of the foreign policy of both the GCC states and Qatar towards the peace process; the extent of the convergence and divergence between the GCC states, and Qatar's orientations and goals of their foreign policy towards the peace process in the Middle East; the discussions over the issue of the influence of the emergent changes in the political environment of the international order; the unprecedented increase in the influence of the new US concept of introducing democracy to the Middle East in order to provide a new horizon to settle the conflict and to achieve peace; and the secondary impacts of this new concept on the relationships between Gulf states.

The analysis of the impact of the internal and external determinants on the decision-making process for the foreign policies of the GCC states towards the peace process in the Middle East will also be discussed further. This will help to clarify the wider research context, as engaging with these dynamics offers a coherent historical framework for understanding the dynamics that influence the decision-making process for the foreign policies of GCC states in general.

11.2 The significance of internal and external determinants in shaping GCC foreign policy

The discussion presented in Chapters Four and Five showed the significance of the internal and external determinant factors structuring the foreign policy of the GCC and GCC member states. It must be noted that the GCC came together as a bloc in 1981, after the 1979 revolution in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the same year, and the

outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq in 1980, all of which created shared security challenges for the Gulf. The GCC's founding first charter mainly focused on economic and cultural cooperation, but in 1984 it moved to set up a joint defence force, the Island Shield armed force. As such, defending the security of the GCC member states had always represented a major dilemma, which left members with no option but to seek the highest levels of coordination, boosting their joint defence capabilities in the face of what they perceive as serious threats, such as Iraq, Iran, and the consequences of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The study found that, in contrast to the findings of James Bill (1996),¹ who did not consider Israel as one of the threats to the Gulf region, the concerns of GCC member states were obvious when the sources of threat to their security shifted from the classic source, namely Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict, to relatively newer ones, that is Iraq and Iran. In this factor of the security equation in the Gulf, this study agreed with Bill's perception of the new source of threat of this partial agreement, namely, that these new threats do not diminish the seriousness of Israel as one of the possible threats to GCC security. The study found that GCC member states were working towards adopting a unified foreign policy regarding these two emerging security threats. This in turn caused a convergence of GCC member states with US foreign policy, more than at any time in the past. Therefore, the GCC and the member states played the role of America's loyal ally regarding these two threats, while, at other times, playing the role of the independent ally in some issues pertaining to the peace process in the Middle East.

This study is in agreement with Hinnebusch's (2003) argument about the strength of the influence of public opinion. He noticed that "public opinion in the Middle East normally plays little in the way of a direct role in foreign policy formulation."² The influence of public opinion in the GCC regarding foreign policy decision-making with respect to the Middle East peace process was strong, albeit temporary. The Palestinian Intifada was one

¹James Bill, in Jamal Sanad Al Sewedy (ed.), *Iran and the Gulf: Searching for Stability*, (Abu Dhabi: Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, 1996).

²Raymond Hinnebusch, *The international politics of the Middle East*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003),p.94.

of the clear examples: public opinion that the Intifada generated throughout the GCC countries, including Qatar, was neither extended nor strong enough to make permanent changes in the foreign policy stances of Qatar and the GCC.

It was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait that connected internal and external determinants, which in turn affected the foreign policies of the GCC and GCC member states, particularly with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East peace process. This had a dual effect, both internal and external. The internal effect manifested in the negative impact on the interest in the Palestinian cause in the GCC and GCC member states, when the PLO took a position in support of Iraq in 1990. However, this negative impact was short-lived and the GCC member states resumed normal relations with the PLO and continued to support the Palestinian cause and Arab rights.

As a result, and given that the military position of the GCC states was fragile at that time, GCC member states, both individually and collectively, sought defence coordination with the world's superpowers through treaties. These treaties required the existence of foreign military bases, especially US military bases, on GCC soil. On one hand, the presence of a US military base in the GCC region created tension in relations among GCC member states and other Arab states. On the other hand, Iran was watching these treaties carefully. These tensions manifested in different forms across the peninsula, and particularly with states such as Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. On the other bank of the Gulf, the feelings of discomfort were prevailing, with repeated Iranian emphasis on the fact that the security of the Gulf was strictly a matter for the Gulf countries. This reflects Iran's rejection of any role that any country from outside the region might play in shaping the security of the region.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and the ensuing events, were among the external determinants that affected GCC foreign policy with respect to the peace process. Due to the US pressures to link terrorism and the right to armed struggle against occupation, GCC member states were forced to make efforts to redefine the concept of

terrorism, and to differentiate between terrorism and a legitimate struggle against occupation. To an extent, the US pressures on GCC countries triggered them to converge their foreign policy with respect to the Middle East peace process.

As Smith and Light (2001),³ and Cook (2008)⁴ suggest, the US began to reformulate its new foreign policy towards the Middle East, revolving around the conception that the lack of democracy constituted the real threat for its interests in the Middle East. The lack of democracy causes a rise in the sentiments of injustice among the people, which in turn generates rage, leading to acts of violence that are directed against either Arab regimes or US interests. This conception entailed a US intervention in some form to introduce democracy to the political regimes of the Middle East. Thus, the US launched a number of initiatives to introduce democracy as a wise and effective system of ruling in Arab political regimes. Among these initiatives was the 'New Middle East Initiative', which was followed by the 'Middle East Partnership Initiative'. Both initiatives were received with a great deal of scepticism on the part of a majority of GCC member states. They expressed a view to the effect that democracy cannot be imported, but must be grown from within each state in a manner that takes into account the religious and civic characteristics of each state.

Unlike other Gulf states, Qatar almost unconditionally supported the US initiatives, and even introduced its own democratization initiative, the Doha Declaration of 2005. Despite the fact that it was introduced after the timeframe of this study, it is important to highlight that Qatar supplied the financial and technical resources to support this initiative, and created the Arab Democracy Foundation with the mandate of executing the Qatari initiative (2007).

³Karen E. Smith and Margot, Light, *Ethics and Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.124-137.

⁴Steven Cook, in Markus Kaim, *Great Powers and Regional Order: The United States and the Persian Gulf*, (Hampshire. England: Ashgate, 2008), p.71.

Comparing the results of the previous studies of Tessler, Smith and Light, and Cook, and studying and analysing the statements of Qatari officials in addition to the efforts made by Qatar, the study found that the main reason for inter-GCC differences was not only Qatar's insistence on normalizing trade ties with Israel, but also the differences in the foreign policy objectives of the GCC and of its member states with respect to the peace process. For the US, in addition to defending its own interests in the Middle East, its objective was to contain the Arab-Israeli conflict. With the conviction that "democracies do not fight other democracies" and, therefore, the belief that Arab democratic states will not go to war with Israel, the US began to pressure Arab states to adopt more democratic systems of governance.

While the Qatari point of view may, to an extent, have coincided with the US, most of the Arab states differ significantly. Rather than a conflict between two politically different systems (democratic versus authoritarian), the conflict had objective reasons stemming from the Israeli violations and unjust treatment of Palestinians, as well as its occupation of Arab territories.

With regard to the Middle East peace process, the foreign policies of the GCC and its member states were generally supportive of the idea of holding an international peace conference. The GCC member states believed that peace is a strategic and indispensable alternative, and that wars only lead to other wars, and, therefore, a vicious cycle of violence. In addition, they believed that there was a strong need for a reasonable approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict, one that was based on respecting the rights of all the people of the region to live in peace within safe and internationally recognized boundaries for all, and that Israel's security would never be achieved through violence or the building of illegal settlements. The view of the GCC and GCC member states was that Arabs in general, and Palestinians in particular, have immutable rights and that peace will never be achieved except through the Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967, and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The study found that the GCC and GCC member states supported all the US initiatives to achieve peace in the Middle East, while at the same time always protesting against the United States' unconditional and unlimited diplomatic support of Israel. Moreover, they perceived this support as encouraging Israeli intransigence, while not achieving peace for the parties of the conflict in the long run. The GCC and its member states had always called on the US to adopt a more impartial attitude with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict. This demand was reflected in the role played by the GCC member states, specifically, the role of the independent ally that defends the safety and integrity of its region and the rights of Arabs in the face of the occupier – Israel.

The GCC and its member states have also supported the initiatives proposed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, such as the Arab Peace Initiative in Beirut in 2002, which was upheld as part of the Roadmap, and the King Abdullah Initiative in 2004. Despite the simplicity and soundness of its logic, which required the full Israeli withdrawal in return for full peace and normalization of relationships, Israel sought to remove it from the Roadmap. The GCC member states continued to support all Arab rights and condemn Israel's extremist policies during the time frame of this study.

11.3 The foreign policy of Qatar and the internal/external determinants

In the third part of the study, which focuses on examining Qatar's internal and external determinants, the study concludes that Qatar tackled such determinants using a different approach. Qatar adopted an approach closer to, and more convergent with, the general US foreign policy approach, as well as its objectives for the region.

In the beginning of its involvement with the Arab-Israeli conflict, Qatar played a limited, insignificant role. This role was centred on the defence of Arab rights in general, and Palestinian rights in particular, the demands for the withdrawal from Arab occupied territories, and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. This was attested during Qatar's independence address, which stated:

Qatar believes in Arab brotherhood and strives to bolster ties of consolidation with all Arab states...Qatar is exerting all efforts to support the joint efforts to achieve Arab unity and to support the fight for common Arab causes, most importantly the occupied Palestinian territories... Qatar absolutely supports the right of the Palestinian people to liberate their lands from occupation and absolutely supports Arab confrontation states in their struggle to liberate their territories.⁵

Furthermore, Article No.5 Clause C of the Basic Charter for the State of Qatar, issued in 1972, stipulates the same goals and meanings mentioned above.⁶ Qatar clearly and unequivocally expressed its support for these rights on all official occasions.

Moreover, Qatar repeatedly condemned Israeli policies in the occupied territories, and called the international community to take its responsibility in maintaining international peace and security by pressuring Israel into abandoning its intransigent policies regarding Arab rights. In this respect, Qatar's foreign policy was generally in line with the political stance of the majority of GCC member states. However, under the leadership of Qatar's "new" Emir at that time, Hamad Bin Khalifa, the study found that Qatar began to adopt a more independent foreign policy position, which parted from the converged policies of the GCC and some of the GCC member states towards the Middle East peace process and became more in convergence with the US foreign policy towards the peace process. The more that Qatari foreign policy became independent of the foreign policy of the GCC countries towards the peace process, the more it became dependent on US policy, and it did not remain pragmatic, or autonomous. This finding is quite different from the finding reached by Steven Wright (2012).⁷ He described the foreign policy of Qatar as independent, pragmatic, and autonomous. However, the independent stance adopted by

⁵Yusuf Obaidan, Features of the Modern Political Organization in Qatar.(No place of publication; no publisher),p.282.

⁶ The basic charter is the equivalent of the Constitution.

⁷Steven Wright, in David Held and Kristian Ulrichsen (eds), The Transformation of the Gulf: Politics Economics and the Global Order, (London: Routledge, 2012), p.296.

the GCC was manifested in a number of ways, most broadly and comprehensively. It was seen in Qatar's insistence to normalize trade ties with Israel despite the extremist policies of the Netanyahu-led government, which were against the Arabs, the Palestinians, and the peace process in general, and despite the Arab League's recommendations to suspend any ties with Israel, to which other GCC states, such as the Sultanate of Oman, immediately agreed.

A significant finding of this study suggests that within the same context, which called for encouraging the Israelis to engage in the peace process and build bridges of confidence, while at the same time supporting the Palestinians, during the multilateral negotiations – the Arms Control Conference – Qatar's Foreign Minister declared that the indispensable rights of the Palestinian people were the cornerstone of the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the other hand, and on the sidelines of the Arms Control Conference, Qatar received Israel's Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, and Qatar's Foreign Minister declared that Qatar had decided that there should be no unannounced or secret relations with Israel, adding that the Israelis were entitled to know what they would be getting, in consideration for returning the Arab territories. Thus, Qatar decided to go further in its plan to normalize trade relations with Israel. Through a third party, the oil company Enron, Qatar reached an initial agreement to supply Israel with natural gas. This major natural gas deal, which was seen by Egypt as an unpleasant turning point in Qatar's foreign policy and an attempt by Qatar to assume the role of a major player in the Middle East peace process, was the main reason for the strained relations between Qatar and Egypt in 1997, as well as for several years afterwards, specifically when Qatar played the role of a key intermediary between Israel and Hamas during the Gaza War in 2009. In commenting on this Qatari deal, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs, said, "We welcome any attempt to help resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially the Palestinian cause. But it must be done through us."⁸ The comment of Aboul Gheit reflected two points: that Qatar was

⁸ <https://arabic.rt.com/prg/telecast/660321>

willing to play a bigger role in the peace process, and that Egypt was unhappy about this Qatari desire.

The Qatari-Enron deal clearly reflected Qatar's desire to play a bigger role, especially in the Middle East peace process, and this is what might be interpreted as the orientations and goals of Qatar's foreign policy in the Middle East in the years to follow.

Nonetheless, Qatar insisted on continuing this direct relationship, and even invited Israel to attend the Middle East and North Africa Economic Cooperation Conference, which was held in Doha in 1997. In response to this invitation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, and other Arab states decided to boycott the conference to protest about the Qatari decision, which seemed to be devoid of any national interest, as Hamad bin Jassem announced.

Unlike the study of Baskan (2016), who argues "that Qatar was the country least affected by the US response to 9/11 attack",⁹ this study found not only that reform in Qatar was an outcome of the pressure of the George W. Bush administration on the region, but that Qatar was also the country that accepted that pressure the most. There is much evidence supporting this claim: the reform steps that were taken within the Qatari political system, and the promises of general elections, took place during the George W. Bush administration, ideas of forming unions, political parties, and general election – ideas that receded and disappeared completely with time. In other words, the process of political reform in Qatar stalled after the political pressure on the region from the Bush administration ended. This, in turn, led to another significant difference in foreign policy between Qatar and the other GCC member states, something which was completely incompatible with GCC policies: Qatar's support of the US foreign policy towards the Middle East after 11 September, the launch of the US New Middle East Initiative, the MEPI, the US push for the democratization of Arab regimes, and the unconditional

⁹Birol Baskan, *Turkey and Qatar in the Tangled Geopolitics of the Middle East*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p.36.

support of the second US initiative, known as the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which drew strong criticism from many other GCC member states. Not only did Qatar support the US initiatives, but also Qatar, paradoxically, began to launch its own democratic initiatives, despite the fact that Qatar itself does not have, and does not allow the existence of, the least components needed to develop a proper democratic process, such as the right to form political parties or trade unions, or workers unions, not to mention opposition newspapers, or allowing parliament to exercise jurisdiction and oversight of legislation.

In 2005, Qatar called for a conference for fostering the democratic environment in the Middle East. The conference ended with the Doha Declaration, which called on Arab republic states to adopt a democratic system of rule, allow the launch of political parties, recognize the freedom of the press, and distance military institutions from politics. Moreover, Qatar called on monarchical Arab states to shift to constitutional monarchies. In 2007, Qatar launched the Arab Democracy Foundation, whose main objective was to spread and support democratic values. The wife of Qatar's former Emir still chairs this foundation.

This simply meant that Qatar added a new objective to its foreign policy objectives: to spread and support democratic values in the Middle East, one of the main US Middle East foreign policy objectives. Qatar therefore reasserted its role as peacemaker by supporting the proposition that democracy is the way to achieve peace, and by supporting the proposition that Israel is a democratic state and that democracies do not wage wars with other democracies. Qatar also reasserted its role as the loyal ally of the US in the Middle East, or for some other hidden agenda that has yet to appear.

In summary, the foreign policies of GCC member states including Qatar, towards the Middle East peace process were convergent until the Madrid Conference. It was after that conference that foreign policy differences among GCC member states began to surface. Such differences were related to the question of how to deal with Israel. For the reasons

discussed above, Qatar believed that it had to adopt a fixed approach based on the premises of continuing the normalization of ties with Israel, despite all the challenges faced by the peace process and despite all the actual Israeli anti-peace process politics, which disturbed Qatar and the other Arab states. As an expression of its pragmatic politics and self-interested choices, Qatar decided to continue with the normalization of ties with Israel, acting in the process as a role model for the strategic peace option that they believed should be adopted by all Arabs.

11.4 The implications of the post-2005 political developments on GCC and Qatari foreign policy regarding the Middle East peace process.

It was found appropriate to raise the issue of why the State of Qatar had entered firmly into the course of the war on Gaza in 2009, because the answer may provide an acceptable and reasonable basis to understand Qatar's foreign policy towards the Arab Spring later on.

As discussed in the previous chapters of data analysis, Qatar's policy towards the Palestine/Israeli conflict is based around efforts to establish itself as a mediator on the international stage. Qatar also emphasizes humanitarian concerns in its approach to Palestine. Its aid policy focuses on the infrastructure of Gaza, and building Palestinian infrastructure can be taken to be the expression of a desire to exert psychological pressure on Israel. In other words, building infrastructure on the ground conveys the message that Palestine and Palestinians are here to stay. As the current study demonstrates, Qatar's foreign policy has shown significant divergence from other GCC foreign policy. It must be noted that the model adopted in the GCC framework, based around flexibility and compromise, permits it to respond to threats without unanimous consensus.

In the 1990s, Qatar notably allowed Israel to open a trade office in Doha. Officials suggested that this was an attempt to help foster the peace process, as per the Oslo Agreement. It claimed that Israel was sceptical of a prospective Arab peace agreement;

hence the move was a goodwill gesture to fend off such concerns and give Israel incentives to follow through on the peace process. However, Rabin's assassination put an end to the effort. After 2005 (and therefore after the period which is the main focus of the present study), Qatar engaged in a broader foreign policy with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process. During the war on Gaza in December 2009 and until January 2010, an Arab Economic Summit was scheduled in Kuwait City. On the sidelines of the summit, Arab leaders decided to deliberate on the issue of this war, and how to support Gaza and fend off the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian population. Qatar, which was to chair the next Arab League round, invited all Arab states to an emergency summit meeting in Doha exclusively to discuss this issue. Qatar's view was that an important issue such as the Israeli offensive against the Gaza Strip could not be discussed on the sidelines of an economic conference, and that this issue must be at the heart of a dedicated summit meeting. This represented another episode of the Qatari-Egyptian discord with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Egypt were not comfortable, as Qatar appeared to be ambitious to grab a bigger role. Egypt derailed the emergency summit meeting proposed by Qatar and only 13 Arab states out of 22 members of the Arab League attended this meeting. This figure did not meet the required number of attendees. At that time, Egypt's Foreign Minister, Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, declared that "Yes, we exerted efforts to foil the Doha summit, and we succeeded."¹⁰ Perhaps the statement of Qatar's Foreign Minister, Hamad Bin Jassem, during an interview with Al Jazeera, best summarizes and justifies Egypt's attitude with respect to some of Qatar's positions on the Palestinian cause: "We know that Egypt is like the doctor who only has one patient, which is the Palestinian cause, and this doctor does not want us to take this patient from him."¹¹ As a matter of fact, one way or the other, Qatar was seeking to lure that patient to the Doha clinic, to use Jassem's metaphor. The contentious issue between Qatar and other GCC member states was not the normalization

¹⁰<http://www.egypt.com/egypt-today/2009/january/28/87451>

¹¹Hamed Ben Jassem, interview with al Jazeera, 2004.

of ties with Israel, but rather mainly its adoption and support of the US initiative calling for the democratization of the GCC and the Middle East region.

The study concludes by echoing the view of some US officials, analysts, and thinkers that democratization in the GCC region and the Middle East will pose risks to US interests in this region. To minimize these risks, it was preferable that the shift towards democratization came from within the Arab states. These were the same concerns voiced by other GCC member states, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the late King Abdullah, and the UAE, who were critical of the Qatari adoption of the US initiative, the Qatari Doha Declaration, and the ensuing Qatari actions, such as the creation of the Arab Democracy Foundation, which aims at spreading the principles of democracy, and supports institutional and individual pro-democracy initiatives. It is true that the Arab Democracy Foundation does not engage in the GCC region; nevertheless, other GCC member states have concerns that the work of this foundation may extend to include the GCC region.

As initially discussed, the US believes that it has a direct interest in causing such a shift towards democracy, and for the reasons discussed in the literature review, the GCC member states, and particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, continued to remain sceptical of the democratization initiatives that were wholeheartedly supported by Qatar. These concerns grew with time, particularly with the onset of the Arab Spring. While Qatar supported the uprising financially, diplomatically, and through the media, other GCC member states watched the unfolding events with great concern and distrust. The concerns of Saudi and the UAE continued to grow over Qatari backing of Arab Spring revolutions and calls for democracy, until these concerns climaxed in the termination of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain on one side and Qatar on the other side. This happened when Qatar supported Islamist President Mohamed Morsi's regime in Egypt, and the Muslim Brotherhood used its media to pour vitriolic attacks on the new regime in Egypt. The pressures stemming from concerns over joint

GCC region security, the rise of ISIL, the so-called Islamic State challenge to the religio-political establishments in the Gulf states, and the increasing Iranian influence in Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen left GCC member states with no option but to directly or indirectly interfere, even militarily, and to eventually restore diplomatic relations with Qatar.

11.5 Conclusion

This chapter has summarized the central research findings, and offered a critical reflection on the significance and the wider implications of the results for the GCC foreign policy regarding the Middle East conflict. An attempt has been made to further contextualize the study findings within the wider framework of the post-2005 political developments in the region and the wider world.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Conclusions of the Study

12. Main conclusions of the study

The central objective of this study has been to investigate the foreign policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its member states with special reference to the Qatari foreign policy towards the peace process in the Middle East from 1991 to 2005. It has been also within the core interest of this study to explore the range of divergence or convergence between the two foreign policies, and to engage with the broad rationale informing these policy positions.

The study has raised three main questions, which revolve around its main objective. First, what were the main determinants, internal and external, facing the GCC states while formulating their foreign policies towards the Middle East peace process, particularly between 1991 and 2005? Second, what was the overall agreed foreign policy of the GCC states towards the Middle East peace process during the same period? Third, to what extent was Qatari foreign policy convergent with, or divergent from, the foreign policy of the GCC regarding the peace process between 1991 and 2005?

The study adopted an overall qualitative research methodology to investigate its central questions. The research design of the study consisted of diverse data collection tools and analysis procedures, and made use of archival document analysis strategies. Data was collected from five types of primary sources, mainly the closing statements of the GCC summits, ministerial meeting statements, United Nations documents, the General Assembly leaders' and diplomats' speeches, and the Security Council minutes of meetings. It also made use of statements by Qatari officials on different levels, extracted from a semi-governmental Qatari newspaper, *Al Raya*, and the relevant speeches made by the Emir of Qatar.

Based on the analysis of the related official documents, covering the historical period between 1991 and 2005, presented throughout the chapters of data analysis, the study concluded that there were notable differences between the foreign policy of the GCC and the foreign policy of Qatar towards the peace process on two levels: the perception and the application. While the foreign policies of the GCC and the member states have linked the progress of the peace process with the normalization of economic and diplomatic relations with Israel, Qatar has worked to normalize its relations with Israel independently, regardless of the extent of progress made in the peace process itself.

In many ways, Qatari policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict in general, and the Israel-Palestine conflict in particular, has also reflected Qatar's desire to establish itself as a significant mediator on the regional and international stage. Qatar considered that the normalization of its relations with Israel provided economic and diplomatic incentives, and was not an issue subject to political or diplomatic manoeuvrings; rather it was a genuine foreign policy orientation of Qatar to motivate Israel to move forward in the peace process. It is important to highlight that the incentives Qatar offered Israel during the period covered by the research, do not appear to have succeeded at any time in changing Israel's political attitude towards the peace process. It seemed that the GCC countries were able to withstand this difference and to contain its effects on the cooperation and relations between the member states of the Council.

The study revealed that this foreign policy divergence, which produced serious effects on the entire inter-GCC relations and threatened relations among the member states, was related to Qatar's adaptation of US administration initiatives to introduce democracy to the Middle East as part of the plan to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. The study showed that Qatar had endorsed this initiative without consultation and agreement with other GCC countries. Therefore, the foreign policy of Qatar related to this issue produced an important and serious impact on the Arab region in general, and the Gulf region in particular. The impact was manifested in the rising tension in relations between Qatar on

the one hand, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the Kingdom of Bahrain on the other, which ended with the severance in diplomatic relations.

Like any research, this study had a particular focus and therefore is naturally subject to certain limitations. As a result, a number of relevant questions regarding the GCC and Qatari foreign policy need further investigation. Further research on the following central topics and issues is recommended.

It would be relevant to explore the motivations and dynamics forming Qatari foreign policy regarding the peace process and to critically assess the degree to which such a foreign policy actually serves national interest. In this regard, Qatar's initiative on the democratization of Arab states in 2004/2005, including the allocation of significant financial, technical, and human resources, and the creation of the Arab Democracy Foundation, to actualize this policy goal need to be rigorously researched.

It would also be relevant to consider the political consequences of the crisis that hit the GCC in 2013, which climaxed in the withdrawal of the ambassadors of four of the GCC members for a number of reasons, and Qatar's support of some groups in the so-called pro-democracy movement, particularly in Syria, which these states considered to be a misuse of Qatari media platforms, as well as the accusations made against Qatar of providing the Muslim Brotherhood with safe harbour, which threatened the security and stability of the neighbouring states, in addition to accusations that Qatar supported the opposition group of the Bahraini regimes. Egypt and Libya also deserve to be the subject of a distinct study. Further research projects need to critically examine the emergence of new security threats in the region, such as radical political Islam/transnational Jihadist movements and their impact on the formation of new patterns of alliances between countries in the region that in turn affect GCC foreign policy. In this regard, the so-called Arab Spring and the appearance of ISIL, and their effect on GCC foreign policy, as well as the wider fluctuating and competing foreign policies of the regional powers, need to be explored in depth.

Finally, it is often acknowledged that despite decades-long regional and international efforts, and countless initiatives on Middle East conflict, little has been achieved on the ground. In the light of this tragic fact, it is crucial to examine Israel's perception of the peace process and to explore how it can contribute to getting closer to solving one of the most enduring and tragic conflicts in modern history that has far reaching implications for regional and world peace.

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