

## **GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) CRISIS: THE ENCOURAGEMENT SAUDI ARABIA TO BREAK OFF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH QATAR**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to determine Saudi Arabia's push to sever diplomatic relations with Qatar. This research uses qualitative research methods and literature studies which refer to literature articles, journals, books, and electronic media. The results of this research show Saudi Arabia's push to sever diplomatic relations with Qatar in June 2017 because Saudi Arabia is a country that is in an important and strategic position and is a leader for Islam and Arabia. A high sense of belonging to Arab identity is an important element for Saudi Arabia in contemporary times. So in this case, Saudi Arabia's national interests as a status quo region need to be maintained and maintain a balance of power to stem the influence of Shiite Islam in Saudi Arabia and its surroundings as well as maintain the security stability of the country and also the unity of the Gulf countries and the Middle East region. In this case, it is hoped that there will be a principle of good faith between Qatar and the countries of the Middle East region, especially the Gulf countries (GCC) if they want to issue a policy that is quite different from the GCC policy.

**Keywords: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Gulf Countries (GCC), Middle East Region, severe diplomatic relation**

### **ABSTRAK**

*Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui dorongan Arab Saudi untuk memutuskan hubungan diplomatik dengan Qatar. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis metode penelitian kualitatif dan studi kepustakaan yang merujuk pada literatur artikel, jurnal, buku serta media elektronik. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan dorongan Arab Saudi untuk memutus hubungan diplomatik dengan Qatar pada Juni 2017 karena Arab Saudi sebagai negara yang berada dalam posisi penting dan strategis serta menjadi pemimpin bagi Islam maupun Arab. Rasa kepemilikan yang tinggi dengan identitas Arab merupakan salah satu elemen penting bagi Arab Saudi di masa kontemporer. Sehingga dalam hal ini, kepentingan nasional Arab Saudi sebagai Kawasan status quo perlu dipertahankan dan tetap menjaga keseimbangan kekuatan agar dapat membendung pengaruh Islam syiah masuk di Arab Saudi dan sekitarnya serta menjaga stabilitas keamanan negaranya dan juga persatuan negara-negara teluk dan kawasan timur tengah. Dalam kasus ini, diharapkan adanya asas i'tikad baik antara Qatar dan negara-negara kawasan timur tengah khususnya negara-negara teluk (GCC) jika ingin mengeluarkan kebijakan yang cukup kontras dari kebijakan GCC.*

**Kata Kunci: Arab Saudi, Qatar, Negara-negara Teluk (GCC), Timur Tengah, Pemutusan hubungan diplomatik**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The dynamics of relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar have experienced a decline since the 1990s. This was darkened after the Arab Spring phenomenon that occurred in the Middle East in 2011, which brought various problems to the region, such as increased competition between political and sectarian forces in the region, as well as changes in the configuration of the region (Firdaus, 2018). In intra-Arab relations, after the Arab Spring, there were sharp divisions between the Saudi camp on one side and the Qatari camp on the other side. The Saudi camp is the main donor to the Syrian Revolutionary Front (SRF), which is the main group within the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Meanwhile, Qatar is the main supporter of funding and logistics for the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (Wardoyo, 2018). These two camps were increasingly highlighted in 2017 in the discourse on Saudi Arabia's decision to sever diplomatic relations with Qatar. This happens because of Qatar's ambitious foreign policy with different priorities from other countries in the Middle East region. Qatar is suspected of funding extremist organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood (IM), Hamas, and Hezbollah. In addition, Qatar's closeness to Iran as a Shiite Muslim power is Saudi Arabia's main regional rival as a Sunni Muslim (Afif Notodewo, 2022). The crisis became more chronic with the hack of the Qatari news agency on May 23, 2017, in which a "fake news" story falsely attributed inflammatory comments by the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, to praising Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, and Israel (MacDonald, 2021). However, the Qatari government refused and clarified the news circulating that the news was fake news published by hackers to calm the atmosphere. Even though it has tried hard to straighten out the situation, Saudi Arabia has already responded to the news with a firm attitude. From there, bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar arose, resulting in serious impacts (Ferian, 2020). Tensions escalated so much that, at that time, Saudi Arabia and other countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt withdrew their countries' diplomats from Doha. Political tensions between Saudi Arabia and Qatar have been going on since the mid-20th century, when there were border disputes involving other Gulf countries, such as Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. However, in 2008, the border dispute between Saudi Arabia and Qatar resulted in a final boundary being agreed upon through negotiations. As time goes by, the issue of tension between Saudi Arabia and Qatar focuses more on Qatar's foreign policy, which is in direct conflict with Saudi Arabia (Muhammmad Zulfikar Rakhmat, 2020).

Qatar's foreign policy at odds with Saudi Arabia gave rise to several negotiation attempts in 2017, but these efforts were not successful in achieving an agreement acceptable to all parties. Furthermore, Kuwait's role as a mediator is to hold high-level meetings between Qatar and countries that have cut ties with it. In this case, two forms of resolution were carried out by Kuwait, namely through mediation to find a solution or middle way to the conflict that occurred and shuttle diplomacy, which was carried

out using a "shuttle," or going back and forth between the country's leader to be the mediator and the country's leaders. who are involved in a conflict to find a middle way and get results, namely in the form of a peace agreement that was not obtained in the previous mediation (MAULIDA, 2022)? However, this mediation was not successful in reaching a concrete agreement. On the other hand, the United States' efforts as a mediator want to lead the mediation between these two countries because it has stronger dominance compared to the countries in conflict and several interests it wants to achieve. However, these efforts have not yet produced a complete solution (Oktarezki, 2021). Several negotiations carried out ultimately failed to resolve the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which attracted international attention in the prestigious Middle East region.

The Middle East region is the locomotive engine that drives the world industry with its petroleum assets. So, it is not beyond the pale if the Middle East region is considered a region that has high publicity; this can be seen almost every time the mass media often provides information about developments in the conditions of the Middle East from various unique aspects. Plus the factor is an area that is a mecca for major religions in the world (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). However, countries in the Middle East are also very vulnerable and susceptible to conflict due to certain interests. The various conflicts that have occurred in the Middle East are part of the transition of power that has occurred in several regions. Added to this is the complexity of various aspects, such as the economy and state ideology (Kurniawan H. , 2017). Until the post "Arab Spring" events created new attention for mankind from time to time, its influence was felt by hundreds of millions of people, especially the conflict that occurred between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which is interesting to study and research. So the problem formulation that will then be discussed in the research is "What Encouragement Saudi Arabia To Break Off Diplomatic Relations With Qatar?"

The purpose of writing this research is to explain the factors behind Saudi Arabia's diplomatic break with Qatar. The benefits of this research are divided into two categories: academic benefits and practical benefits. The academic benefits of this research are: the author wants to contribute to the development of studies in the field of international relations and so that this research can become a source of reference and consideration for research regarding the study of the Middle East region.

## **ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **National Interest**

National interest is a formula designed to achieve national goals. The attitude of a country in international politics depends on how that country forms its national interests. Therefore, if a country based on national interests to carry out international relations, it is tentative, which is the current international relations phenomenon where a country adjusts its national interests from time to time, it

will be reflected in the system. National interest is important for the state because it becomes a reference in formulating foreign policy. National interests manifest in practice because of the solid-state foundation of international policy and the sense of responsibility of state leaders. The national interest is the protection of the country's interests in the international arena, the interest is the application and reflection of the country's needs in the activities of its leaders (Isomov, 2020). The national interest of a country is usually the most important component of the country's needs, such as defense, security, military, and economic prosperity that a country must consider when formulating its foreign policy. National interests are determined for the benefit of the nation, to achieve national goals. National interest refers to a country's efforts to survive. From today's perspective, we can see exactly how national interests produce two outcomes, namely interdependence and conflict. Harmony and interdependence can be achieved if the national interests of a country are in line with the interests of other countries. If not, conflicts will arise and national interests between countries will clash with each other.

According to Hans. J Morgenthau stated that the concept of national interest and power is the main thing in building a country's foreign and domestic political framework. Both are then defined by Morgenthau that national interest is the goal of the state in carrying out international political activities, while power is defined as a means for the state to achieve that goal. The term "national interest" refers to diplomatic concepts that complement each other to improve the welfare of other national units. The goal of the state to maintain or increase its authority can be seen as a national interest (Wanimbo, 2022). National Interests National interests are created from the needs of a country, interests are also based on a force that wants to be created so that the state can have a direct impact on the country's considerations to gain world recognition. The role of a country in providing material as the basis of national interests is undeniably the point of view of the international community as a country that establishes a relationship attached to its foreign policy (Astri Audina Savitri, 2021).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses descriptive qualitative type. Whereas the qualitative method emphasizes more on observing phenomena and examines more into the substance of the meaning of these phenomena focusing on the process and the meaning of the results. Qualitative methods have a focus on in-depth observation and can produce a comprehensive study (Wibisono, 2019). Qualitative data analysis technique is a data processing technique where the data is in the form of non-numeric and focused on quality (Salsabila, 2022). The main objective of qualitative research is to understand phenomena or social phenomena by focusing more on a complete picture of the phenomenon being studied rather than breaking it down into interrelated variables. This type of qualitative research uses document study which focuses on the analysis or interpretation of written material based on the context in the form of notes

such as textbooks, newspapers, magazines, letters, films, diaries, manuscripts, articles, and the like (Prof. Dr. H. Mudjia Rahardjo, 2010).

The descriptive method is a research characteristic that opens more specifically about various social and natural phenomena that occur in people's lives. Specific in its definition, it is intended to mention the aspects of the relationship, impact, and completion of the research activities carried out. The purpose of this descriptive research is to describe the research then provide an explanation regarding the results of the research that has been found and finally validate the truth and accuracy of the findings (University S. , 2022). Nana Sudjana and Ibrahim (1989: 64) say that: "*Descriptive research is research that seeks to describe a symptom, event, and event that is happening at present where the researcher tries to photograph the events and incidents that are the center of attention to then describe them as they are.*"

In this case, what is done is to collect steps, classify data, collect data, draw conclusions, and report with the main objective of making an objective description of a situation in a description (Margareta, 2013). The procedure for collecting data uses library research, namely reading literature related to research conducted using several data analysis techniques. The purpose of the literature study is explained from the documents of Western Sydney University (University W. S., 2017) to gain an understanding of existing research and debates that are relevant to a particular topic or area of study. Data analysis techniques are steps to collect, select, and transform data into an information (Populix, 2023).

## **DISCUSSION**

The thing that prompted Saudi Arabia to sever diplomatic relations with Qatar was because of several main policies, such as Saudi Arabia's strategy to protect its country's national interests. Based on the phenomenon of international relations, the national interests of a country are adjusted from time to time as a reference in formulating foreign policy. National interests are realized in practice because of the solid foundations of state international policy and the sense of responsibility of state leaders. National interest is the protection of the country's interests in the international arena, interest is the implementation and reflection of the country's needs in the activities of its leaders (Isomov, 2020). Saudi Arabia's encouragement to decide on a policy that attracted world attention by using a form of counterbalancing shown by Saudi Arabia regarding the diplomatic break with Qatar, because not all conflicts have to be fought with war, Saudi Arabia did not use violence in its attitude. Saudi Arabia responded to threats and demands as a condition for Qatar to end the conflict with Saudi Arabia. This counterbalancing is part of the balance of power theory for the constant rebalancing of power in international affairs (Ismail, 2022, pp. 64-67). The counterbalancing carried out by Saudi Arabia is

supported by using coercive diplomacy as an effective and efficient method. Coercive diplomacy uses threats to opposing parties to delay or even cancel a country's attitude or decision through threats, sanctions, termination, or cancellation of cooperation. So those forms of coercion or violence are not applied immediately, giving priority to giving an ultimatum first within a certain period.

In the context of international relations, diplomatic relations are a relationship to establish international cooperation between countries by the provisions, principles of international law, and agreements concerning relations between countries (Aisyi, 2021). Diplomatic relations are a way to link a country's interests in international relations. One of them is Saudi Arabia, which has established diplomatic relations with Qatar. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are two of the six countries that are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar are quite close in terms of identity and race. The relationship between Qatar and Saudi Arabia began in 1783 when Al Khalifah led the conquest of Bahrain. In this era, there was a transition of power over a fairly long period. Saudi Arabia, which was then led by Saud Bin Abdul Aziz, succeeded in conquering the Qatari region. After Qatar gained independence, it turned out that Qatar discovered natural resources in the form of natural gas, which was used to advance economic resources. As time goes by, the condition of the country is not supported by geographical conditions and is flanked by large countries. Qatar's trade access, whether via land, sea, or air, must first go through Saudi Arabia (Putri, Analisa Kepentingan Nasional Arab Saudi Dalam Pemutusan Hubungan Diplomatik Terhadap Qatar Tahun 2017, 2021).

Looking at the historical conditions and dynamic dynamics of these two Middle Eastern countries, especially after the discovery of natural gas in Qatar, it can be said that relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar are not going well enough. Saudi Arabia's diplomatic relations with Qatar peaked on June 5, 2017, when the Arab Quartet (Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain) objected to Qatar's support for the Middle Eastern Islamic political movement, the Muslim Brotherhood (IM), which is considered a terrorist group (Kinninmont, 2019) as well as Qatar's policies, which are indicated to support funding for the Muslim Brotherhood (IM), ISIS, and Al-Qaeda. In the end, Saudi Arabia cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar and blocked land and sea routes. The reason is that Qatar accepted the Muslim Brotherhood group in Doha and gave legality to Sheikh Yusuf al-Qhordowi as the leader of IM to channel his teachings through Qatar's largest media, Al-Jazeera (Umul, 2021). In this case, Saudi Arabia's influential position in the Middle East certainly determines the political direction of the Gulf countries that are part of the GCC.

Saudi Arabia considers that this action taken by Qatar deviates from the agreement of the GCC countries and could also threaten Saudi Arabia's national security and regional stability. Of course, the foreign policy carried out by Saudi Arabia depends on Saudi Arabia's national interests in the Middle

East region. A country's national interests are based on strong reasons to protect and maintain territorial power and security. Each country certainly has its defense strategy to protect the country and gain strength to create security. In this case, the protection of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East region carried out by Saudi Arabia refers to a form of counterbalancing the balance of power in the international system to minimize any threats that disturb a country's national interests. Saudi Arabia carried out a diplomatic break with Qatar, which was considered the main source of conflict. The instrument used to terminate Saudi Arabia's diplomatic relations uses coercive diplomacy<sup>1</sup>. Applying sufficient pressure to show the purpose of the country carrying out diplomacy with the target country, also shows the threat that greater force will be used if necessary (Khoiriyah, 2019). Looking at the dynamic pattern between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, it is known that Saudi Arabia's policy of severing diplomatic relations with Qatar was driven based on protecting the Gulf countries and maintaining security stability in the Middle East. The threat made by Saudi Arabia through coercive diplomacy also illustrates that it can have a deterrent effect on Qatar so that it does not deviate and make policies outside those determined by the Gulf countries or the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

### **Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy**

Saudi Arabia is a country that is the largest superpower in the Middle East region. Saudi Arabia is a country with a government system based on the Al-Qur'an and Sunnah in the form of an absolute monarchy. Bordered by Jordan (Northwest), Iraq and Kuwait (North), Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman (East), Oman to the southeast, and Yemen (South) (PRATIWI, 2018). The territory of Saudi Arabia covers four-fifths of the area on the Arabian Peninsula with an area of 2,240,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It is the largest country in Middle East Asia and the 14th largest country in the world. Saudi Arabia is known as a flat country and has many desert areas. The famous desert is in the south of Saudi Arabia which is nicknamed the "Empty Area" (in Arabic, Rub al Khali), the largest desert region in the world. But in the southwest, there are mountainous areas that are grassy and green (SAFITRI, 2019).

From the map image, Saudi Arabia has a size and geology that makes Saudi Arabia store a lot of natural resources such as minerals, oil, and gas, the main raw materials for manufacturing and industrial

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<sup>1</sup> Coercive Diplomacy Diplomacy is a way that is considered more effective and efficient than war to maintain the stability of world peace. The aim of diplomatic practice is to find a way out of a conflict between two countries, where the settlement achieved in the diplomacy process contains the interests of each country in conflict. This type of diplomacy is a type of diplomacy that uses threats to the opposing party to delay their actions or even cancel their actions. Coercive diplomacy is used with the aim of changing the attitudes or decisions of a country through threats, sanctions, terminating or canceling cooperation. In coercive diplomacy, the form of coercion or violence is not directly applied, so that it prioritizes giving ultimatums in advance with a certain period. Coercive diplomacy uses a strategy by providing certain strengths and levels aimed at inviting the opponent to stop aggression (See Febriandi. (2018). Kegagalan Diplomasi Koersif Arab Saudi terhadap Qatar. *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional Universitas Indonesia*, 5).

development. Saudi Arabia has the largest mineral deposits in the Middle East. In the western part of the country, the Arabian Shield is a major source of valuable and basic minerals such as gold, silver, copper, zinc, chromium, manganese, tungsten, lead, aluminium, and iron. Especially in the east, extensive sedimentary formations contain industrial minerals such as gypsum, feldspar, mica, sulfur, and salts. Saudi Arabia is also a source of extremely valuable rare earth elements such as tantalum which has a quarter of the world's reserves and niobium. This vast natural resource represents up to 22% of global oil reserves, more than any other country. Saudi Arabia's oil production began in 1933 and oil exports in 1939. Some eight decades later, Saudi Arabia has enough oil to last another 80 years at a current extraction rate of 10.2 million bpd. Every day Saudi Arabia extracts more than 7.5 billion standard cubic feet of natural gas. More than 8588 billion m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas is available (Arabia, 2023). Since the presence of Saudi Arabia as one of the central countries in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia has always had a policy that focuses on the Middle East region which will directly affect the stability of Saudi Arabia (Lestari, 2018).

Saudi Arabia as a country that adheres to an absolute monarchy system always opens diplomatic relations between countries which is a natural event that needs to be built in the world of international relations as a form of implementing its foreign policy. The main framework is to establish listening relations with neighboring countries avoid any form of intervention in internal affairs with other countries and support Arab and Islamic countries through all matters within the framework of common interests (Nadia, 2020). One of them is joining the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to maintain its existence in the Middle East Region. The GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) was formed in May 1981, headquartered in Riyadh, with six members in the Middle East, namely Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. Saudi Arabia's foreign policy to establish cooperation with GCC countries provides many benefits for Saudi Arabia itself. Moreover, the interests of these GCC countries in the political and economic systems are almost the same which aim to improve coordination, cooperation, and integration in various fields, intensify relations, establish scientific research centers, build joint projects, and encourage economic and trade cooperation between private companies (Swandy, 2018).

In the world of international relations, diplomatic relations between countries are a phenomenon that needs to be established by countries to achieve the interests of a country. Qatar is one of the countries that has diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are two countries located in the Gulf region and both are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have committed themselves to regional security through a security agreement known as the "Riyadh Agreement" which was also signed by Kuwait on November 23, 2013 (Swandy, 2018, pp. 3-5). The first agreement indicated that Sheikh bin Hamad al-Thani (current Emir of the state of Qatar) signed



all the matters requested by the Gulf countries and promised to implement the conditions before the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and establish a new phase for brotherly relations. The second agreement was stated on November 16, 2014, supplemented by the King of Bahrain, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and Prime Minister of the UAE. The most prominent demands agreed to by Sheikh Tamim in the 2014 deal were ending Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood, and the expulsion of all its non-citizen affiliates from Qatar. In addition, Qatar also promised not to bring in certain interested persons who could harm Qatar, and not to support any organization fighting the legitimate government in Yemen and Egypt. Qatar also agreed to cooperate with the GCC countries in supporting Egypt and maintaining its security and stability and, stop insults directed at Al Jazeera Media Channel and Al-Jazeera Egypt Live channel (Maulana, 2017).

Diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar are good in terms of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports. This makes Qatar maintain its international relations to remain stable with Arab countries. Qatar, as a small country on the edge of the Persian Gulf, has the largest natural gas field in the world, which has made Qatar skyrocket as Qatar's key and initial capital. Qatar's per capita income is \$130,000. However, with the presence of gas which is the source of Qatar's economy, Qatar has channeled funds into things that have fueled its neighboring countries, one of which is funding for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to finance a global media network based in Doha, Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera does not hesitate to present critical news that warms the ears of the Gulf countries (Kusumadewi, 2017). This incident then shocked the international world in 2017 when there was news regarding Saudi Arabia breaking off diplomatic relations with Qatar, followed by other Arab countries such as Yemen, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, and the United Arab Emirates.

Saudi Arabia is a country that has national interests, one of which focuses on regional countries in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia's decision to sever diplomatic relations with Qatar shows that decisions about what is in the national interest are the result of a political process in which the leaders of a country can have different views regarding these interests. The policy carried out by Saudi Arabia is based on Saudi Arabia's national interest, namely maintaining the stability of the Saudi Arabian Region and the Middle East (Sari, 2022). Apart from that, Saudi Arabia also thinks that this will threaten its political stability, so Saudi Arabia does a balance of power as a change in international status and power, especially in the efforts of a country that wants to control certain areas. The process of balance of power can lead to the stability of relations between countries. In the classical realist perspective, the balance of power is one of the institutions that is expected and a good thing to keep fighting for because it prevents hegemonic world domination by countries that have great power. This happened because the cooperation that was built between Qatar and Iran threatened the potential stability of Saudi Arabia's power (Rahman, 2021).

### **The Encouragement of Saudi Arabia to Break Off Diplomatic Relations With Qatar**

Saudi Arabia's decision to sever diplomatic ties and blockade Qatar defined a gulf crisis line that has taken on the aspect of a long-term 'cold war' stalemate between the parties that was unable or unwilling to find a way and created a destabilizing effect in the Middle East and countries of cooperation. Gulf (GCC) because it has been boycotted (Ulrichsen, 2020). The blockade by Saudi Arabia on Qatar made the situation complicated so several parties wanted to help solve the blockade problem. The policies carried out by Saudi Arabia are considered to have crossed the line and have violated human rights. This view came from a UN agency, namely the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). However, Saudi Arabia and its allies think that OHCHR does not understand the reasons related to the crisis in diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar and this is being done based on the principle of sovereignty of each country and maintaining the country's national security (Meisawitri, 2021).

Saudi Arabia is a country that is in an important and strategic position and is a leader for Islam and Arabs. A high sense of belonging to an Arab identity is one of the important elements for Saudi Arabia in contemporary times. Arabic identity which is defined as the similarity of language is very closely related to Islam. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has a Sunni ideology that is very much at odds with Iran, with its main sect being Shia Muslims. This is of course a trigger related to Sunni and Shia ideology which is spread in various countries in the Middle East. In addition, the author sees several factors that became the background of Saudi Arabia's decision to cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar which was followed by other Arab countries, including:

- a.) Qatar's soft stance on regional rival Iran angered other GCC nations and could pose a serious threat to GCC nations and Saudi Arabia. Qatar's independent foreign policy violates the contents of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) agreement established on May 25, 1981, in Riyadh and contrasts sharply with the values shared by its neighboring countries, making Qatar a threat to Sunni solidarity in the region, primarily because of its friendly ties with Shia-majority regional rival Iran.
- b.) Qatar supports the Muslim Brotherhood group in the Arab Spring phenomenon that occurred in Egypt, Libya and Syria
- c.) Hacking and information warfare through the media to incite (Indonesia, 2017). So the GCC countries carry out propaganda to prevent Qatar and leaving relations with terrorist organizations that are against GCC policies.

In the process of Saudi Arabia's diplomatic severance with Qatar, Saudi Arabia used a cooperative diplomacy approach as part of a conventional and contextual military strategy but as a component of a political-diplomatic strategy aimed at persuading the enemy to withdraw. This cohesive diplomacy is a psychological instrument that is more flexible than the 'physical, fast and decisive' use made in the

military strategy (Siregar, 2021). As reported by (Putri, Analisa Kepentingan Nasional Arab Saudi Dalam Pemutusan Hubungan Diplomasi Terhadap Qatar Tahun 2017, 2021) on June 12, 2017, Saudi Arabia issued 13 demands for 13 demands that Qatar had to fulfill, namely:

1. Reducing diplomatic relations with Iran and closing diplomatic missions. In addition, Qatar must also stop all forms of military cooperation with Iran. Meanwhile, for trade relations, Qatar is obliged to comply with the United States.
2. Cut all forms of relations with terrorist organizations, specifically these organizations include the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, and Lebanese *Hizbullah*.
3. Closing the Al-Jazeera media and all its relations.
4. Closing Qatar-funded news channels including Arabi 21, Rassd, *Al-Araby*, Al Jadeed, and Middle East Eye.
5. Immediately stop the presence of the Turkish military in Qatar and end all military cooperation with Turkey in Qatar.
6. Stop all funding whether for individuals, groups, or organizations that have been labeled as terrorists by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Bahrain, and the United States.
7. Handing over all the Terrorist Figures in Qatar who are being hunted by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Bahrain eliminating Qatari citizenship to these terrorists freezing all assets, and providing information about all movements and their funding.
8. End all interventions in the form of granting citizenship to fugitives from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Bahrain.
9. End all contact with the political opposition from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain and submit all evidence of Qatar's contacts with these oppositions.
10. Paying compensation caused by Qatar's policies in recent years. The amount of the compensation will be specified and coordinated with Qatar.
11. Willing to perform monthly audits in the first year when demands have been met. Over the next 10 years, Qatar will continue to be monitored for compliance.
12. Align vision and policies with Saudi Arabia and its allies in the military, political, social, and economic fields. By the Riyadh Agreement in 2014.
13. Approve all requests within 10 days or all these claims become invalid.

The blockade and termination of diplomatic relations carried out by Saudi Arabia had a significant impact on Qatar. This is because all trade routes that wish to enter Qatar must pass through Saudi Arabia first. However, coercive diplomacy through ultimatum demands made by Saudi Arabia did not go well and was rejected by Qatar because Qatar considered these demands to be unrealistic and there was no strong evidence and was seen as having violated its sovereignty. It also reflects Saudi Arabia's

weak coercive strategy. Qatar, which is a small country, is very smart in playing its role in the region, so Saudi Arabia must find various ways that Qatar can be controlled. The failure of Saudi coercive diplomacy could be because Qatar is urgently looking for new partners who can match Saudi military and economic power such as Iran and Turkey (Febriandi, 2018, p. 12).

According to the author, apart from the factors causing Saudi Arabia to sever diplomatic relations and blockade Qatar, there are also several objectives of Saudi Arabia in this crisis, namely:

- Maintaining Saudi Arabia's status quo in the Middle East
- The interests of Saudi Arabia to create security, stability, and unity in the Gulf countries and the Middle East region
- Maintain the interests of Saudi Arabia's security stability
- Shows that Saudi Arabia is the hegemon state of Qatar as a form of self-power

The author sees that Saudi Arabia's goal in terminating diplomatic relations and the blockade of Qatar is an important matter to study. Saudi Arabia is one of the Middle Eastern countries that has a central rivalry in the status quo. This is of course very impactful if there is a threat or outside influence that is contrary to the national interests of Saudi Arabia and the GCC countries. Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia's decision to blockade Qatar was a decision that was quite crucial and had a significant impact on Middle Eastern countries. It also invites international attention and attention. From here it can also be said that Western countries and the international world can see how the state of balance in the Middle East region and assess Saudi Arabia's position as one of the centers of *al-Haramain* (City of Mecca and Medina).

## **CONCLUSION**

As a leader of Islam and Arabia, Saudi Arabia is pushing to break diplomatic ties with Qatar because of its strategic importance and leadership role in the region. A strong sense of Arab identity and belonging is a crucial component of Saudi Arabia today to stem the influence of Shiite Islam in Saudi Arabia and its surroundings, as well as to preserve the security and stability of the nation and the unity of the Gulf states and the Middle East region, it is necessary to uphold Saudi Arabia's national interests as a status quo region and to maintain a balance of power.

Due to Saudi Arabia's dominant position in the Middle East, it needs to exercise caution while deciding how to break diplomatic ties with Qatar. Naturally, this presents a negative image in the global community. By pursuing bilateral relations with Qatar and making efforts toward rapprochement, mediation, and the development of a peaceful settlement system, Saudi Arabia should be able to put peaceful methods into practice, fostering unity and oneness among the Gulf states while minimizing or even eliminating the likelihood of conflict. Like Qatar, which was once a minor nation but reversed

course to become one of the richest nations in the world following the discovery of natural gas. However, it does not imply that Qatar behaves arbitrarily or disregards GCC nations' laws and policies. It is a result of a nation's participation in an alliance or organization to follow and put into practice beneficial policies. If Qatar wants to issue policies that are significantly different from GCC policies, there needs to be a principle of good faith between Qatar and nations in the Middle East, particularly the Gulf countries (GCC) to avoid making a snap decision to seek assistance under the guise of these charges and to avoid feeling like a nation under worldwide scrutiny, Qatar also needs to consider the positive diplomatic relationships it has developed with past nations.

This study aims to shed new light on Saudi Arabia's rivalry in the Middle East and the causes that led to the breakup of diplomatic ties with Qatar for readers and scholars of international relations to be able to contribute the most to Islamic insight, particularly from the perspective of international relations in Islam, and to become a topic that can be studied more thoroughly and used as evaluation material, it is important to have knowledge about the crisis in the Gulf countries (GCC) and the Middle East in general.

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