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“Combating Polarization in Times of Global Crisis”

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De-escalating Tensions in the Persian Gulf

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RESEARCH
REPORT



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Introduction

This report aims at unraveling the complex issue of one of today's primary socio-economic issues in the international relations of the Middle East, which we can roughly define as the tense relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia which takes place on and around the Persian Gulf. These tense relations are best defined as polarization, being in direct connection to this year's conference theme, combatting polarization, seeing as none of the involved countries are focusing on finding a solution, but are instead focused on the amount of personal gain they would receive by their actions.

Definition of Key Terms

De-escalation: Reduction of the intensity of a conflict or potentially violent situation.

Crude oil: Petroleum.

Oilfield: An area of land or seabed underlain by layers yielding mineral oil, especially in amounts that justify commercial exploitation.

Infrastructure: The basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.

Pahlavi Monarchy: A sovereign state in Western Asia which was bordered by Turkey and Iraq to the west, the Soviet Union to the north, Afghanistan and Pakistan to the east and shared a maritime border with Oman toward the south.

Strait of Hormuz: A strait between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. It provides the only sea passage from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean and is one of the world's most strategically important choke points.

General Overview

The coup d'état that happened in Iran in 1953, was the event that overthrew Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh who was democratically elected, in order to strengthen the monarchical rule of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. This event was orchestrated by the U.S. which inevitably led to how the alliances in the current issue were formed, alongside altering the government which also led to the

tensions arising in areas near the Gulf. This was mainly due to the fact that the Iranian economy was slowly plummeting due to the crises surrounding their oil production.

On 8 May 2018, the United States left the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), a detailed, 159-page nuclear deal agreement with five annexes reached by Iran and the P5+1, reestablishing sanctions against Iran. Iran's oil creation hit an eminent low on account of these endorsements. As explained by the BBC in April 2019, United States sanctions against Iran "prompted a sharp slump in Iran's economy, pushing the estimation of its cash to record lows, quadrupling its yearly expansion rate, heading out unfamiliar financial specialists, and setting off fights". Iranian specialists have accused the U.S. of seeking after hybrid fighting against the country.

Strains among Iran and the U.S. emerged in May 2019, when the U.S. began sending more military resources for the Persian Gulf area subsequent to getting an asserted "crusade" by Iran and its "intermediaries" to undermine U.S. powers and Strait of Hormuz crude oil dispatching. U.S. authorities referred to insight reports that remembered photos of rockets for dhows and other boats in the Persian Gulf, apparently put there by Iranian paramilitary powers. The U.S. was worried that the rockets could be terminated at its Navy.

On 14 September 2019 two of Saudi Arabia's most critical oil facilities, the Abqaiq plant, and the Khurais oilfield, came beneath facilitated assault, causing the largest-ever disturbance to worldwide oil supply and raising concerns around further heightening of tensions within the Persian Gulf.

On 5 January 2020, Iran ended its commitments to the nuclear deal and the Iraqi parliament passed a resolution to expel all foreign troops from its territory.

In relation to the topic at hand, "Combating Polarization in Times of Global Crisis" the topic would be in direct correlation with the tensions occurring between countries on the Persian Gulf, seeing as none of the countries are working in order to find a beneficial solution by reaching mutual grounds, but rather only considering their personal benefit and how it would turn out for the country, leading to a clear case of polarization.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Islamic Republic of Iran: Allies with Syria and Kuwait, one of the main parties involved, against Saudi Arabia. Iran is directly connected to the Persian Gulf, which leads to easy access to Iranian military aid swiftly. Iran has a drastically low amount of oil, which respectively has harsh effects on their economic status.

Saudi Arabia: Allies with the United States of America and Great Britain, against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Arabia had undergone many attacks, mostly believed to be done by Iran and Iran's allies which would inevitably lead to the tensions getting increasingly worse.

United States of America: Has a formed alliance with Saudi Arabia. Orchestrated the 1953 Iranian coup d'état. Also contributed troops alongside the UK in the Invasion of Iraq in 2003. Reiterated violations of the international law, most importantly the articles 39, 40, and 41 of the UN founding chart.

United Kingdom: Has a formed alliance with Saudi Arabia. Promoted and contributed to the 1953 Iranian coup d'état alongside the US. Contributed troops and military aid for the Invasion of Iraq which happened in 2003.

United Arab Emirates: The UAE joined alongside four other members of the International Maritime Security Construct. The alliance was made and pursued to protect the interests of its members and their merchant ships when passing through maritime passageways, explained by the Emirates News Agency. Its area of operation covers the Strait of Hormuz, Bab Al Mandab, the Sea of Oman, and the Arabian Gulf.

Israel: Israel wasn't a member country but was an ally of the International Maritime Security Construct. Israel participated in the coalition by providing unspecified assistance. On 13 August, UAE and Israel established full bilateral diplomatic relations, and later on establishing diplomatic relations with Bahrain at the start of September.

Timeline of Events

The chart below shows the timeline of relevant events accompanied by a brief description of each event.

15–19 August 1953 Iranian Coup D'état	<i>The 1953 Iranian coup d'état was orchestrated to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh for reinforcing the monarchical guideline of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi on 19 August 1953, organized by the United States and the United Kingdom, and done by the Iranian military. Which led to the end of the Pahlavi Monarchy alongside having drastic effects on the surrounding infrastructure due to the chaos that arose.</i>
10–14 September 1960 Formation of OPEC	<i>The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is an intergovernmental association of 13 nations. Established on the 14th September in 1960 in Baghdad by the initial five individuals, it has since 1965 been settled in Vienna, Austria.</i>
20 March - 1 May 2003 Invasion of Iraq	<i>The 2003 Invasion of Iraq was the primary phase of the Iraq War. The invasion started on 19 March 2003 and 20 March 2003 and lasted for a little more than one month, including 26 days of significant battle activities, in which a joined power of troops and military aid from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland attacked Iraq altogether.</i>
27 December 2019	<i>The 2019 K-1 Air Base attack was a rocket attack on the K-1 Air Base in Kirkuk province in Iraq on 27 December 2019. The attack resulted in 1 U.S. civilian contractor's death, which arose even more conflicts.</i>

K1 Airbase Attack	
5 January 2020 Iran Ends Commitment to the Nuclear Deal	<i>The decision of Iran to end their commitment to the Nuclear Deal was made right after the head of Iran's elite Quds force passed away, early Friday in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad. Soleimani's death has led to the escalation of tensions between the U.S. and Iran.</i>

Treaties and Events

International Maritime Security Construct

The International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) is a multinational maritime effort established by the U.S. to ensure the gulf's security following Iranian commercial tankers.

Following Iran's shoot-down of a U.S. observation drone on 20 June 2019, the U.S. reinforced its endeavors to set up an alliance to prevent Iranian assaults in the Persian Gulf. On 19 July, U.S. Headquarters recognized what was called "Operation Sentinel" which had the objective of de-escalating strains and advancing oceanic solidness in global waters "all through the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Oman". Sentinel called for taking an interested country to give escorts to their hailed business vessels in the area and for organizing reconnaissance capabilities. U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper later remarked on the idea of the activity, expressing "My view is... we would need to forestall the Iranians seizing or halting a boat, absolutely, for any subjective explanation whatsoever". Some U.S. partners, especially European partners, were apparently hesitant towards the Sentinel Program because of doubts related to marking on to the U.S. drove maritime exertion that might actually drag them into a showdown with Iran.

United States withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

The United States reported its withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), otherwise called the "Iran nuclear arrangement" or the "Iran deal", on May 8, 2018. The JCPOA is a concession to Iran's atomic program came to in July 2015 by Iran, the P5+1 (who are the five perpetual individuals from the United Nations Security Council; China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, the United States in addition to Germany as the stated +1) In a joint assertion reacting to the U.S. withdrawal, the heads of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom expressed that the United Nations Security Council goal supporting the nuclear arrangement remained the "binding international legal framework for the resolution of the dispute". Different nations, worldwide associations, and U.S. researchers have communicated lament or condemned the withdrawal, while U.S. conservatives, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and partners have upheld it. The withdrawal caused worries in Iran because of its possible harsh effects on the economy.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Comprehensive Review of the Situation in the Gulf Region

“In October, the Security Council held a debate focusing on a comprehensive review of the situation in the Persian Gulf region under the agenda item “maintenance of international peace and security”. This is a signature event of the Russian presidency, building on a concept for the region that Russia proposed in 2019. “ (UNSC)

Not many effective steps and procedures were made in order to combat issues and de-escalate tensions in the Persian Gulf. Germany sought a peace meeting with the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to help ease military and economical issues and to come to a mutual agreement. Alongside this peace talk, The European Union made a request which aimed at making the European Union back down on military aid to the Gulf and to ease the amount of support they were sending.

All of the attempts that were previously made did not lead to solving and de-escalating the tension in the Gulf, they ended up being futile because they were all brought up by personal gain.

Possible Solutions

The formation of a government organization would highly be urged, formed by members of all the relevant countries. This is to ensure that all countries that are relevant and involved get a say in whatever gets pursued by the organization, seeing as the issue at hand has a more personal outcome to each country. Having the topic lead to the fall or rise of some aforementioned countries would also have a large effect on the decisions and motives led on by members in the council, which could potentially be prevented by the enforcement of rules and regulations for the mentioned organization.

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