

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy in the Persian Gulf

Masoud Rezapour¹, Amir Alizadeh Osalu²

¹M.A. in International Relations, Khatam al Anbiya University, Tehran, Iran

²M.S. in Passive Defense Engineering, Khatam al Anbiya University, Tehran, Iran

Email address: ¹masoudrezapour@hotmail.com, ²a.osalu@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: Masoud Rezapour

Abstract— *The Persian Gulf has always been the focus of regional and international actors because of its geopolitical position and the large volume of energy reserves. These features have made security a top priority for countries in the region; but differing views on security have prevented the formation of trust and cooperation among regional actors. Saudi Arabia, despite its unique political structure, has an undeniable and influential power in the region. Saudi Arabia's security strategies as one of the key players in the Persian Gulf security equations include: Partnership and Coalition with the West (US); Regional Partnerships within the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council; Coalition with Arab and non-Arab actors and increasing the military power. The main purpose of this paper is to examine the reasons for adopting these strategies. The research method used in this paper to achieve the purpose is the descriptive-analytical method and the library method was used to collect information. The paper's hypothesis is this: It seems that the reasons for adopting these strategies should be sought in Saudi Arabia's lower power than Iran and its efforts to maintain the status quo in the region.*

Keywords— *Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia, Security Strategy, Iran, Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Middle East has always been recognized as a region that has been plagued by numerous challenges, accelerated and unstable changes. During the Cold War, the region was influenced by the relationships and rivalries of the two superpowers of the bipolar system, and in the post-Cold War environment it was faced with destabilizing and contentious processes. One of the most important areas in the Middle East is the Persian Gulf. The Persian Gulf region has always been a special place of security, strategic and economic importance in the international system, so it has been the focus of great global powers over the last few centuries and has not been spared its aggression. With the discovery of oil, and given its pivotal role in the global economy, the security and stability of this region is a major concern for countries in the region and the world. The main concern of the countries of the region and the major Western powers in the Persian Gulf region has been the issue of "security". The strategic location of the Persian Gulf region, the commodity market, military equipment and large energy reserves are important features and coordinates of this region. The importance of the Persian Gulf region due to its geopolitical and geostrategic position and the need to maintain its security has provided numerous and varied security patterns for regional countries and sometimes actors outside the geographical area; in the meantime, the vision and pattern adopted by Saudi Arabia seems to be of particular

importance due to its position and importance in the security arrangements of the Persian Gulf region. Maintaining Persian Gulf security has always been a constant and important principle in Saudi Arabia's strategy. Saudi Arabia has always played an important role in regional and trans-regional equations and relations, especially in the Persian Gulf, and now has a special place in the region. Saudi Arabia's location between the two major waterways of the world, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, has given it a particular geopolitical position. In addition to the economic power, oil revenues have enabled Saudi Arabia to expand its political influence in the Arab countries of the region. Saudi Arabia seeks to bring these countries under its umbrella by gathering them in the form of the GCC and signing security agreements, because of the similarities of the political and economic structures of the Persian Gulf states and their vulnerability [1]. The continuation and continuity of the principles and goals of foreign policy and the efforts to maintain the status quo can be considered as the common denominator of all theories presented regarding the aims and principles of Saudi foreign policy. For decades, Saudi Arabia has played a role in the region under Western-led coalitions, and has been one of the central players in shaping regional order. However, the alliance with the West does not mean that Saudi Arabia does not have a favorable regional plan and has not tried to do so. Some believe that the Saudi Arabian ideal regional order has been the establishment of a hegemonic Islamic state based on Wahhabism teachings; but the structure of the international system, and consequently the Middle East regional subsystem, has prevented Saudi Arabia from achieving this order. As a result, the Saudi Arabia has sought its desirable regional order in alliance with the world's super powers, especially the United States and eliminating or isolating its rivals in the region on the one hand and taking over the leadership of the Islamic world and thus playing a central role on the other. Due to domestic and regional concerns over the past three decades, especially the Arab Spring in 2011, Saudi Arabia as one of the security-political states of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf has always sought to gain a prominent position in the Middle East's regional system by using the GCC and its alliance with Arab and non-Arab actors. Given the importance of the role and position of Saudi Arabia in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, this article examines the security strategy axes of the country in the Persian Gulf. These axes include: Co-operation with the West (US), regional cooperation within the GCC, coalition with Arab and non-Arab actors, and increasing military power.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Security realism is one of the foremost perspectives used to explain the external behavior of governments, whether large or small, especially when governments aim to achieve the desired power and security in regional or global critical conditions [2]. This theory, also called human innate realism, is based on the human's authoritarian and evil nature. Accordingly, contrary to the idealists who believe in the modification of human behavior, realists believe that human nature is fixed and cannot be easily changed. Realism is one of the attitudes whose main focus is security. Realists in the field of security deal with issues such as: international Security; insecurity; survival; military-based security issues; self-reliance on security and state-centric security [3]. For realists, though international relations are not the scene of a permanent war, there is always the brutal security competition and the possibility of war. Although countries sometimes cooperate with each other, this cooperation has its limitations and has limited by the logic of the security competition. If we regard security as the efforts of political units to increase their capabilities and capabilities to achieve a position that they find themselves safe from the damage caused by the performance of other actors in international politics, how a country's policies and approaches are designed to address these issues is called security strategies. In general, two factors in security realism theory lead to different security strategies being adopted by actors: First, power and second, foreign policy orientation. Security realists regard the issue of power as one of the main reasons for paying attention to insecurity rather than security, and believe that power in its essence always harms others. Therefore, the accumulation of power in governments makes them always seeking to harm others in order to gain more benefits. As a result, power rests on the ability to inflict physical harm on others. Assessment of power begins with military capabilities and only then deals with other capabilities that directly contribute to the maintenance and use of military capabilities, and then to factors that play a more indirect role. So the most powerful actors are those who are militarily more capable than others [4]. If the military superiority of a country be higher than other countries, that country will have more security. For realists, all states want to have the most military power; because this is the best way to guarantee survival in a world that can be very dangerous. The goal is to gain more military power at the expense of potential competitors; the ideal outcome is to gain international supremacy, and at this time we can say that survival is almost guaranteed.

The foreign policy orientation of countries is one of the key determinants of their security policy. In realism, foreign policy, like other areas of politics, is a struggle to gain and maintain power, and whatever the ultimate goals of foreign policy, power is always an immediate goal. This concept of foreign policy has two consequences: First, not all of the behaviors and actions of one state are political in relation to other states, and many of these activities are carried out

without regard to power, and do not, of course, affect the state power that exercises them; second, not all countries are equally active in foreign policy [5]. States have different orientations depending on the type and nature of the international system to achieve their foreign policy goals. K. J Holsti refers to a strategy alongside roles and goals as external policy outputs. For Holsti, the strategy or overall direction of a state rarely appears in a decision, but rather the strategy of a state comes from a series of successive decisions that seek to bring goals, values and interests into line with the conditions and characteristics of the internal and external environment. One of the positions that states pursue in their foreign policy is to maintain the status quo. States that are committed to maintaining the status quo try to follow their security policies in three ways: maintaining existing structure and power distribution; cooperation with international organizations; joining treaties and alliances. The purpose of preserve the status quo policy is preserve the structure and distribution of existing power at a particular historical moment. The policy of maintaining the status quo in international politics operates in the same way that conservative politics operates in domestic affairs. The special moment in history that acts as a turning point for the status quo policy is usually the end of the war, when the distribution of power in a particular treaty is formulated. Since international organizations have always sought to preserve the framework and rules governing the international system and the treaties that structurally protect this framework, cooperation with international organizations is on the agenda of supporters of the preserve status quo policy. Versailles peace treaty and the establishment of the League of Nations and the United Nations Charter clearly have pursued this goal. Countries that seek to maintain power distribution in a particular case in their foreign policy may use special treaties as a means of action; such as alliance treaties, which often maintain the status quo in some areas [6].

III. SAUDI ARABIA'S SECURITY STRATEGIES IN THE PERSIAN GULF

The Persian Gulf is the most important area in Saudi Arabia's security strategy. Saudi Arabia's security strategies as one of the key players in the Persian Gulf security equations include: (a) Partnership and coalition with the West (US); (b) regional partnerships within the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council; (c) coalition with Arab and non-Arab actors; and (d) increasing the military power.

(a) Partnership and coalition with the West (US): Saudi Arabia's policies in the Persian Gulf are based on maintaining friendly relations with Western countries. Saudi Arabia's aims to co-ordinate with Western bloc is counterbalance radical revolutionary phenomena and prevent them from spreading inside the country. Despite Saudi Arabia's willingness to cooperate militarily and defensively with many trans-regional powers, Saudi Arabia wants US involvement in Persian Gulf security arrangements. Bilateral security arrangements between the GCC states and the United States in the 1990s demonstrate the importance of the US role in the Persian Gulf security arrangements from the perspective of GCC leaders, including Saudi Arabia. Therefore, Saudi Arabia, with a view

to enhancing its internal and external security, is focusing on strengthening its defense and military capabilities, hence invested heavily in the military industry and arms purchases, and prioritized proximity to the US in his military and security policies. Although Saudi Arabia tends to maintain its maneuverability in military relations with other countries such as Britain and France, it does not appear that Saudi Arabia choose a country other than the US for strategic alliance. Saudi Arabia has expanded its arsenal of military weapons by pursuing massive arms purchases from the United States to pursue its foreign policy, which is to maintain the status quo in the region [7]. The US military presence in the aftermath of the Kuwait-Iraq crisis also showed a strong sense of belonging to each other. Although Saudi Arabia and the United States have not signed formal defense pacts due to concerns about internal opposition in Saudi Arabia, but through military training and logistics agreements, US Special Operations Units have made extensive use of the air center at Prince Sultan Air Base in southern Riyadh. Despite the differences that Saudi Arabia and the United States have found in recent years, the two countries have continued to maintain strategic and traditional ties to maintain the status quo in the region [8].

(b) Regional cooperation in the form of GCC: Given the persistence of traditional patterns of power, deterrence and balance in the Persian Gulf, and the lack of comprehensive regional integration models, the region's powerful governments have sought political assistance. Coalition building in foreign policy has always played a decisive role in securing Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia as one of the security and political states of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, given the domestic and regional concerns over the last three decades, especially with the Arab Spring in 2011, has always sought to use the GCC and the alliance with Arab and non-Arab actors to assert its superior position in the Middle East's regional system in dealing with political and security issues. Saudi Arabia has played a pivotal role in the formation of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, and has always represented himself as an older brother. The country enjoys a superior position over the other five smaller countries in terms of geography, resources and economic power and military capability. The difference in power allows Saudi Arabia to play a leadership role in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. The establishment of the secretariat of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in Riyadh has also provided a platform for Saudi Arabia to influence the council more effectively. In times of crisis and the spread of common external threats, Saudi Arabia's dominant role in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council becomes clearer and other countries accept this role. Under the same attitude, Saudi Arabia is trying to unite the GCC as a single bloc against security threats and other claimants of power in the region. Despite disputes between GCC member states, Saudi Arabia continues to maintain its leadership role in guiding its policies and defining its grand strategies. One of Saudi Arabia's tools for using the GCC in the region is to hold joint meetings on defense, security, political, cultural and economic matters. An important part of these partnerships is military and security, which aims to maintain the status quo and eliminate security risks [9].

Concerning the alliance with Arab actors, the Damascus Declaration or the 6 + 2 security plan and the Moroccan and Jordanian membership on the GCC can be mentioned. The Damascus Declaration sought to establish an active military force to defend the member states of the Cooperation Council in the face of foreign aggression. According to the security plan of the Damascus Summit, the deployment of Egyptian and Syrian forces in Saudi Arabia was in fact intended as a guarantee for the security of the Persian Gulf states and, of course, at the expense of the Council. The treaty also emphasized the planning of economic and financial assistance programs by the member states of the Council to Egypt and Syria. Although the statement was not successful in practice, it initially became so important to Saudi Arabia and other members of the council that the council said: "Any communication within the framework of relations between the Arab states will be based on the principles stated by the Damascus declaration". Saudi Arabia's goal of the 6 + 2 security plan was to compensate for the weaknesses in human resources, military training, and the lack of an Arab security system in general; because the direct presence of the United States had led to anti-Western sentiment and the fight against foreign influence in the Arab countries, this had become a problem for Saudi Arabia. Eventually, the 6 + 2 security plan failed because Saudi Arabia did not accept military control of the region from its rivals Egypt and Syria. After the uprisings in the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East, Saudi Arabia sought to prevent the disruption of the existing order as much as possible and to guide the development of its interests [10].

(c) Coalition with Arab and non-Arab actors: At a meeting in Riyadh on 10 May 2011, Saudi Arabia called for the two kingdoms of Morocco and Jordan to join the six-member GCC. Saudi Arabia pursued two goals from the proposal: First, Saudi Arabia saw itself in a weaker position than before with the collapse of its main allies, which diminished the strategic importance and influence of the country in the region, especially compared to other regional rivals; so Saudi Arabia was looking for a balance of power in the region. The second factor that raised Saudi Arabia's concern was the formation of radical movements in the region. This has heightened Saudi Arabia's security concerns and led it to adopt solutions to counter the spread of the revolution in the Persian Gulf. The plan illustrates Saudi Arabia's efforts to protect Arab monarchies against popular uprisings and to address security threats in the region [11]. Saudi Arabia has also partnered with non-Arab countries such as Pakistan and Turkey to build coalition. Relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have always been good. The two countries have a long history of cooperation in the Afghan war and in helping to strengthen the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. These relations, however, were closer when Pakistan was ruled by the military (General Zia-ul-Haq and General Musharraf) or the Muslim League Party [12]. The two countries have held many joint military exercises so far. One of these military exercises is the "Al-Samsam" exercise, which is held every two years. The first military exercise, Al-Samsam I, was held in Pakistan for six days in 2004. Al-

Samsam II in 2006 was held in Punjab. Al- Samsam III, in 2009 was held in Saudi Arabia and Al- Samsam VI was held in Jhelum city near the Punjab for three weeks in 2011. The purpose of the military exercises is to familiarize Pakistani and Saudi forces with the military knowledge of the two countries. Saudi Arabia is using Pakistan's capabilities to maintain its internal and external security in the region. During Mohammad bin Salman's visit to Pakistan in 2015, amid tensions with Iran over the execution of Sheikh Nemr, Pakistan Army Commander General Rahel said: "any attack on the territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia will have a Pakistani response". With the emergence of the Arab Spring in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia sought to pursue its security policies by working with Turkey through regional balancing and balancing the phenomena affected by Arab Spring developments. This policy has led to security cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Turkey as two important and stable countries in the region [13]. The expansion of defense-military cooperation has led the two countries to show interest in enhancing cooperation to maintain the status quo in the political and security spheres, with regional developments and, above all, the Syrian crisis being the main manifestation of such cooperation and show that the two sides have taken a close relationship. In addition to the Syrian crisis, the two countries have common security policies towards the Iraqi government. Riyadh and Ankara are opposed to Shiite power in Iraq and see it as a geopolitical threat. In particular, Saudi Arabia recognizes that Shiite empowerment in the region, in addition to diminishing the permeability of conservative policies in the region, also results in the strengthening of Shiites in Saudi Arabia. Despite their differences over the level of selection of Salafist and Brotherhood groups and moderate and extremist groups, the two countries support the Sunni movement in Iraq, in order to maintain their conservative policies in the region [14].

(d) Increasing the military power: Saudi Arabia is keen to increase its military capability. Major arms purchases and the development of military infrastructure can be mentioned in this context [15]. Saudi Arabia is one of the largest buyers of military weapons from the United States. According to a report released by the Congressional Research Service on January 2015, between October 2010 and 2014, a major military arms sale plan worth more than \$ 90 billion was planned between Washington and Riyadh. These included the sale of Apache helicopters, mortars, anti-tank missiles as well as military training. US officials have also said arms contracts worth \$ 29.4 billion a year with Saudi Arabia were aimed at boosting Saudi Arabia's military capability [16]. In addition to the United States, Saudi Arabia has also purchased a variety of military supplies from Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, China, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom over the past decade. Saudi Arabia ranks third in the world in terms of military spending after the US and China, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The top five countries in military spending are the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, India and France; sixty percent of the world's military spending belongs to these five

countries. Also according to the report, Saudi Arabia had the highest military burden in the world at 8.8 per cent of GDP in 2018. It has been the largest importer of military weapons, between 2014 and 2018, accounting for 12% of the world's arms imports [17]. The total number of personnel in the Saudi military is 230,000. Saudi Arabia is one of the most advanced forces in the Middle East and even has the potential to be an influential force in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council's military decisions. The Saudi Air Force suffered significant weaknesses and stagnation from year 1994-2001 for several reasons, including inadequate management, training deficiencies, focus on air defense, and so on. But since 2001, the Saudi authorities have paid particular attention to the air force, and with the aim of increasing the readiness and combat capability of the air force, significant contracts have been concluded with the Western countries to modernize and train Saudi Arabia air force personnel. The country has seven major air bases, including: King Khalid air base, King Fahd air base, King Abdul-Aziz air base, King Khalid air base, Prince Sultan air base, King Faisal air base, and Prince Abdullah air base. The latest Saudi Air Force assets are listed in Table 1:

Table 1: Saudi Arabia Air Force assets

Type of equipment	Number
Total aircraft	848
Fighters	244
Attack	325
Transports	49
Trainers	207
Total Helicopter	254
Attack Helicopter	34

Resource: Global firepower, 2019

Saudi Arabia army, with about seventy-five thousand active personnel, is the largest land force in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and is responsible for conducting land military operations in the country. The Saudi Arabia armed forces has four armored brigades, five mechanized infantry brigades, one airborne brigade, one royal guard brigade, two independent marines battalion and one and one army aviation command. Thus, the Saudi Land Force has ten combat brigades and one royal guard brigade in total. The Saudi army is equipped with a variety of armor and artillery equipment and is among the top countries in the region. The latest Saudi Arabian land forces assets are listed in Table 2:

Table 2: Saudi Land Force assets

Combat Tanks	Number
Armored Fighting Vehicles	1062
Self-Propelled Artillery	11100
TOWED Artillery	705
Rocket Projectors	1818
Self-Propelled Artillery	122

Resource: Global firepower, 2019

The Saudi Arabian Navy was established in 1950 and developed with the help of the United States of America. In 1979, the development plan of the force was followed by French assistance. More vessels were purchased from England

and France in 1980 to 1990. In 1990, Saudi Arabia signed a treaty with the United States, whereby the United States began to integrate and coordinate Saudi Arabian naval equipment with US naval equipment. Due to Saudi Arabia's access to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, the Navy has an Eastern armada (with the centrality of Al Jubail) in the Persian Gulf and a Western armada (with the centrality of Jeddah) in the Red Sea. Saudi Arabia has sought military expansion deals with Western countries, especially the US and France, over the past decade with the aim of expanding and modernizing the navy, especially in the Persian Gulf. The latest status of Saudi Arabian Navy assets are given in Table 3:

Table 3: Saudi Navy assets

Type of equipment	Number
Total Naval Assets	55
Frigates	7
Corvettes	4
Patrol Vessels	9
Mine Warfare	3

Resource: Global firepower, 2019

IV. CAUSES OF SAUDI ARABIA'S SECURITY POLICIES IN THE REGION

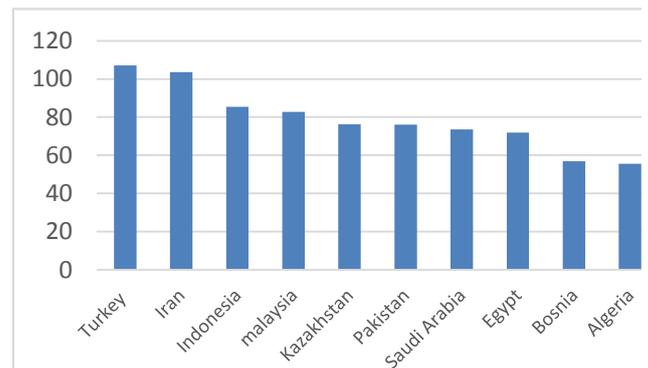
There are a number of factors involved in Saudi Arabia's security policies, but the most important are: Saudi Arabia's lower power than Iran; Saudi Arabia's foreign policy orientation to maintain the status quo in the region.

(a) Saudi Arabia's lower power than Iran: Power is a relative concept, and being powerful is measured by both space and time. Given that power lies at the heart of international politics, solutions have been proposed to measure national power [18]. Given the diversity and multiplicity of factors and variables of countries' national power measurement and their unequal methods of measurement, in this study we will use one of the measures to compare the national power of Iran and Saudi Arabia. Seyyed Hadi Zarghaniin a study in 2013 has evaluated the national power of the countries of the Islamic world based on various factors. The model of national power in this model is based on nine economic, political, social, cultural, transboundary, territorial, military, spatial and scientific factors. Each factor is made up of several variables and indices; from these factors, the national power of the countries of the Islamic world is determined. According to Zarghaniin's research work, the chart below shows the national power status of the countries in the Islamic world, which shows the level of national power of Saudi Arabia and Iran [19].

In science and technology, Saudi Arabia ranks fifth and Iran ranks fourth in the Islamic world. In culture, Saudi Arabia ranks twentieth and Iran ranks second; In terms of social factor, Saudi Arabia ranks twenty first and Iran ranks fourth; In terms of territorial, Saudi Arabia ranks fourth and Iran ranks second; In economic, Saudi Arabia ranks fifth and Iran ranks fourth; In terms of political factor, Saudi Arabia ranks fourth and Iran ranks third; In terms of transboundary factor, Saudi Arabia ranks fifth and Iran ranks thirteenth; In terms of spatial factor, Saudi Arabia ranks third and Iran ranks sixth;

and finally In terms of military factor, Saudi Arabia ranks sixth and Iran ranks third in the Islamic world. Accordingly, Saudi Arabia's national power is significantly lower than Iran's. In this regard, given the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, the extent of national power is an important factor in the security approaches of the two countries in the region. Therefore, Saudi Arabia's lower power than Iran has led to its security policies, including: Partnership and coalition with the West (US); regional partnerships within the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council; coalition with Arab and non-Arab actors and increasing the military power.

Chart 1: National Power Rankings of Islamic World Countries by National Power Level (The sum of the nine factors)



Reference: Zarghaniin, 2013

(b) Foreign policy orientation to maintain the status quo: The basics of Saudi foreign policy has based on maintaining the status quo and balancing radical revolutionary phenomena and preventing them from spreading inside the country. In this context, Saudi Arabia has always pursued a policy of conservatism, caution and avoidance of regional policy. Saudi Arabia's efforts to maintain the distribution of power in the region (Bahrain and Yemen) and working in international organizations (Islamic Cooperation Organization) can also be understood in this context.

(1) Maintaining the Distribution of Power in the Region (Bahrain and Yemen): Conflicts between states result from endangering their national interests, which can be caused by a conflict filling a power vacuum in a particular region or country, or the conflict can arise from the conflict between a country seeking to maintain the status quo and a country seeking to change the status quo; or as the most important reason, this conflict can be caused by the exercise of superiority at the regional and international level [20]. While Saudi Arabia seeks to consolidate its position as a regional hegemony, this leadership has always been challenged by Iran. In other words, Saudi Arabia has sought to co-organize its policies at the regional level in order to counterbalance Iran and expand its influence [21]. In recent years, the country has taken steps to maintain its power in the region. Examples of such actions can be seen in the military attacks on Bahrain and Yemen. Bahrain is at the forefront of Saudi Arabia's political worldview, and among the most urgent Saudi Arabia's foreign policy issues is maintaining security and stability of this

country. Bahrain, besides being at the forefront of the foreign policy agenda of Saudi Arabia, is one of the countries of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council that is fully dependent on the West for security. For Saudi Arabia, security and stability in Bahrain is important in many respects. Saudi Arabia is concerned about the fall of the Bahraini government and the coming of a Shiite-led government; this could lead to increased Iranian influence in the region. Bahrain's government extensively suppressed protest movements at the start of intense Shiite protests in Bahrain with the direct green light of Saudi Arabia; when the Bahraini government weakened in the face of this wave of protests, the Saudi military entered the country to confront the uprising in Bahrain and was able to suppress the protest movements with an iron fist. Following the escalation of the Yemeni crisis during the era of Ali Abdullah Saleh, an important action taken by Saudi Arabia, along with other members of the GCC, was to present a plan that, despite Saleh's resignation, granted him immunity and allowed him to oversee member states of the Saudi-led Cooperation Council in Yemen's internal affairs. The second step was taken in the early months of 2015; Saudi Arabia, with the support of regional Arab states, launched military attacks on Yemen under the pretext of accessing Yemeni Houthis with ballistic missiles. However, with the Yemeni resistance and the continuation of the war, Saudi Arabia does not appear to have won the war. It is clear that Saudi Arabia's concern are more due to the power of Shiite groups such as Ansarallah and the Houthis in Yemen that are in line with Iran's interests [22].

(2) Working in international organizations (Islamic Cooperation Organization): Another of Saudi Arabia's efforts to maintain the status quo in the region is through international organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It has gained credibility among Muslims around the world through activities such as the development of the Two Holy Mosques, extensive economic and financial assistance to Muslim countries, and assistance to Muslim minorities. Saudi Arabia has practically gained the support of the Arab world for conservative policies by upgrading its position among the countries of the Islamic world. The role of Saudi Arabia is crucial in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which is the most important forum of Islamic countries. With the support of the Arab countries, Saudi Arabia has practically become one of the main elements of this organization [23]. For example, in 2016, at the Thirteenth Islamic Cooperation Organization (ICO) Leaders' Conference held in Istanbul, the organization expressed its support for Saudi Arabia in the fight against terrorism, and in particular for supporting the Muslim Coalition against Terrorism. Actually by this clause, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation shown support for the Saudi initiative. On the other hand, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) issued a rather sharp warning to Iran about interfering in the internal affairs of countries such as Yemen and Bahrain, supporting terrorism, raiding Saudi diplomatic sites in Tehran and Mashhad; this also reflects the role of the organization in supporting Saudi Arabia's policies in the region.

V. CONCLUSION

Saudi Arabia has always strived to play a leading role in the Persian Gulf region because of its vast territory, vast oil resources and its geopolitical position in the region. Given the developments over the last three decades, especially the Arab Spring in 2011, the country is pursuing different security strategies in the region in order to transform itself into the dominant power in the Persian Gulf. The key axes of Saudi Arabia's security strategies in the Persian Gulf are: Partnership and coalition with the West (US); regional partnerships within the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council; coalition with Arab and non-Arab actors and increasing the military power. One of the most important reasons that has led Saudi Arabia to adopt security strategies in the region is its lower power than Iran and its foreign policy orientation to maintain the status quo in the region. Measuring national power in Saudi Arabia and Iran through algebraic sums of positive and negative scores on eighty-seven variables in the form of nine factor of economical, political, territorial, social, cultural, scientific, military, transboundary and spatial factors indicate Saudi Arabia relative to Iran It has lower power. Therefore, Saudi Arabia's lower power over Iran has led to its security policies, including partnership and coalition with the West (US); regional partnerships within the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council; coalition with Arab and non-Arab actors and increasing the military power. Another factor is the country's foreign policy orientation to maintain the status quo in the region. Saudi Arabia is trying to pursue its conservative policies in the region through maintaining the power distribution in the region (Bahrain and Yemen) and working in international organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

REFERENCES

- [1] Azimi, Roghayeh Sadat, Saudi Arabia, Tehran: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p 10, 1995 (in Persian)
- [2] Moshirzadeh, Homeira, Development in international relations theories, SAMT Publication, p73, 2009 (in Persian)
- [3] Abdollah Khani, Ali, Security Theories, International Institute for Cultural Studies and Research: Abrar Moaser, p 61, 2010 (in Persian)
- [4] Gholam Hoseini, Ismael and khojeh, reza, Realism School and Military Strategy, *Defense Policy Journal*, Volume 21, Issue 83, pp114-115, 1392 (in Persian)
- [5] Morgenthau, Hans J, Thompson, Kenneth W and Clinton, David, Politics Among Nations, McGraw-Hill Education; 7 edition, pp64-67, 2005
- [6] Holsti, k, International politics: A framework for analysis, Prentice-Hall; seventh printing edition, pp 91-103, 1967
- [7] Aghaei, Seyed Davood and Ahmadian, Hasan, The Islamic Republic of Iran-Saudi Arabia relations fundamental challenges and opportunities ahead, *Politic Quarterly*, Volume 40, Issue 3, p 12, 2010 (in Persian)
- [8] Asadi, Ali Akbar, The most important differences between Iran and Saudi Arabia, International Center for Peace Studies (IPSC), 2016 (in Persian)
- [9] Cordesman, H. Anthony and Burke, Arleigh A., Moving Towards unity, Expanding the role of the GCC in gulf security, center for strategic and international studies (CSIS), pp 9-11, 2012
- [10] Karami, Kamran, Feasibility of Saudi-Turkish ties forming a new regional coalition, International Center for Peace Studies (IPSC), 2013 (in Persian)

- [11] Sadeghi Aval, Hadi, and Naghdi Eshrat Abad, Jafar, Relations between Iran and Regional fort of GCC, *Global Politics Quarterly*, Volume 3, Issue 4, p 57, 2014 (in Persian)
- [12] Etaat, Javad and Ahmadi, Ibrahim, The Geopolitical Analysis of Pakistan's Relations with the Neighbors: The Tensions and Threats, *Journal of Political Studies and International*, Volume 7, Issue 24, p 17, 2015 (in Persian)
- [13] Muhittin, Ataman, Turkish Saudi Arabian Relations, during the Arab uprisings: Towards a Strategic Partnership, *insight turkey*, Vol 14, No. 4, p 4, 2012
- [14] Moheb Ali, Ghasem, The Causes and Consequences of Expanding Saudi Arabia-Turkey Relations, International Center for Peace Studies (IPSC), 2015 (in Persian)
- [15] Sadeghi, Hosein, Ahmadian, Hasan, Saudi Arabia from oil hegemony to regional leadership, *International Journal of Foreign Relations*, Vol. 3, No 2, p 137, 2010 (in Persian)
- [16] Lamoth, Dan, How U.S. weapons will play a huge role in Yemen, 26 March 2015, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/03/26/how-u-s-weapons-will-play-a-large-role-in-saudi-arabias-war-in-yemen/>
- [17] SIPRI, SIPRI Yearbook 2019, Summary in English, Armaments, Disarmament and International Security; summary, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), pp. 6-12, 2019
- [18] Tellis, Ashley J., Bially, Janice, Layne, Christopher and McPherson, Melissa, Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age, RAND Corporation, pp. 20-23, 2000
- [19] Zarghaniin, Seyyed Hadi, Measurement and Ranking of National Power of Muslim Countries, *Journal of Political Sociology of Islam World*, Volume 1, Issue 2, pp 1-26, 2013 (in Persian)
- [20] Azghandi, Alireza and AghaAlikhani, Mahdi, The Regional Grounds of Disintegration Between Iran And Saudi Arabia (2005 - 2011), *Politic Quarterly*, Volume 43, Issue 2, p 227, 2013 (in Persian)
- [21] Kooh kan, Ali Reza and Tajari, Saei, The Syrian Crisis and Saudi Arabia's Regional Policy (2011 - 2014), *Strategic Research of Politics*, Volume 3, Issue 10, pp. 115-116, 2015 (in Persian)
- [22] Sadeghi Aval, Hadi, Analysis of Relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia on the Basis of Motivational Realism (2005-2015), *International Political Research Quarterly*, Volume 7, Issue 25, p 151, 2016 (in Persian)
- [23] Ramezan Zadeh, Ali Akbar, Besharati, Mohammad Reza, Hashemi, Taghi, Regional Position Transformation and Stressful Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia, *Journal of Management and Defense Research*, Volume 12, Issue 71, pp. 171, 2013 (in Persian)