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**FOREIGN POLICY OF THE UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES AND ITS MILITARY
INTERVENTIONS IN THE REGION**

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ÖZ

BİRLEŞİK ARAP EMİRLİKLERİ DIŞ POLİTİKASI VE BÖLGEDEKİ BÖLGEDE Kİ ASKERİ MÜDAHALELERİ **Gözde ÇAĞLAR**

Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri (BAE) eskiden Umman sınırların içindeyken İngiliz sömürgesinden sonra 1971 yılında bağımsız bir devlet olarak kurulmuş ve 2004 yılına kadar Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan tarafından yönetilmiştir. Körfez bölgesinde bulunan petrol zengini bu ülkenin dış politikası, yöneticilerinin kişiliği ve bölgede meydana gelen olaylara göre şekillenmiştir. 1979'daki Devrimi'nden sonra ülke güvenliğine en önemli tehdit olarak İran görülmüştür. 1980'lerde ülke güvenlik kaygılarından dolayı Körfez İşbirliği Konseyi'ne (KİK) üye olmuştur. Başlangıçta güvenlik sorunlarına karşı askeri değil diplomatik yollar tercih edilmiştir. 2004'te Sheikh Zayed'in ölümünden sonra yerine oğlu Halife bin Zayid el-Nehyan gelmiştir. Ülkenin diplomatik çözümlerden yana olan dış politika tutumu, bu dönemden sonra değişerek askeri bir boyut kazanmıştır.

Tezi açıklamak için öncelikle Kopenhag Okulu'nun güvenlikleştirme teorisinden bahsedilmiş ve daha sonra BAE ile ilgili tanıtıcı bilgilere yer verilmiştir. İkinci kısmında Körfez bölgesinin güvenliğini ilgilendiren konulara değinilmiş, üçüncü bölümünde ise Arap Baharı öncesindeki dış politikasından bahsedilerek, 2011 sonrası politikalarındaki değişim analiz edilmiştir. Aktif bir oyuncu olarak bölgede söz sahibi olan BAE'nin askeri müdahaleleri, politik ve ekonomik yardımları örnek ülkelerle açıklanmıştır. Arap Baharı sonrasında Müslüman Kardeşlere olan karşıtlığına değinilmiştir. Daha sonra BAE dış politikasındaki farklılıklar ve Katar ambargosu açıklanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: BAE dış politikası, Arap Baharı, askeri müdahale, Körfez bölgesi, güvenlik.

ABSTRACT

FOREIGN POLICY OF UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND ITS MILITARY INTERVENTIONS IN THE REGION GÖZDE ÇAĞLAR

The United Arab Emirates (the UAE), which was part of Oman until it was colonized by the Great Britain, was founded in 1971. It was governed by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan until 2004. The foreign policy of this oil-rich country has been shaped according to the personality of its leader and the events taking place in the region. After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran was viewed as the greatest security threat. In the 80s, the country became a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) due to security concerns. In the beginning, methods of diplomacy were preferred rather than those of military to deal with security problems. After the death of Sheikh Zayed in 2004, his son Khalifa bin Zayed al Nahyan succeeded him. The country's foreign policy stance that favored diplomatic solutions gained a military dimension during his period.

In the initial part of the thesis, the securitization theory of the Copenhagen school was mentioned and some general information is given about the UAE. In the latter part, the issues related to the security of the Gulf region were discussed and the third part tackles the foreign policy before the Arab Spring and the change in the policies after 2011. The military interventions, political and economic aid of the UAE as an active player are explained with the referent countries. The opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood, after the Arab Spring, was mentioned. That being discussed, the differences in the UAE foreign policy and the Qatar embargo were explained.

Key Words: the UAE foreign policy, Arab Spring, military intervention, Gulf region, security

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADFD	: Abu Dhabi Fund for Development
AQAP	: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
ATACMS	: Army Tactical Missile System
CRS	: Congressional Research Service
DIB	: Dubai Islamic Bank
FAA	: Federation of Arab Emirates
FCM	: Federal Council of Ministers
FNC	: Federal National Council
FSC	: Federal Supreme Council
GCC	: Gulf Cooperatin Council
GCTF	: Global Counterterrosim Forum
GNA	: Government of National Accord
GNC	: General National Congress
GNP	: Gross National Product
HIMARS	: High Mobility Artillery Rocket System
HoR	: House of representatives
IRENA	: International Renewable energy Agency
IRGC	: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
KSA	: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LNA	: Libya National Army
LPA	: Libyan Political Agreement
MB	: Muslim Brotherhood
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OIF	: Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPEC	: Organisation of the Petroleum Exportiong Countries
SA	: Saudi Arabia
SCAF	: Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
THAAD	: Terminal High Altitude Air Defence System
THE UAE	: United Arab Emirates

UK : United Kingdom
UN : United Nation
UNSCR : United NAtion Security Council Resolution
USA : United States of America
USSR : Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WW2 : World War 2



INTRODUCTION

Scope of Thesis & Argument

The United Arab Emirates was part of Oman before British colonization. It was founded in 1971, and since its establishment, it has faced regional problems in the Gulf region. During the early period, it tried to provide its own security, and sought to make partners for itself. The UAE, which preferred diplomatic solutions in its foreign policy, did not favor military intervention even though it viewed Iran as the greatest threat to its security since its establishment. However, there have been changes in the UAE's foreign policy since 2011 and this has changed from diplomacy to a more interventionist policy. The aim of this study is to explain the security problems the young country faced and to show the changes in its foreign policy since its foundation. The thesis also addresses the issues which the United Arab Emirates considers as a security problem, explains securitization of them and how these subjects are handled. Therefore, the theory of securitization and the Copenhagen School are discussed.

The UAE is an important country in terms of its oil reserves and strategic position, which makes it open to external threats. Not strong enough to defend itself, the country seeks protection under the umbrella of other big states such as the United States. Although the Federal Supreme Council is the highest authority in the country and it is the President running its foreign policy and the Federal Council of Ministers, the Federal National Council and the Foreign Ministry can be regarded, in practice, as the highest authority in decision-making. Foreign Policy of the country was changed after the Sheikh Zayed. After 2004, when the new leader Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan came to power, the country became a member of Arab Quartet* and started to pursue pro-western policies.¹

According to Ehteshami, after 2011 not only diplomatic but also military tools have come to the fore in the UAE foreign policy. After this period, the UAE played an

*Arab Quartet include foreign ministers of Jordan, the UAE, Egypt, Saudi Arabia.

¹ Khalid S. Almezaini, **The UAE and foreign policy: foreign aid, identities and interests**, Routledge, 2012.

active role in the region. This military role is seen in Bahrain, Libya and Yemen.² However before 2011, there was a “quiet diplomacy”³ model which was based on diplomatic tools but it changed with the Arab Spring. Although the UAE started to use more military elements in its foreign policy, the issues regarding security problem either significantly changed or remained the same. The Shiite expansionist policies of Iran, for instance, have continued to be considered as a major threat to national and regional security. Likewise, different groups, following the Arab Spring, have begun to be seen as a potential menace to stability. The Muslim Brotherhood, Islamist groups and Houthis have been declared as terrorist organizations. Thus, moves in foreign policy were announced to have been made to ensure the national security.

Until the Arab Spring, there were important events that had shaped the foreign policy of the UAE. The first of these is 1979 Iranian Revolution. It is clear that this revolution, which is described as a security problem for the Gulf countries, is also a problem for the UAE, whose three islands were occupied by Iran. After this revolution, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established as a security block against Iran. The second important issue was the Iran-Iraq war. Then, in 1990, the Gulf War affected the foreign policy of the country. For GCC countries, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as a member of the GCC has become an important issue because they could not prevent the invasion and found it necessary to call for outside assistance to end the invasion. That country was the USA. Also, 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003 were among the major regional changes until 2011. All these developments have shaped both the domestic and foreign policies of the UAE. The Gulf countries did not oppose the collapse of Saddam Hussein’s regime, opening the way for the Iranian influence the next door.

The Arab Spring that shook the Arab world was a factor of a major regional change. However, this desire for change was not welcomed by the Gulf countries as they preferred the continuation of the status quo, and they opposed the changes which

² Anoushiravan Ehteshami, “Saudi Arabia as a Resurgent Regional Power”, **The International Spectator**, vol 53, no 4, September 25, 2018, p. 38.

³ Martin Adelman, “Quiet diplomacy: the reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy”, **Africa Spectrum**, vol.3, no. 2, 2004.

was brought about by the Arab Spring. The UAE has also played an active role in this process by leading the changing regional order along with the Saudi Arabia.

This study explains the cases of Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain and Libya where the Arab Spring occurred. The Revolution of 25 January 2011 in Egypt did not initially cause any reaction in the UAE. However, the UAE reacted to the fact that in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood came to power and supported the coup process and the Sisi administration. In addition, the UAE joined military interventions in Libya, Yemen and Bahrain. In Libya, it participated in NATO intervention to topple the Qaddafi regime⁴ but it defended the Bahrain government against the protestors.

Egypt's Sisi administration was seen as a partner by the UAE, which sees the Muslim Brotherhood as a security threat by shaping the government's foreign policy accordingly.⁵ Also, the Operation Decisive Storm was launched in Yemen⁶ by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates while Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, and Pakistan joined the operation.⁷ The GCC sent its troops to Bahrain upon the request of the king to suppress demonstrations.⁸ All these developments have also caused divergences with Qatar in foreign policy and diplomatic crisis between the two countries has been experienced. These developments are evident to changes in the UAE foreign policy and its active role in the region. The aim of the thesis is to explain this role in reshaping the regional order.

The study focuses on the changes of foreign policy after 2011, as well as the regional changes after 1971. It is also worth noting that it is quite necessary to have a grasp of pre-2011 period to be able to understand the UAE's foreign policy and to satisfactorily answer how the country's policies through military interventions are

⁴ "NATO and Libya (Archived)", **nato.int**, November 9, 2015, (Online), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_71652.htm, 28 November 2019.

⁵ Stephan Roll, "Al-Sisi's development visions: projects and power in Egypt" **Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik**, 2014, (Online), <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-396571>, 1 March 2019.

⁶ Ali Semin, "Yemen Krizi, Husiler Ve İran-Körfez Güç Mücadelesi", **İstanbul: Bilgesam**, no. 1201, April 3, 2015, p. 2-3.

⁷ Ghassan Shabaneh, "Operation Decisive Storm: Objectives and Hurdles", **Aljazeera Center for Studies**, April 12, 2015, (Online), <http://studies.aljazeera.net/mritems/Documents/2015/4/13/2015413105654152734Operation%20Decisive%20Storm.pdf>, 4 May 2015.

⁸ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Bahrain's uprising: Regional dimensions and international consequences", **Stability: International Journal of Security and Development**, vol. 2, no. 1, 2013, p. 4.

shaped. To this purpose, it seems essential to get to know the general organizational structure of this oil-rich country. I then elaborated the security problems of the Gulf region, relations with Iran, the existence of terrorism as a security problem. In the light of all these security problems, not having any significant power for self protection, the country's relations with the USA, an important partner to this small gulf country, are scrutinized. The UAE's foreign policy is then divided as before and after 2011. So I tried to explain the changes in the UAE's policy, and in so doing, I touched upon the Copenhagen School's theory of securitization.



Theoretical Framework

One of the basic concepts of international relations is security. A large number of studies concerning this concept is an obvious evidence of how important a subject it is. However, despite the researches and theoretical discussions, there is no compromised definition of security and each theory offers different explanations for security. Especially, the changing international conjuncture also modified the view of security. International relations are liable to change, resulting in the way in which concepts are used and the perspectives of theories change.

Two armed powerful states had established a bipolar world order in the Cold War but after 1989, it was seen that communist governments were overthrown and the Soviet Union collapsed. Along with these new developments, there have been differences in traditional perspectives on security. That's why, a political and theoretical debate has begun to redefine the concept of security.⁹ As a result of the criticisms that started against the traditional international relations theories, "critical theories" came to the fore. These criticisms have expanded to cover not only the methods but also the perception of security. Critical theory has questioned positivist theories with the question of who is the main actor for security is, explained its approach and took security from a wider perspective in terms of actors. Not only national security, but also individual, global and international ones are examined. Actors are not just the states. It includes individuals, non-governmental organizations, interest groups, non-government actors and societies.¹⁰ The Copenhagen school, which deals with the security among critical theories, stands out with its "securitization theory". In Security studies, school is shaped with three main ideas as sectors, regional security complexes and securitisation. Debate of the Copenhagen School in security studies and politics was made in the 1970s and 1980s to make narrow concept of security wider. While traditionalists assume that security issues can not cover everything, a different argument is made by Copenhagen school and they suggested to think about about what makes

⁹ Hans Günter Brauch, "Güvenliğin yeniden kavramsallaştırılması: Barış, güvenlik, kalkınma ve çevre kavramsal dörtlüsü", *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*, vol. 5, no.18, 2008, p. 19.

¹⁰ Keith Krause, Michael C. Williams, "Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods", *Mershon International Studies Review*, vol. 40, no. 2, 1996, p. 229-254.

security problems a security problem. Security discourse is created against a security threat that is said to exist and justified the use of many kind of methods to deal with it. It legitimizes the use of power. The securitisation process is a kind of speech act. Not everything is a security issue on its own, yet when they are qualified as a security problem, they have the potential to become a security issue. Copenhagen School often characterizes securitization as an undemocratic situation.¹¹

Copenhagen School focused on identity, which is vulnerable to threats. Although it was a subject that had been handled much earlier by social scientists, it was revised again by Weaver and others and gained a new perspective. Another important contribution of the School is the substantial shift in consideration that ensures the core of the discussion, with the rise of society to a level of an independent object of security.¹²

While Copenhagen School is trying to look at the security issue from a wider perspective, traditional theories are military focused and state-centered. Buzan said that the definition of threat should cover a wider area than military issues. According to classical theories, security complexes are shaped from the inside to outside with the mutual effects between their units and classical theories are formulated about the military and political sectors and states are its reference objects. However, Copenhagen School tries to wider security complex theory to sectors other than military area. For traditional political-military understanding, security is related with survival. An existential threat perception is a way to justify the use of force. It is checked whether their security is threatened. In addition to these, securitization is an extreme kind of politicization. According to the theory, while any public issue is actually non-politicized, then it can be made securitized by politicizing it. Securitizing actors can attempt to build everything as a referent object.¹³ According to Copenhagen School, through

¹¹ Ole Waever, "Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: New school's in Security", **International Studies Association**, March, 2004, (Online), [http://www.udc.edu.br/libwww/udc/uploads/uploadsMateriais/08052018165824Waever,%20Ole%20\(2004\)%20Aberystwyth,%20Paris,%20Copenhagen_New%20Schools%20in%20Security%20Theory%20and%20Their%20Origins%20Between%20Core%20and%20Periphery.pdf](http://www.udc.edu.br/libwww/udc/uploads/uploadsMateriais/08052018165824Waever,%20Ole%20(2004)%20Aberystwyth,%20Paris,%20Copenhagen_New%20Schools%20in%20Security%20Theory%20and%20Their%20Origins%20Between%20Core%20and%20Periphery.pdf), 01.03.2020.

¹² Bill McSweeney, "Identity and security: Buzan and the Copenhagen school", **Review of international studies**, vol. 22, no.1, 1996, p. 82.

¹³ Barry Buzan, et al., **Security: A new framework for analysis**, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

language, some issues turn to security issues (or threats). Language identifies certain actors or issues as threatening factors for a specific political community, thus make possible the securitization (sometimes by interpretation).¹⁴

Problems outside the political sphere can be included in the political sphere. Politicized problems become a part of public policy and the problem started to concerns social society. The transformation of the politicized problem into a security problem occurs when it is presented from an existential threat perception. When states have expressed the issue as survivability problem and persuaded the public, the problem has now been secured. However, more securitization leads to less democracy so, the problems must be taken within normal political boundaries and resolved here as soon as possible.¹⁵ When states see the problems as a threat to their survival, they give them priority, and they both have the right to eliminate it and use extraordinary ways to do so. Namely, if securitizing actor perceive referent object as an existential threat to its survivability and convince the audience by speech act, extraordinary measures are taken in the securitization of the problem.¹⁶

In literature about United Arab Emirates, Almezaini focused Constructivism. Theory says that in international relations, behaviors are shaped by norms, identity, beliefs, values, not by interests exclusively. Constructivists also think that state identity determines state strategies. Almezaini says foreign aid in the UAE foreign policy was shaped according to norms, identity, beliefs, values. That's because issues such as the Arab unity and the Islam were on the agenda from time to time, so they shaped their foreign aid according to these subjects.¹⁷

It is possible to mention that state identity (mainly Arabism) played a significant role in the foreign policy perspective of the UAE until 2004. However, it is not enough to explain the interventions in Bahrain, Libya and Yemen solely with ideology.

¹⁴ Matt McDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security", **European journal of international relations**, vol. 14, no. 4, 2008, p. 568.

¹⁵ Ole Waever, **Securitisation: Taking stock of a research programme in Security Studies**, Unpublished draft, February, 2003.

¹⁶ Nebi Miş, "Güvenikleştirme Teorisi ve Siyasal Olanın Güvenikleştirilmesi", **Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi (AID)**, vol. 6, no. 2, 2011, p. 350.

¹⁷ Khalid S. Almezaini, **op. cit.**, p. 13-16.

Because of its opposition to the MB, the UAE provided financial aid to the coup government in Egypt since 2013. Looking at the United Arab Emirates' foreign policy, the policies of the securitization theory proposed by the Copenhagen School can be seen. While Iran is generally assumed to be an external threat during the period before the Arab Spring and is being, this situation has been shaped in the axis of the Muslim Brothers after the Arab Spring. The state administration has made securitization clear in its discourses. Muslim Brothers were first perceived as a survival problem for the country and its citizens, and so some steps were taken to persuade the public for legitimization. Since its establishment, it is possible to explain the foreign policy of the country with the theory of securitization.

The UAE and Iran have an unresolved dispute over tree Island of Emirates (Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunb). Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad visited the island of Abu Musa in 11 April 2012. In the speeches, foreign minister of the UAE, Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed said that *"visiting of the Iranian president was a "flagrant violation" of the UAE sovereignty."*¹⁸Not only about island disputes but also nuclear attempt of Iran led to perception of security threat. In 3 December 2007, Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed expressed: *"The GCC states follow closely the Iranian nuclear issue which worries them due to its political consequences, and as far as security is concerned in light of the arm-wrestling between Iran and the international community"*.¹⁹

Minister of state of foreign affair for the UAE, Anwar Bin Mohammed Gargash spoke in the Asia Society Policy Institute and he claimed:

"Nearly four decades after Iranian revolution, Iranian model has not been an attractive model in the region. The country has younger demography and a lot of Iranian would like to see their country opening up. These are its internal problems and also there are external ones such as sectarianism and ideology. Iran has help raising sectarianism in the region and it became a major problem. This is a disaster for the region. Iran has been much

¹⁸ Vesela Todorova, "GCC Summit to Discuss Iranian Provocation", The National, April 14, 2012, (Online), <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/gcc-summit-to-discuss-iranian-provocation-1.359174>, 03.03.2020.

¹⁹ "Ahmedinejad Arrives for Gulf Summit", **Aljazeera**, December 3, 2007, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2007/12/200852514309702795.html>, 05.03.2020.

more aggressive. It is not seen only for nuclear technology but also for ballistic missile problem, supporting to Hezbollah and Houthies.”²⁰

The UAE foreign minister Shaikh Abdullah gave a speech in the UN General Assembly and he stated:

*“Iran continues to develop and conduct more ballistic missile tests in a deliberate violation of the spirit of the nuclear agreement. Therefore, we support enhancing controls on Iran’s nuclear programme and continued assessment of the agreement and its provisions.”*²¹

It is seen that the UAE and Iran have a dispute over Yemen, which will be explained later in the research. For the Yemen crisis, which is exacerbated by the Arab Spring and turned into a stalemate, the deputy permanent representative of the UAE to the United Nations, Jamal Al Musharakh spoke in the Security Council and expressed the views of the UAE about the cases in the Middle East. Al Musharakh demanded for solving the conflicts in Yemen and Syria and he underlined it was Iran that caused instability and tension in the region, as the common factor of interference. Also it is an existential danger because of its expansionist policies, spreading its revolution across borders, and interfering in the internal policies of neighbouring countries. He also added: *“Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism in our region from Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria to Al Houthi militia in Yemen, and terrorist groups and cells in Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.”*²²

Muslim brothers are the organization perceived by the United Arab Emirates as an external threat also. Al-Islah, which was opened as a branch of Brotherhood in the UAE, started to attract attention as a security threat especially with the beginning

²⁰ “The UAE Foreign Minister Criticizes Iran and Praises U.S. Withdrawal From Nuclear Deal”, **Asia Society**, September 27, 2018, (Online), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuJuxqUGZ8E>, 05.03.2020.

²¹ “UAE says Iran breaking spirit of nuclear deal”, **Gulf News**, September 23, 2017, (Online), <https://gulfnews.com/uae/government/uae-says-iran-breaking-spirit-of-nuclear-deal-1.2094458>, 05.03.2020.

²² “UAE: Iranian interference cause of tension in region”, **Gulfnews**, April 22, 2017, (Online), <https://gulfnews.com/uae/government/uae-iranian-interference-cause-of-tension-in-region-1.2015589>, 05.03.2020.

of the Arab spring in 2011. it reached its highest point when Morsi administration came to power by election in 2012, in Egypt. The United Arab Emirates first referred to the Muslim brothers and Al-Islah as a threat to national security, and then moves were made to prevent the existence of these organizations.

The US officials stated that Mohammad Bin Zayed generally describe the Muslim Brotherhood as whole "extremists" that include al-Qaeda or populist movements. In 2014, Saudi Arabia defined the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization and the UAE followed this explanation and also approved legislation to enable prosecution and declared oppositions against them as terrorists.²³ Abu Dhabi's opinion towards the Muslim Brotherhood is that it is a transnational organization and it provides the ideological support for the most violent Islamist movements of the world.²⁴

Emirates was scared of the rise of the Brotherhood in Egypt and its influence to revive a potential revolution. This thought led to the securitization of Muslim Brothers within the UAE. Later, the intervention was also legitimately started. The UAE has arrested nearly 60 local Islamists within the borders of the country in 2012 and accused them of being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood that is forbidden in the country - and of conspiring to overthrow the government. According to these thought, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahayan said: *"The Muslim Brotherhood does not believe in the nation state. It does not believe in the sovereignty of the state. They are using their prestige and capabilities to violate the sovereignty, laws and rules of other states."*²⁵

When 94 people from the Muslim Brotherhood were blamed and sentenced by the UAE in 2013, the attorney general claimed the accused had created a group that openly called on people to follow the values and teachings of Islam, with a hidden agenda to overthrow the state. They set up an organization that sought to deny the

²³ Andrew Chappelle, "Abi Dhabi's problem with the Muslim Brotherhood", **Aljazeera**, May 26, 2018, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/abu-dhabi-problem-muslim-brotherhood-180526105937656.html?xif=%20mb>, 08.03.2020.

²⁴ Barbara A. Leaf and Elana Delozier, "The UAE and Yemen's Islah: A Coalition Coalesces", **The Washington Institute**, December 6, 2018, (Online), <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-uae-and-yemens-islah-a-coalition-coalesces>, 08.03.2020.

²⁵ "Gulf States must tackle Muslim Brotherhood threat: UAE", **Reuters**, October 8, 2012, (Online), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-emirates-brotherhood/gulf-states-must-tackle-muslim-brotherhood-threat-uae-idUSBRE8970X220121008>, 05.03.2020.

fundamental principles of the UAE system of governance and to capture power, he said. To interpret the country's behaviors in the same six international human rights organisations, the Gulf Center for Human Rights, Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders said: *"It appears that 'national security' has been used as a pretext by the Emirati authorities to stifle dissent and repress all activists asking for democratic reforms and respect for human rights."*²⁶

Not only about Muslim brotherhood but also in Libya intervention, Gaddafi was seen as a security problem. The GCC countries met in Riyadh and issued that Arab League should take precautions to stop the bloodletting in Libya and to start connection with the National Council, which was established by the opposition groups.²⁷ In addition to this, Arab league also took action and one Arab League official said *"now: Which one is the better way? Should Western-led forces get ride of Gaddafi or suitable conditions created for the Libyan oppositions to do it themselves."*²⁸ United Nation Security Council was then called by the Arab League to enforce a no fly zone for Libya to protect citizens and to avoid this fatal situation without delay.²⁹ After Gaddafi's fall, the United Arab Emirates supported the Haftar administration in Libya. In order to justify this support, the UAE mentioned in its discourses that as a trusted partner for the UAE's interests in Libya, Haftar seeks to establish stability in the country. Just like the Sisi administration, the UAE wants the Haftar administration to rely on its support, while Emirates' main purpose is to ensure that Libya is free from stability and independence. Emirates does not want a strong oil-rich Libya in the region.³⁰ As mentioned later in the thesis, United Arab Emirates acted in line with the theory of securitization in its foreign policy. Perceiving Iran as a threat is clearly seen

²⁶ "UAE charges 'plotters linked to Muslim Brotherhood'", **BBC News**, January 28, 2013, (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-21226174>, 08.03.2020.

²⁷ "GCC: Libya regime lost legitimacy", **aljazeera**, March 11, 2011, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/03/2011310211730606181.html>, 16.03.2020.

²⁸ Martin Chulov, "Arab League to reiterate backing for Libya no-fly zone", **the guardian**, March 22, 2011, (Online), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/22/arab-league-libya-no-fly>, 16.03.2020.

²⁹ Richard Leiby, Muhammad Mansour, "Arab League ask U.N. for no-fly zone over Libya", **washingtonpost**, March 12, 2011, (Online), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/arab-league-asks-un-for-no-fly-zone-over-libya/2011/03/12/AB0ie0R_story.html, 16.03.2020.

³⁰ Jonathan Fenton, Harvey, "Why UAE seeks to crush Libya's democratic transition", **AA**, March 30, 2020, (Online), <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/analysis-why-uae-seeks-to-crush-libya-s-democratic-transition/1784855>, 30.03.2020.

in the island dispute, in the intervention to Bahrain and in Yemen. The UAE's backing for the Haftar administration after the fall of Gaddafi in Libya and the support for the Sisi coup in Egypt are indicative of their approach to Muslim Brotherhood. It is clear that the United Arab Emirates will behave towards the theory of securitization in its foreign policy.



CHAPTER ONE

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

1.1. Historical Background

In the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire took the control of Basra which is a gateway to the Persian Gulf and became influential in this region. As a result, they started to be active in the Persian Gulf which has an important connection of trade with the Indian world and the Far East. During this period, the Portuguese-Ottoman rivalry was experienced and this was especially on the control of the Bahrain Island.¹ Since the middle of the 16th century, with the control of the Hejaz, the Ottoman Empire tried to control over the Arabian Peninsula and they established relationship with the Arab sheikhs to the west of the Gulf for several centuries. It also showed interest in the southern parts of the Gulf region (i.e. the Omani Coast where the UAE is located).²

In the same century, when the Portuguese began to dominate the Gulf region (today known as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Qatar), other European states also started to have a say in line with their commercial interests. The Dutch and the British began to show interest in the Gulf region. Portugal's loss of supremacy in the region has led to a rivalry between the Dutch and the British. When the United Kingdom consolidated its colonial presence in India, the Dutch dominance has weakened after 1766. On the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, European and Arab piracy activities increased in the region. In 1820, a general peace agreement was signed between the Arab tribes and the Great Britain in order to prevent piracy and the slave trade.³

Having a strong influence in the region, the Ottoman state beginning to lose power in the 17th century, United Kingdom, which desired to secure the road to its colonies in India, started to become more effective in these lands over time. Napoleon's

¹ Salih Özbaran, “16. Yüzyılda Basra Körfezi Sahillerinde Osmanlılar: Basra Beylerbeyliğinin Kuruluşu”, *Tarih Dergisi*, vol 0, no 25, 1971, p. 51-61.

² İdris Bostan, “Basra Körfezinin Güney Kesimi ve Osmanlılar(1876-1908)”, *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, vol. 9, no. 9, 1989, p. 311.

³ *United Arab Emirates*, The Middle East and North Africa, 1986, p. 804-805.

Egyptian expedition (1798-1799) and the uprising of Kavalali Mehmet Ali Pasha(1831-1841) led United Kingdom to increase its interest in Egypt and to understand the importance of the Middle East for the Indian colony.⁴ For this reason, the UK has started to take a more active role in the region.

In line with this relationship, especially in the Gulf region, the tribal sheiks decided to make a "perpetual maritime truce" among them with the support of the Great Britain. A peace treaty was signed in 1853 and the region was called the Trucial Coast. The Trucial States entered into proper formal relations with the Great Britain in 1892 by an agreement with Britain. Like other neighbors in the north of the Bay, the Emirates (Trucial States) also came under British protection against foreign forces. Because of the growing interest of France, Russia, and Germany in the region, Britain became more involved in controlling these countries' foreign relations. The Sheiks, who accept the superiority of British interests in foreign relations, were also becoming dependent on the British arbitration in their domestic affairs. The sheiks are still given authority to rule according to their traditional customs.⁵

In particular, foreign powers competed to have influence over the Middle East after the sign of weakness of Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. After the World War 2, European powers lost their old powers and were forced to withdrew of them. It led to a transformation of power in this region, Soviet Union and United States came out as external power and their regional military bases and client states were led them to have this capacity.⁶ By 1952, the seven emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah and Sharjah) first came together with the idea of federation and the fact that the British convinced the Sheikhs to come together to form the Trucial States Council and to talk about their common problems.⁷ In 1968, Great

⁴ Fahir Armaoğlu, "19. yy siyasi tarihi (1789-1914)", **Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları**, 1997.

⁵ Michael Adams, **The Middle East: A Handbook; (Handbooks to the modern world)**, Blond, 1971.

⁶ William Mark Habeeb, **The Middle East in turmoil: Conflict, revolution, and change**, ABC-CLIO, 2012.

⁷ Abid A Al-MArayati, **The Middle East: its governments and politics**, Belmont, Duxbury Press, 1972.

Britain announced that British protection for Trucial Sheikhdoms would end in 1971 and they would withdraw from the region.⁸

Britain remained an important power in the Gulf between 1820 and 1971. It provided protection to ruling families in the Gulf and did so by signing various agreements because maintaining the status quo in this region was important to Britain interests.⁹ For this reason, its aim was to provide the security of the region and to protect its trade routes to India. However, the reason behind Britain's withdrawing from the region (from Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States) in 1971 was the changing demands of the post-World War II, the increasing nationalistic ideas in the region and because of Great Britain's internal problems.¹⁰

In fact, before the withdrawal, Britain wanted to create a federal structure in the Gulf region. But the project failed because Bahrain and Qatar had disagreements on this issue, only seven emirates have been transformed into a federal structure under the name of Trucial states. On December 1st, 1971, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Sharjah, Fujairah and Umm Al Quwain joined the Federation and Ras Al Khaimah joined in 1972.¹¹

1.2. After the Independence of the Gulf Region

The UK withdrew from the region in 1971, and new states, namely, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE, were formed. Of course, during this period they were vulnerable states.¹² The withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the region resulted in an unstable situation, coinciding with the 45-year long cold war dominating the

⁸ Sheel K. Asopa, **Oil, Arms and Islam in the Gulf**, Jaipur, Printwell Oublishers, 1986.

⁹ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "IMPLICATIONS OF THE QATAR CRISIS FOR REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE GULF", **Alshara Forum**, June 29, 2017, (Online), <https://research.sharqforum.org/2017/06/29/implications-of-the-qatar-crisis-for-regional-security-in-the-gulf/> , 17 May 2019.

¹⁰ Zachary K. Goldman, Mira Rapp-Hooper, "Conceptualizing Containment: The Iranian Threat and the Future of Gulf Security", **The Academy of Political Science** , vol. 128, no. 4 , December 17, 2013, p. 607.

¹¹ John Duke Anthony, John A.Hearty, "Eastern Arabian States:Kuwait,Bahrain,Qatar,the United Arab Emirates ,and Oman", **Westview Press**, Ed.by. David E. Long, Bernard Reich, Boulder, Colorado, (w.date), p. 149.

¹² Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Implications of the Qatar Crisis For Regional Security in the Gulf", **Alsharaq Forum**, June 29, 2017, (Online), <https://research.sharqforum.org/2017/06/29/implications-of-the-qatar-crisis-for-regional-security-in-the-gulf/>,17 , May 2019.

international arena (1945-1990).¹³ At that time, the Gulf countries saw the presence of an unstable situation as the rise of nationalism posed a threat to foreign interests because both Arab Radicals and Soviets tried to change the status quo for their interests. Therefore, the Gulf countries (Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ajman, Qatar, Fujairah, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, and Umm Al Quwain) also supported the formation of a single political entity to protect their interests and security. The FAA (Federation of Arab Emirates), which was planned to be established after the withdrawal of the UK, intended to serve this purpose. However, after significant efforts, the initiative to establish the FAA from nine emirates has failed. While Bahrain and Qatar gained independence in 1971, the remaining seven orders were finally brought together as the UAE.¹⁴

After the UK's colonial presence in the Gulf ended in 1971 following the 1968 resolution, the Arab Gulf states were forced to find a partner or patron to maintain their own security and to deal with the dangers in the region.¹⁵ This window of time was also a period when the small Gulf states felt most vulnerable and endangered until the GCC was founded in 1981 in Abu Dhabi.¹⁶ The withdrawal of the UK from the region did not end the influence of the UK, or the USA. In fact, after the withdrawal of the UK, the USA dominated the region more clearly.¹⁷ During the following years, the US has become the main security partner.

Although the USA was late to the Persian Gulf, it has managed to become a major player in the region after the World War Two, replacing the role of UK in the region.¹⁸ It is thought that oil in the Gulf countries would meet the energy needs of both themselves and their western allies.¹⁹ It is clear that oil was very important for

¹³ David Painter , “The Cold War: an international history”, **Routledge**, March 11, 2012, (Online), <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9780203010037>, 23 February 2019.

¹⁴ Zachary K. Goldman, Mira Rapp-Hooper, **op.cit.** , p. 608-609.

¹⁵ Reyadh Alasfoor, **The Gulf Cooperation Council: its nature and achievements**, Lund University, 2007, p. 19.

¹⁶ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, “Implications of the Qatar Crisis For Regional Security in the Gulf”, **Alsharq Forum**, June 29, 2017, (Online), <https://research.sharqforum.org/2017/06/29/implications-of-the-qatar-crisis-for-regional-security-in-the-gulf/>, 17, May 2019

¹⁷ Zachary K. Goldman, Mira Rapp-Hooper, **op.cit.**, p. 607.

¹⁸ W. Taylor Fain, **American ascendance and British retreat in the Persian Gulf region**, New York, Springer, July 2008, p. 1-2.

¹⁹ Esra Pakin Albayrakoglu , “ABD-Körfez İşbirliği Konseyi İlişkilerinde İran Faktörü”, **Uluslararası İlişkiler Akademik Dergisi**, vol 8, 2011, p. 97.

American economy and its hegemony on energy resources that has been an important part of the world economy. The most important oil reserves in the world are present in the Persian Gulf. Therefore, the US wanted to primarily maintain its influence in this region and wants to be in a dominant position in the global arena.²⁰ Besides seeking security partners from external powers, the Gulf States have also taken some steps to ensure their security domestically and they founded the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

1.3. The Geopolitical Nature of the United Arab Emirates

The UAE consists of 7 emirates which are known as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Umm Al Quwain, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, and Fujairah. Abu Dhabi is the largest emirate and its population is more than others. The UAE has shores in both the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf: 250 km on the Gulf of Oman and 1200 km on the southern coast of the Persian Gulf.²¹

The Persian Gulf as a unique model has a homogeneous situation with diverse nations, and cultures in the region. In second century, when Arab tribes migrated to the coast of Persian Gulf, the relations between the Arab and Iranian populations that have dissimilar ethnic background began. There are various disputes in the Persian Gulf and not only the UAE but also Iraq, Iran, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia have borders in there. For example, over the Persian Gulf, three islands known as Lesser Tunb, Greater Tunb and Abu Musa led to a problem between Iran and the UAE.²²

It is not be forgotten that border disputes in the Gulf region are not only due to geographical reasons. The disputes are based on problems pertaining to colonialism and foreign interventions. That's because the borders of other Gulf Countries except Iran and Oman were drawn in the 19th century by the imperial forces. A search for political identity and a competition for economic resources were complicated, which

²⁰ Kenneth M. Pollack , “Securing the Persian Gulf”, **The Brookings Review**, vol. 21, no. 4, 2003, p. 19.

²¹ John Duke Anthony, John A.Hearty, **op. Cit.**, p. 150.

²² Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh,, **Security and territoriality in the Persian Gulf: A maritime political geography**, Routledge, 2013.

led to disputes over international borders on account of a lack of effective regional regulations between and over the countries. Saudi Arabia-Qatar, Saudi Arabia-Yemen, Iran- the UAE, Bahrain-Qatar, Iraq-Kuwait, Oman-Yemen, Oman-The UAE, and Saudi Arabia-Oman suffered from territorial disputes in different dates.²³

Territorial competition is not seen only about border disputes. As it is known, there is no borderline of the UAE through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. However, Yemen war increased the importance of African ports; for example, United Arab Emirates has been using Assab ports located in Eritrea and in this way it surrounds and bomb critical port of Hodeida, Yemen. As the role of the UAE in Yemen strengthens, its role in these regions also increases.²⁴ In addition, in order to have a word in the region and take geographical advantages, the United Arab Emirates is trying to maintain its military presence as well as its interest in the ports.²⁵ Except in regions where the UAE tries to provide control for economic, commercial and political interest, the country has important seaports that contribute to the countries' geopolitical significance. The seaports of the UAE are both international and regional hubs and a necessary factor in driving economic growth and they enable economic diversification. Its sea transportation industry is growing steadily by focusing on operating ships and ports, maintaining and constructing dry docks in accordance with the international maritime standards and safety of the marine environment. The World Shipping Council noted that the UAE has two container ports which are among the world's top 50 and Dubai featuring within the top ten ports. Also, 61 percent of the cargos destined to GCC states reaches via the UAE's seaports. In addition to the UAE's oil ports, it also has 12 commercial trading ports.²⁶

²³ Gwenn Okruhlik, Patrick J. Conge, "The Politics of Border Disputes: On the Arabian Peninsula", **International Journal**, vol. 54, no.2, 1999, p. 233-245.

²⁴ David Styan, "The politics of ports in the Horn: War, peace and Red Sea rivalries," **African Arguments**, July 18, 2018, (Online), <https://www.eutm-somalia.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-politics-of-ports-in-the-Horn-War-peace-and-Red-Sea-rivalries.pdf>, 19.03.2020.

²⁵ Shady Ahmed Mansour, Yara Yehia Ahmed, "Saudi Arabia and UAE in the Horn of Africa: Containing Security Threats from Regional Rivals", **Contemporary Arab Affairs**, vol. 12, no. 3, 2019, p. 102-110.

²⁶ The Official Portal of the UAE Government, **government.ae**, (Online), <https://www.government.ae/en/information-and-services/infrastructure/civic-facilities/seaports>, 5 May 2019.

The UAE is also an important player in maintaining global energy supplies. With 40 percent of Middle Eastern oil is transported through it, the Strait of Hormuz is a significant route of transportation of oil and the UAE has a coast adjacent there. This 34-mile-wide passage is the way which two-fifths of the world's traded oil is currently shipped by tankers through it.²⁷

1.4. The UAE Society

According to 2018 data, the UAE population was estimated as 9,267,000. Only 19 percent are Emiratis and 23 percent is other nationalities (Iranians and Arabs), about 50 percent is South Asians, 8 percent is other expatriates (East Asians and Westerners). The 96 percent of the population is Muslim and the 16 percent of them are Shi'a Muslims. Four percent of the population is Christian, Hindu, and other religions. The official language of the country is Arabic, but Persian and English are among the languages spoken widely in big cities.²⁸

Muslims based on different sects in the Islamic World continue to live in the same state. The majority of the Muslim Sunni population belongs to the Hanafi sect, but the Hanbali sect is also common in the country.²⁹ The Gulf region which covers Iran has the highest population of the world's Shiite Muslims. While Bahrain, Iraq and Iran has more than 65 percent of the population, in Kuwait nearly 25 percent and in Yemen 40 percent are Shiite.³⁰ Percentage of the Shia in the other Gulf States are between 5-15 percent.³¹ Social and economic division between Shia and Sunni were said to be more certain in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain than other Gulf countries.³² For this reason, it is seen that the Sunni-Shiite distinction does not pose a serious problem in

²⁷ "The UAE and Global Oil Supply", **Embassy of the United Arab Emirates**, (Online), <https://www.the UAE-embassy.org/about-the UAE/energy/the UAE-and-global-oil-supply>, 5 May 2019.

²⁸ "United Arab Emirates", **Military Technology**, 2018, p 210-213, (Online), <http://se-arch.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=132965180&lang=tr&site=ehost-live>, 6 May 2019.

²⁹ Adem ARIKAN, "İslam dünyasının mezhep haritası ve nüfus dağılımı", **Journal of Islamic Research**, 2018, vol. 29, no. 2., p. 352.

³⁰ Fatima Ayub, "The Gulf and Sectarianism", **European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)**, 2013, (Online), https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR91_GULF_ANALYSIS_AW.pdf, 23.02.2020.

³¹ Toby Matthiesen, **Sectarian gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring that wasn't**, Stanford University Press, 2013.

³² "Identities and Islamism", **CHATHAM HOUSE**, May, 2012, (Online), https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Middle%20East/0512gcc_summary.pdf, 23.02.2020.

the United Arab Emirates. Nevertheless, the UAE opposed Iran's Shiite expansionist policies.

Foreign workers constitute the majority of the population. There is a difference between the large emirates (i.e. Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah) and less-wealthy emirates to the east but oil and gas revenues are the most important factors which hold the UAE together.³³ Despite their reduced role, tribal affiliation is still significant in the country. Their tribes are both Arabs and Sunni Muslims. But now they are mostly in urban areas and settled, abandoning their nomadic life-styles.³⁴ Even if people lived on the mountain, desert or on the coastal area, they were more homogenous society with their beliefs and Arabic language before the discovery of oil. The foreign workers came to the country with the 21st century, although society has not been the same, the homogeneity of the native inhabitants was not corrupted. While society that has passed into modern life in many areas, some basic features of tribal society have remained the same. For example, being a respectable tribe member remains important in the society.³⁵

Emirates' demographic population comprises the settled inhabitants (hocalar) and the semi-nomadic or nomadic tribes (bedouins or badu). Tribal values which are based upon kinship and Islam are two elements that have affected the UAE's social structure. In the world, dynasties and monarchies exist with the highest concentration in the Gulf region and the UAE separately has seven ruling families. The supreme chief who comes to governance by allegiance and power was appointed as the head of the emirate. The seven ruling dynasties from all emirates are the distinguished families in the area. Among these families are the Al-Bu-Falah of Abu Dhabi, the Al-Maktoom of Dubai, the Al-Qasimi of Sharjah and Ras-al-Khalmah, the Al-Sharqi of Fujairah, the Al-Nuaimi of Ajman, , and the Al-Muala of Umm-al- Quwain. The Shaikh enjoys the economic resources obtained from levies, customs and taxes duties imposed on the local community's economic activities.³⁶

³³ Anthony H. Cordesman, **Geopolitics and energy in the Middle East**, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 15 September 1999.

³⁴ John Duke Anthony, John A. Hearty, **loc. cit.**

³⁵ Frauke Heard-Bey, **United Arab Emirates: a new perspective**, Trident Press Ltd, ed. By Ibrahim Abed, Peter Hellyer, 2001, p. 114.

³⁶ Mohammed Abdulla Mohammed Al-Rokn, "A Study of the United Arab Emirates Legislature Under the 1971 Constitution with Special Reference to the Federal National Council (FNC)", **University of Warwick**, 1991, (Online), <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/36197>, 23.02.2020.

Even if the country is ruled by monarchy, the existence of civil society has been seen in social life and this entity has emerged especially after 9/11. While sense of confidence suppressed by political authority, situation changed after 9/11 and the UAE government started to interest in civil society. However, the most important reason is creating a better image for the USA. Nevertheless, the political authority never nurtured a sense of trust for civil society, and did not believe it would play a positive social role.³⁷ Moreover, civil society in the Middle East has always been subjected to pressure and restrictions. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood frequently participated in the power struggle and were oppressed by governments.³⁸

1.5. The Political Structure of the UAE

In 1971, a temporary constitution was made in the UAE and the political structure was shaped according to this constitution. Accordingly, the federal structure was determined as a federal executive, legislative and judiciary, the Federal National Council serves as the Legislative structure. It works in the form of an advisory council and there are also norms of traditional tribal and Islamic rules. This structure has 40 members. Those are divided among the emirates according to the size of the population. Accordingly, Dubai and Abu Dhabi have 8 seats, Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah has 6 seats, while the rest of the members has 4 seats. In general, budget discussions and decisions are made in the FNC. It also approves laws and international agreements. The prime minister, the president and the members of the supreme council are also approved by the FNC. A simple majority is sufficient for a decision to be made. Dubai and Abu Dhabi have veto power here as the two major emirates.³⁹

The Federal National Council is an advisory body for the Supreme Council. A half of the members of the FNC are elected and other half appointed by the Emir. The UAE is governed by the Supreme Council as an executive body, which includes the leaders of the 7 emirates. The Supreme Council consists of 7 emirates and the president is elected from among these members. In 2004, after his father's death, Sheikh Khalifa

³⁷ Fatma Al Sayegh, "Post-9/11 changes in the Gulf: The case of the UAE", **Middle East Policy**, vol. 11, no.2, 2004, p. 120.

³⁸ Eberhard Kienle, "Civil society in the Middle East." **The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society**, 2011, p. 148-150.

³⁹ **Ibid.**, p.153.

bin Zayed Al Nahyan became the leader of Abu Dhabi, then he became the president of the UAE. The Council of Ministers (cabinet) is governed by the prime minister and appointed by the Supreme Council leaders. Every emirate is represented by at least one minister. The legal system in the UAE is based on the 1971 constitution. It is not possible to observe any political party formation in the UAE. The federal judicial system was also run by this Constitution and has both supreme and lower courts. Judges are appointed by the president, and these judges are also approved by the FNC.⁴⁰ All of the emirates have a federal court system and all the emirates are governed with both secular and Islamic laws.⁴¹

Over the years, many steps to develop the UAE political system. To increase political participation, elections of the Federal National Council in 2006 in the UAE and the creation of the electoral college were designed as important steps. Between 1972 and 2006, 40 FNC's member were appointed. After 2006, the electoral college has elected 20 members of FNC and 20 members nominated by the rulers of the Emirates.⁴²

1.6. The Economy of the UAE

The discovery of oil in the Gulf region dates back to 1908. During this period, Persia allowed a British company to explore oil in its territory and they exploited it. By the 1940s, most of the world's oil reserves were in the Middle East. In 1938, Dubai signed the oil concession with the Great Britain, and other agreements were signed by other sheiks in subsequent years. American (Standard Oil Company of California), British (British Petroleum and Petroleum Concession Ltd.), and French (Compagnie Française des Pétroles) oil companies competed in the region for oil exploarations. Oil was first found in Abu Dhabi in 1958 and then, Dubai in 1966, changing everything

⁴⁰ "Country report: United Arab Emirates", **Economist Intelligence Unit**, May 2013, (Online), <http://content.argaam.com.s3.amazonaws.com/794f9add-6cc4-46e4-9771-37dfa5dbc63d.pdf> , 6 May 2019.

⁴¹ United Arab Emirates, **Military Technology**, October 15, 2018, (Online), <http://se-arch.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=132965180&lang=tr&site=ehost-live>, 6 May 2019.

⁴² "Seaports", **The Official Portal of the UAE Government**, October 30, 2018, (Online), <https://www.government.ae/en/information-and-services/infrastructure/civic-facilities/seaports> , 7 May 2019.

there and then in other Trucial States. Oil has been the most important source of income until recently.⁴³

Nomadic farming, pearling, seafaring, fishing and date palm cultivation were the main economic sectors prior to the discovery of oil in the 1950s in the Gulf region.⁴⁴ The discovery of oil made economic income in the region dependent on oil. Furthermore, with the discovery of oil, naturally, the western entrepreneurs tried to be active in the region. At the same time, the balance of power within the federation has changed. For example, the discovery of oil allowed Abu Dhabi to get ahead of other emirates in administrative reforms and social welfare. This provides another proof that oil actually affects the region significantly.⁴⁵ In the year 1967 the leader of the Abu Dhabi Sheikh Zayed joined the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC*).⁴⁶

The UAE has become a country dependent on oil production. Particularly the three emirates of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah have rich oil resources.⁴⁷ Nearly 30 percent of the country's GDP is based on gas and oil output. Also when value of export was 388,179 million \$, value of petroleum export was 74,940 million dollar in 2018.⁴⁸ According to the 2018 World Bank data⁴⁹, the country is among the group of high-income countries according to the ranking by the GNP per capita. In addition to having

* The task of OPEC is to manage the petroleum policies of the member countries, to ensure the stability of the oil markets, to provide a regular supply of oil to consumers and to provide a fair return on capital. OPEC has aimed to establish a common policy for oil-producing countries against oil companies and is the main objective of protecting the interests of these countries.

⁴³ Susan Muaddi Darraj, Meredyth Puller, **Creation of the Modern Middle East: United Arab Emirates**, Chealsea House, Ed.by. Arthur Goldschmidt Jr, New York, 2008, p. 27-31.

⁴⁴ "Seaports", **The Official Portal of the UAE Government**, October 30, 2018 , (Online), <https://www.government.ae/en/information-and-services/infrastructure/civic-facilities/seaports> , 7 May 2019.

⁴⁵ John Duke Anthony, John A.Hearty, **op. cit.** , p. 156.

⁴⁶ Susan Muaddi Darraj, Meredyth Puller, **op. cit.** , p. 36.I

⁴⁷ Sean Foley, **Guide to Islamist movements**, ME Sharpe, Ed. by. Barry M. Rubbin, 2010, p 310.

⁴⁸ "UAE Facts ad Figures", **OPEC**, 2018, (Online), https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/170.htm, 18.02.2020.

⁴⁹ "World Bank Country and Lending Groups " , **The World Bank**, 2017, (Online), <https://datahelp-desk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>, 02 May 2019.

a rich income in terms of the energy sector, the UAE economy has an advanced service sector, especially tourism.

Oil, natural gas and coal constitute a large part of the world's energy demand (87 percent), making the oil and gas countries such as the UAE important actors in the world energy markets. Oil consumption increased more than average 1.4 million barrels per day (1.5 per cent), coal consumption rose by 1.4% and consumption of natural gas grew 195 billion cubic metres (5.3%) in 2018.⁵⁰ According to 2018 data, OPEC has 79.4 percent of world crude oil reserves, the UAE as a member state of organization has 8.2 percent of it.⁵¹ The country is also the 8th with the largest natural gas reserves in the world (5.9 trillion cubic meters as of 2018).⁵² This brings the UAE to an important position in the energy market. However, it has a fragile structure against the global economic crises because its revenues from both oil and natural gas production and tourism are open to economic global economic fluctuations. For example, during the economic crisis of 2008, the UAE economy is also affected significantly since then. Another problem is limited years were left until the oil reserves will exhaust. It is estimated only 94 years were expected for the UAE oil reserves.⁵³

In a place where oil is so important, it would be a great mistake to see the oil as the sole source of income. The UAE aims to end its dependence on hydrocarbons. For this purpose, the UAE leaders started to make plans for the period after the depletion of oil. They realized the importance of investing in other sources of income besides oil. The foundation of the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and technological

⁵⁰ "BP Statistical Review of World Energy", **BP**, 2019, (Online), <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/energy-economics/statistical-review/bp-stats-review-2019-full-report.pdf>, 19.02.2020.

⁵¹ "OPEC Share of World Crude oil Reserves, 2018", **OPEC**, 2019, (Online), https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/data_graphs/330.htm, 19.02.2020.

⁵² M. Garside, "Leading Countries by Proved Reserves of Natural Gas From 2008 to 2018", **Statista**, June 25, 2019, (Online), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/265329/countries-with-the-largest-natural-gas-reserves/>, 19.02.2020.

* IRENA: 2019 yılında 160 üyeye ulaşmış olan bu intergovernmental organisationun amacı ülkelerin sustainable energy transformationuna yardımcı olmak ve desteklemektir. DİPNOT (<https://www.irena.org/>)

⁵³ Harun Öztürkler, "Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri Ekonomisinin Temel Özellikleri", **Middle Eastern Analysis / Ortadoğu Analiz**, July 1, 2012, (Online), <https://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/birlesik-arap-emirlikleri-ekonomisinin-temel-ozellikleri/>, 02 February 2019.

investments concerning Industry 4.0 can be seen as examples. They want to lower the share of oil and gas that is currently about the 30 percent of the UAE GDP but this will only be possible if it shifts its economy to other areas. Therefore, they place emphasis on renewable energy sources. For example, solar energy-based systems have started to develop rapidly. At the same time, the importance given to renewable energy sources can be seen in the hosting of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA*) in the Masdar City. This city is designed as a city that works with renewable energy.⁵⁴

In general, the UAE economy has certain characteristics. One is its strategic location. Because it is located in between Europe, Asia, and Africa, there are thousands of Chinese enterprises that use Dubai as a focal point to trade in Africa and Asia. At the same time, Indian traders use the UAE to reach the world. Another characteristic is its financial resources. The third one is the sovereign wealth fund. For example, Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute's June 2016 figures show that the largest sovereign wealth fund in the Middle East and the fifth largest worldwide with USD 792 billion is Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. The UAE tries to implement the policy of economic diversification with air transport, tourism, financial services, trade, alternative and energy manufacturing and managed to achieve a certain degree of developments in these sectors. Another policy is the foreign direct investment (FDI). The Ministry of Economy of the UAE released the Economic Report in 2018 and it claims that the UAE between 2012-2017 had 1.6 percent average growth rate and with this growth rate the UAE became attractive for the foreign direct investments in the Middle East and North Africa. Also, the UAE is aware of the importance of Islamic banking because of the large number of Muslims as 1.6 billion in the world. For example, Dubai

⁵⁴ Carlos Costa Neves , “Change and Continuity in the Gulf”, **Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group**, September 24, 2018, (Online), <https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=sites/default/files/2018-10/2018%20-%20CHANGE%20AND%20CONTINUITY%20IN%20THE%20GULF%20-%20187%20GSM%20%2018%20E%20rev1%20fin.pdf> , 09 February 2019.

is the country which established the Dubai Islamic Bank (DIB) (1970) with world-wide reach.⁵⁵

The economy of the UAE is broadly linked to oil, and its wealth-based prosperity is also high. Although the increase in the economic wealth and GDP of the United Arab Emirates is clearly seen in the charts, it is seen that the crises negatively affect the country's economy. Looking at the GDP of the country, which has changed over the years, it is seen that there are decreases in 2009 and 2015-2016.⁵⁶ The cause of the first decline may be attributed to the 2008 global crisis, but in the second decline was because of Qatar embargo and American sanctions on Iran.

⁵⁵ “Seaports”, **The Official Portal of the UAE Government**, October 30, 2018, (Online), <https://www.government.ae/en/information-and-services/infrastructure/civic-facilities/seaports>, 14 May 2019.

⁵⁶ “United Arab Emirates”, **The World Bank**, (Online), <https://data.worldbank.org/country/united-arab-emirates>, 20.05.2020.

CHAPTER TWO

REGIONAL SECURITY OF THE GCC

2.1. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

The GCC is an organization established in 1981 as a cooperation mechanism among the Gulf countries and there are several factors behind its establishment. The first one is that it was established in response to the Iranian revolution of 1979.¹ For all that, Iran's presence in the Strait of Hormuz had an impact on the Gulf countries' trade and exports.² Another issue that emerged as a security problem for the Gulf countries in this period was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.³ Another reason for the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council was the security problem experienced by the emergence of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980.⁴

The UAE joined the GCC in the same year when it was established on 25 May 1981. The other GCC countries were Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman which are countries. The goal of all these countries then was to protect themselves from outside interventions. GCC countries were aware that the interest of the world turned to the Gulf region due to the Iran-Iraq war because the rest of the world depended on this region for fuel and energy needs. The main purpose of the GCC was, therefore, to develop policies to prevent foreigners (especially Iran) from invading their territory. The UAE became a member of the organization because they were concerned about any interference with their borders.⁵

Despite the conversations related to economic cooperation, the main purpose of the GCC was always security and defense. The countries within the GCC have

¹ Zachary K. Goldman, Mira Rapp-Hooper, "Conceptualizing Containment: The Iranian Threat and the Future of Gulf Security", **The Academy of Political Science**, vol. 128, no. 4, December 17, 2013, p. 590.

² Gülşah Neslihan Akkaya, **Körfez İşbirliği Konseyi: Krallar Kulübü ve Değişen Bölgesel Düzen**, SETA, August 2013.

³ Hasan- Askari Rizvi, "Gulf Cooperation Council", **Pakistan Horizon**, vol. 35, no. 2, 1982, p. 30.

⁴ Zachary K. Goldman, Mira Rapp-Hooper, **op. cit.**, p. 590.

⁵ Susan Muaddi Darraj, Meredyth Puller, **Creation of the Modern Middle East: United Arab Emirates**, Chelsea House, Ed.by. Arthur Goldschmidt Jr, 2008.

sought to make security arrangements to modernize and to consolidate their military capabilities and air defense systems. For this purpose, the GCC countries tried to equip their security forces with modern weapons and to increase their striking power. To do this, advanced weapons were purchased from the UK, Germany, USA, and France. The purchases included sophisticated aircraft, Hawk surface to air missiles and their launchers, radars and communications equipment.⁶

Although it has been set up for security purposes, the GCC is not considered successful in some security-related issues. For example, the GCC countries decided to create a joint military force and in December 1986, Peninsula Shield Forces were established for this purpose. But since these forces could not prevent Iraq from invading Kuwait in 1990, it was clear that the GCC countries had limited military capacity. GCC countries have also admitted their ineffectiveness in the Doha declaration.⁷ The failure of the Council to defend Kuwait led the states in the region to rely on an external power, namely the USA. Because the USA by itself would provide a much more effective alliance than the GCC countries could together. Thus, the GCC countries have gone under further US influence and have also benefited from the USA's defense and war experience.⁸

The Gulf countries decided to disband the Peninsula Shield Forces at the Riyadh summit of 2006. Saudi Arabia proposed the adoption of the principle of "the central government and independent forces" instead. According to this principle, each member state should keep a special military unit within its own security forces and in its territory, should be ready for the central army. Although the member states decided to work to develop this proposal, no concrete results have been achieved.⁹ The Peninsula Shield Force remains the military arm of the GCC and joint military exercises are

⁶ Hasan- Askari Rizvi, *op. cit.*, p. 33-34.

⁷ Christian Koch, "The GCC as a regional security organization", **KAS International Reports**, no. 11, 2010, p. 26.

⁸ Anthony Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and the New "Game of Thrones" ", **CSIS**, July 13, 2017, (Online), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/saudi-arabia-the-uae-qatar-and-new-game-thrones>, 8February 2019.

⁹ Gülşah Neslihan Akkaya, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

carried out by the Peninsula Shield Force in cooperation with all armed forces of the GCC member states.¹⁰ However, this force is no way close to defending the Gulf.

For Ulrichsen, the GCC has failed many times to solve security problems despite several reform efforts. That is because the US is still the predominant force in the region. The examples of the GCC failures are to resolve the 92-93 Saudi Arabia-Qatar boundary dispute and the failure of Saudi Arabia's efforts to make the GCC more cohesive and political.¹¹ In another example, difficulties in suppressing the uprisings in Iraq, Libya and Syria could be attributed to the lack of coordination between the Arab World and the GCC members and that the GCC failed to create such coordination.¹² Similarly, the GCC failed to mediate or solve the Iran-UAE border dispute. In 1999, Iran rejected the mediation offered by the GCC to resolve the issue of the Tunb and the Abu Musa islands. Because a member of the recently established commission has made a statement in favor of the UAE and has impaired the commission's neutrality.¹³

There are other examples of border disputes between the GCC countries: The disagreements between the UAE and the Saudi Arabia known. In fact, the GCC countries had various disagreements among themselves but most of these disputes have been resolved over time. Sometimes there emerge various other problems. For example, the Saudi authorities prevented the UAE citizens from entering the kingdom with their identity cards by 2009. The reason for this was that these people came from the places the Saudi Arabia considers as their own region. In other words, even in 2009, there were contested areas between the Saudi Arabia and the UAE.¹⁴ A few months later in March 2010, the Emirates navy opened fire on the KSA patrol vessel and

¹⁰ "Peninsula Shield Force", **MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**, (w.date), (Online), <https://www.mod.gov.sa/en/Alliances/Pages/Shield.aspx> , 30 April 2019.

¹¹ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen , "Implications of the Qatar Crisis for regional security in the Gulf", **AIS-harq Forum Brief**, June 29, 2017, (Online), <https://research.sharqforum.org/2017/06/29/implications-of-the-qatar-crisis-for-regional-security-in-the-gulf/> , May 2019.

¹² Anthony Cordesman , " Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and the New "Game of Thrones" ", **CSIS** , July 13, 2017, (Online), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/saudi-arabia-the-uae-qatar-and-new-game-thrones> , 8February 2019.

¹³ Marco Pinfari , "Nothing but failure? : the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council as mediators in Middle Eastern conflicts", **Crisis States Research Centre**, March, 2009 , (Online), <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08b7be5274a31e0000ba4/WP45.2.pdf> , 12 February 2019.

¹⁴ "FACTBOX-Rivalry and differences between Saudi and the UAE", **reuters**, April 6, 2010, (Online), <https://www.reuters.com/article/gulf-union/factbox-rivalry-and-differences-between-saudi-and-the-uae-idUSLDE63405T20100406> , 20 MARCH 2019.

forced it to surrender. In this case, two Saudi sailors were injured and the incident occurred in the waters disputed between the two states. Such examples show that disputes among the GCC countries continues to exist.¹⁵ Again in the mid-2000s, disagreement between these two countries had failed the GCC's joint energy initiative. In 2008, the UAE announced that it would pursue an independent policy on nuclear energy and aimed to develop national nuclear policies by 2020.¹⁶

When we look at the same issue, Grabowski says, the history of the Gulf Cooperation Council has also witnessed problems due to regional disagreements. For example, he reports about the disagreements between Qatar and Bahrain on the Zubarah and the Hawar Islands or there are differences in the regional security perceptions of GCC countries. As another example, the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in the region in 2014 caused a conflict among the Persian Gulf countries. In addition, different approaches and national policies of the GCC countries against Iran also caused disagreement. For example, KSA, Bahrain, and the UAE maintain a more hostile attitude to Iran while Oman and Qatar can be considered more moderate and balanced.¹⁷ This can partly be attributed to the small percentage of the Shiite population in Oman and Qatar. Moreover, in Oman, the ruling elites are from the Ibadi sect¹⁸ as two minority sects show solidarity, affecting the country's attitude towards Iran. For the GCC countries, relying on the USA looks preferable for their national interests rather than depending on each other in the region.

In fact, in 1991, in the search for security after the Desert Storm, the GCC countries signed the Syrian-Egyptian Declaration of Damascus and agreed with the two countries on security issues. However, the GCC countries were not very keen on this declaration because they had no military and political trust in either Egypt or Syria.

¹⁵ Richard Spencer, "Naval battle between the UAE and Saudi Arabia raises fears for Gulf security", **The Telegraph**, March 26, 2010, (Online), <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middle-east/unitedarabemirates/7521219/Naval-battle-between-the-UAE-and-Saudi-Arabia-raises-fears-for-Gulf-security.html>, 20 February 2019.

¹⁶ Mari Luomi, "Abu Dhabi's Alternative-Energy Initiatives: Seizing Climate-Change Opportunities", **Middle East Policy Council**, vol 16, no 4, Winter, 2009, p. 102.

¹⁷ Wojciech Grabowski, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the crisis in the GCC: Roots, issues and implications", **Stosunki Międzynarodowe**, vol. 52, no. 2, 2016, p. 356.

¹⁸ Birol Başkan, "Körfez'in İran Sorunu: güvenlik ikileminde çoklu ilişkiler.", **Akademik Orta Doğu**, vol. 7, no. 14, 2013, p. 39-63.

For this reason, the USA remained the most preferred option after the Desert Storm.¹⁹ The similarity in the perceptions of external and internal threats in the region, the need for regional security regulation and the desire to maintain the status quo brought together the GCC and USA.²⁰

As understood from the above explanations, the GCC was established against regional security threats but it has not been able to establish a security force because the military forces of the member states and the number of people were not sufficient for this purpose. Small GCC countries do not want the KSA to become dominant in the region and to interfere in their domestic affairs. In addition, the border problems and their distrust toward each other also prevented the establishment of a common defense system. Naturally, as their economic integrations increased and improved over time, the relations became more normalized and they considered the issue of common security. Economically, an agreement was reached in 2001 on the customs union and the common market in 2008. They still do not work as expected, and the disagreement between the UAE and KSA over the location of the central bank hampered the transition to a common currency.²¹ Moreover, their economies are similar to each other and do not offer much variation.

2.2. Security and Terror

In the period between 1981 and 2004, various battles took place in the Gulf and its environs. The Iran-Iraq war took place (1980-87), so did the Afghanistan war (79-89), Iraq invaded Kuwait (1990-91), and in 2003 Iraq was occupied by the USA. In addition, three of the UAE's islands are occupied by Iran. Therefore, the security

¹⁹ Joseph Kostiner, "The United States and the Gulf States: Alliance in Need", **Middle East Review of International Affairs**, vol. 2, no. 4., 1998, p. 56-57.

²⁰ Hasan- Askari Rizvi, "GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL", **Pakistan Horizon**, vol. 35, no. 2, 1982, p. 36.

²¹ Gülşah Neslihan Akkaya, **op.cit.**, p. 12.

concerns of the GCC countries also increased and all these events showed how fragile the Gulf was.²²

In addition to the above-mentioned regional problems, the general context of the Gulf region was shaped over time and continues to affect regional security. The first is the process of globalization and increased communication and technology. With globalization, the region has become more connected to each other, which can sometimes create security problems. For example, the conflicts in Yemen and Somalia are affecting maritime security in the Gulf countries. The problem in one country in a period of increased integration may affect other countries, which can lead to a security problem. The second reason is the internationalization of the Gulf and its emergence as an economic-financial center, attracting more attention to the Gulf region. We can add oil as a third factor. The problem is that foreign oil distributors can sometimes lead to security problems in the countries. The other factor is that there is no internal cohesion between the GCC countries. Moreover, the security problems of the GCC has not been solved effectively.²³

In addition to the above comments, Pollack named three major threats in the region: (1) The security problem of Iraq (especially when the USA withdrew in 2011, the GCC countries faced problems such as terrorism, sectarian conflict, and refugee flows)²⁴, (2) Nuclear weapons program of Iran and (3) internal unrest in the countries of the Gulf Cooperating Council (Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, SA, and the UAE).²⁵

With regard to the security problem in the region, Cordesman stated that Arab states (Qatar, SA, the UAE) actually need unity and therefore should cooperate better to fight terror and extremism. He said that Arab countries need an integrated structure to prevent Iran from threatening the GCC countries. For this reason, these countries

²² Hassan Kashoob, "Economic and Security in the Gulf", (w.date), (Online), https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Hassan_Kashoob/publication/325022562_Economic_and_Security_in_the_Gulf/links/5af835ce0f7e9b026bea7a35/Economic-and-Security-in-the-Gulf.pdf, 12 February 2019.

²³ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Internal and external security in the Arab Gulf states", **Middle East Policy**, vol. 16, no. 2, Summer, 2009, p. 395.

²⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 42.

²⁵ Kenneth M. Pollack, "Securing the Persian Gulf", **The Brookings Review**, vol. 21, no. 4, 2003, p. 19.

must re-consider the cost of security forces and arms transfers. This is true not only for security but also for the region's internal stability. The GCC countries tend to struggle with each other as witnessed in the Qatar siege. This allows the USA to exert more pressure on them or the region opens more to Iranian intervention.

The Iranian influence does not solve the problems in the region but, instead, leads to more complications as Iran has been able to provide support to Hezbollah and Houthis in such an environment and to give more weight to its missile system.²⁶ Other important players in terms of regional security are non-state actors (militant groups such as Al-Qaeda and Houthis).²⁷ It is clear that terror and terrorist organizations constitute a problem for regional security. Especially after 9/11, terrorist organizations in the region attracted more attention and they were instrumental in promoting Iranian foreign policy objectives.

Although the existence of radical religious and militant groups became more evident after the 9/11 attacks, it is possible to talk about earlier stages of formation. Especially the experience of the Afghanistan war had a big impact on this development. The Afghan administration, which has been criticized for its actions, has been criticized by the groups who call them infidels (mostly inspired by the Iranian revolution and the Muslim Brotherhood) and these groups have revolted against the government. After the government failed to overcome this revolt, the Soviets intervened in Afghanistan in 1979, following the request for help from the corrupt government.

In the bipolar world order, disturbed by this invasion of the Soviets, USA has provided support to the Mujahedeen who fought against the Communist administration. With the weapons it has supplied, the USA has caused radical Islamic fighters to increase and gain power in the region.²⁸ During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iran was trying to spread its own revolution. To support the Afghan Shiites, the Iranian

²⁶ Anthony Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and the New "Game of Thrones" ", **CSIS**, July 13, 2017, (Online), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/saudi-arabia-the-uae-qatar-and-new-game-thrones>, 8February 2019.

²⁷ Robert E. Hunter, **Building Security in the Persian Gulf**, RAND Corporation, 2010, p. 47.

²⁸ Fatih Tosun, "TALİBAN ÖNCESİ AFGANİSTAN", (w.date), (Online), <https://www.academia.edu/6308823/Taliban>, 11 Januay 2019.

nationals were sent to Afghanistan to join the armed struggle against the Soviets and to spread Khomeini's politics and ideology there.²⁹

After the 1990s, global jihadism took its new shape with Osama bin Laden that adopted a new doctrine in 1996. This doctrine encouraged the fight against the USA. Instead of local dictators the USA and its allies became the main enemies for these new jihadists. Global jihadists found themselves in operations of al-Qaeda. This collaboration in Afghanistan worked as an educational camp and many radicalized Muslim youths traveled and spent time in there. However, after the 9/11 and the invasion of Afghanistan led to the destruction of al-Qaeda. Nevertheless, to hold al-Qaeda together, fatwas were published and jihad-related books are distributed over the internet. The more important problem arose with the Iraq invasion. Thus, Iraq became the most important target for the global jihadists because they believed that as a Muslim country Iraq was suffering from the USA invasion.³⁰

The activities of radical Islamic groups and terrorist organizations, especially after the September 11 attacks, have created a new security problem in the Gulf countries. They became concerned over radical Islamist groups because these groups will cause problems such as rebellions in their own states. For example, in addition to terrorist organizations, radical groups supported by Iran such as Hezbollah were also a source of concern for Gulf countries.³¹

In fact, the Sunni Gulf countries had initially allowed Islamism to spread in the region. They did this in two ways: Firstly, these countries, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, provided significant financial support to Islamist groups and non-governmental organizations supporting Islamic values. The Muslim Brotherhood that was prosecuted by the Abdennasser in Egypt during the 1950s and the 1960s sought refuge in the Gulf countries including

²⁹ Hafizullah Emadi, "Exporting Iran's revolution: the radicalization of the Shiite movement in Afghanistan", **Middle Eastern Studies**, vol. 31, no. 1, January, 1995, p.7.

³⁰ Thomas Hegghammer, "Global jihadism after the Iraq war", **The Middle East Journal**, vol. 60, no. 1, 2006, p. 13.

³¹ Lenore G. Martin, "Turkey and Gulf cooperation council security", **Turkish Studies**, vol. 10, no. 1, March 23, 2009, p. 75-93.

the Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Secondly, the Gulf countries have granted asylum to Islamists, including those accused of terrorist attacks.³²

After the September 11 attacks, radical Islam and terror began to become a problem among the Gulf countries in the line of US policies. With this attack, the world's perspective on the Gulf countries has also changed. This is also the case for the UAE because, after September 11, it became evident that the UAE had various links with terrorist groups. Two of nineteen air hijackers were UAE citizens (Marwan al-Shehhi, Fayed Banihammad)³³ and the rest are said to be given fundings, flight training and airplane tickets through the UAE. For example, Muhammad Atta, the important figure in the conspiracy, had \$100,000 placed in his bank account over moneychangers in the emirate of Sharjah. Therefore, the terrorist attack affected the UAE's image and its foreign policy. After 2001, the UAE took measures to prevent religious terrorists.³⁴ Terror was an important issue in the cooperation of the UAE with the USA. Both countries have tried to prevent and to stop al-Qaeda in the region. For this purpose, the UAE also became a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)* in 2011.

The UAE, which supported the Taliban regime in Afghanistan together with KSA and Pakistan in 1996, later began to side with the USA intervention after the 9/11 and the Hamid Karzai government, which replaced the former administration in 2001 upon the fall of the Taliban regime. The UAE armed forces served in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2004 and became the only Arab country to do so. The presence of the UAE there shows the change in viewpoint towards international issues and hard and soft power elements. Although it showed the fundamental change in its foreign policy in 2011, the UAE also participated in humanitarian aid in Afghanistan in

* As an informal, a-political, multilateral counterterrorism (CT) platform, the GCTF is that has strengthened the international architecture for addressing 21st century terrorism and launched in 2011.

³² Sean Foley, **Guide to Islamist movements**, ME Sharpe, Ed. by. Barry M. Rubin, 2010, p. 305.

³³ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, et al. ,” The 9/11 commission report”, **US Government Printing Office**, 2004, (Online), <https://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>, 27 February 2019.

³⁴ Sean Foley, **op. cit.**, p. 311-312.

addition to its military support for USA and NATO forces.³⁵ Because the violence in Afghanistan hindered the basic requirements such as healthcare and education, the UAE contributed to the protection and stability of humanitarian organizations in these areas affected by armed conflicts.³⁶

It is also possible to observe the UAE's attitudes towards terrorism and terrorist organizations in their statements. Especially in the statements of the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperations, it is seen that various terrorist attacks have been condemned. The ministry made statements condemning terrorist attacks in many countries such as Somalia, Burkina Faso, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Egypt, Germany, London, Bahrain etc. Some of these have been done by ISIS, some by Houthies and some by other terrorist organizations. These statements made by the ministry clearly demonstrated the official attitude towards terrorism, which disrupts the stability of the state. Such terrorism has been regarded as a security problem.³⁷

Specifically viewed, in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates act jointly against Iran-backed Houthis, they describe and characterize it as a terrorist organization in their speeches. Thus, the Houthis are perceived as an external threat. For example, when Saudi Arabia's Abha airport was attacked, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation said:

*"The UAE strongly condemns this terrorist act and labels it as a new evidence of the Iranian-backed Houthi militias' hostile and terrorist tendencies to undermine security and stability in the region. The UAE reiterates its solidarity with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia against any threat to its security and stability, and ...The security of the UAE and of the kingdom is indivisible. Any threat or danger to Saudi Arabia's security is considered a threat to the UAE's security and stability."*³⁸

³⁵ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Transformations in the UAE's Foreign Policy", **Al Jazeera Centre for Studies**, June 8, 2017, (Online), http://studies.aljazeera.net/mritems/Documents/2017/6/8/2d9acc7f833e4e9eb2c97b8eb590e4bb_100.pdf, 28 February 2019.

³⁶ "The UAE's Policy on Afghanistan", (w.date), (Online), <http://www.theUAEafghanistan.ae/en/the-uae-policy-on-Afghanistan.php>, 25 February 2019.

³⁷ United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperations, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/news>, 27.05.2020.

³⁸ "UAE condemns deadly Houthi attack on Saudi Arabia's Abha Airport", *The National*, June 24, 2019, (Online), <https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/uae-condemns-deadly-houthi-attack-on-saudi-arabia-s-abha-airport-1.878239>, 27.05.2020.

The United Arab Emirates saw Muslim Brothers as a threat to their national security and has made securitization of them. According to 2016 Report on International Religious Freedom, a list of groups that include Muslim Brotherhood and related organizations were defined as terrorist organizations and individuals who were charged of being connected or supplying support to organizations were prosecuted by the UAE.³⁹

2.3. Iran: Threat or Partner?

Another issue that the UAE considered a threat to Gulf security was Iran. The ongoing disagreements between the GCC and Iran can be listed as follows: The invasion of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb islands by Iran, the Iranian Revolution, Iran's efforts to influence Shiites citizens in the GCC and Iran's support for organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas. The most important threat to GCC countries was the Iranian Revolution. The Islamic Republic of Iran was declared on 1 April 1979.⁴⁰ This led to a turning point in its relations with the Gulf countries. Apart from Oman, other Gulf countries define Iran as their most compelling rivals. Their regimes were threatened because these states think that Iran is trying to spread its own revolution to the neighboring countries and intervenes in their internal affairs.

GCC countries also say that nuclear project of Iran led to the proliferation of weapons in the Middle East. At the same time, they believe that sectarian and strategic ambitions are sought by Iran with its proxies to make advances in the region. Gulf governments feel surrounded by Iran and by its proxies in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. They are trying to adopt an alternative strategy to these challenges. Moreover, they have implemented money, arms, and sometimes military forces to control these perceived threats. The preoccupation of the GCC countries with Iran (particularly the UAE and Saudi Arabia) also shaped their perspective for the broader region.⁴¹ These

³⁹ 2016 Report on International Religious Freedom: United Arab Emirates”, **U.S. Department of State**, (Online), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2016-report-on-international-religious-freedom/unted-arab-emirates/>.

⁴⁰ Esra Pakin Albayrakoglu, “ABD-Körfez İşbirliği Konseyi İlişkilerinde İran Faktörü”, **Uluslararası İlişkiler Akademik Dergisi**, vol. 8, 2011, p. 102.

⁴¹ Carlos Costa Neves, “Change and Continuity in the Gulf”, **Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group**, September 24, 2018, (Online), <https://www.nato-pa.int/download->

problems lead countries to pay more attention to security issues in order to protect themselves, as seen in the size of their military expenditures.

Looking at military spending, security is an important aspect in the relations between the GCC and Iran. Countries are armed for their own security, naturally at different rates. For example, the IISS and SIPRI's data indicate that Iran spent \$15.9 billion on security in 2016, which amounts to 3.9 percent of its GDP. The Congressional Research Service (CRS), which is an official U.S. estimation of arms transfers, shows that the GCC took \$30.4 billion in arms deliveries during the years 2012 – 2015. GCC arms deals reached 84 billion during this period. In the same period, Iran spent 600 million USD.⁴² Analysis shows that estimated military spending of GCC countries was \$128 billion in 2017, also Iran spent \$16 billion.⁴³ Although Iran is trying to increase its military capacity in the Gulf, its economic problems have reduced the amount of money it can spend on defense.⁴⁴

Another reason why Iran is seen as a threat is the dispute between Iran and the UAE about the islands belonging to the UAE. This dispute did not cause any military confrontation between the two countries and remained at diplomatic level. For years, Iran and the Arab countries have experienced conflicts over three islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb. Iran claims that the Gulf region exports oil through these islands, Iran will have more control over Strait of Hormuz which connects the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea. On November 30, 1971, Iran occupied the islands of Abu Musa (belonging to Sharjah), Greater and Lesser Tunb (belongs to Ras Al Khaimah). This military intervention both surprised and annoyed the Gulf states. Thus, these countries have realized that they need to protect themselves. This need for protection started the arms race in the Gulf. The conflict over the islands has reappeared

file?filename=sites/default/files/2018-10/2018%20-%20CHANGE%20AND%20CON-TINUITY%20IN%20THE%20GULF%20-%20187%20GSM%20%2018%20E%20rev1%20fin.pdf, 09 February 2019.

⁴² Anthony Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and the New "Game of Thrones" ", **CSIS**, July 13, 2017, (Online), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/saudi-arabia-the-uae-qatar-and-new-game-thrones>, 8 February 2019.

⁴³ Anthony Cordesman, "The Arab Gulf States and Iran: Military Spending, Modernization, and the Shifting Military Balance", **CSIS**, December 12, 2018, (Online), https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/181212_Iran_GCC_Balance.Report.pdf , 06.02.2020.

⁴⁴ Richard Sokolsky, F. Larrabee, **Persian Gulf security: improving allied military contributions** , Rand , Ed. by. Richard Sokolsky, Stuart E Johnson, 2000, p. 11.

in the 1990s.⁴⁵ In April 1992, Iran removed the UAE military forces from the island of Abu Tunb and took control of the Tunb islands. These are strategically important islands near the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance of the bay.⁴⁶

The island dispute between the UAE and Iran has continued and has not been solved yet. As an ongoing part of this issue in August 2008, Iran opened an administrative and maritime security office on Abu Musa, and the UAE rejected that. In October 2008, Iran and the UAE signed an agreement to establish a committee to resolve their dispute but in 2012, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit to Abu Musa also meant Iran's resolution. Responding to this, the UAE withdrew its ambassador from Tehran. In May 2012, Iran made a move to anger the UAE even further. The visit of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Commander-in-Chief Mohammad Ali Jafari and a few members of the parliament to the island and the plans of making it a touristic center have provoked the UAE. In September 2013, the UAE Foreign Minister, in his speech at the UN General Assembly, called on Iran to stop the occupation and invited the international community to solve this problem, but there was no significant movement toward reconciliation between the two countries.⁴⁷

Regarding regional security in addition to the uneasiness between Iran and the Gulf countries following the occupation of three islands, another incident threatening regional security has been the Iran-Iraq war and has created a security issue, which played a role in the establishment of the GCC. Because this revolution in Iran also affected the Shiite uprisings. The main for Iraq's war against Iran was Saddam's dislike with the Shiite uprisings.⁴⁸ Except for Libya and Syria all Arab countries supported Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War because of the conviction that a non-Arab power threatening the regional status quo.⁴⁹ When we look at the Gulf region as a whole, Iran with

⁴⁵ Darraj, Susan Muaddi, and Meredyth Puller, **Creation of the Modern Middle East: United Arab Emirates**, Chelsea House, 2008.

⁴⁶ Dan Caldwell, "Flashpoints in the Gulf: Abu Musa and the Tunb islands", **Middle East Policy**, March, 1996, vol. 4, issue. 3, p. 50-58.

⁴⁷ Kenneth Katzman, **United Arab Emirates (the UAE): Issues for US Policy**, DIANE Publishing, June 23, 2010.

⁴⁸ Gülşah Neslihan Akkaya, **Körfez İşbirliği Konseyi: Krallar Kulübü ve Değişen Bölgesel Düzen**, SETA, August 2013, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Oktay Bingöl, "Arap Baharı Ve Orta Doğu: Çok Eksenli Güç Mücadelesinde Denge Arayışları", **Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi**, vol. 13, no. 2, 2013, p. 31.

its large size worries the smaller GCC states. For Gulf countries, Iran is already considered a threat by its involvement of regional states through Shiism.⁵⁰

After the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war, Iranian ambition to export its revolution and to become a regional power intimidated the Gulf countries. In other words, the Gulf countries were worried that their own Shia communities would be politicized might even rebel in their home countries. This threat associated with Iran has also led the GCC countries to unite under the umbrella of the United States. Especially in 2003, the period after the Iraqi invasion caused the Shiite group to be effective there. The Shia sect that Iran is trying to spread has increased sectarian tension in the Gulf countries. As the US has also declared Iran as a threat in the region, the ruling groups in the GCC countries have focused more on the political and ideological threats from Iran.⁵¹ Particularly after the invasion of Iraq, Iran's Shiite-oriented expansionist and circumferential policies in Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut, and Sanaa have led to the perception of a serious national security threat in the Gulf countries and the Arab world.⁵²

Iran has always been at the top of the threats for the GCC, one of the leading factors of both the US and the Persian Gulf. However, the perceptions and policies towards this common threat that unites the US and the GCC countries have changed over time, especially in the GCC. Although the US attitude towards Iran changes periodically, it generally remained in the axis of opposition. Despite the global nature of the Iran issue, the USA is able to make ultimatums and sanctions against this country with the confidence that it is the sole superpower. The GCC hopes to develop close ties with many countries, including Iran, to diversify their economies and to expand into new markets in a stable regional order.⁵³ In fact they have mixed relations with Iran. Iran has close relations with the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, within the framework of OPEC membership. For example, Iran is the largest market for non-

⁵⁰ Abdullah K. Al Shayji, "The GCC-U.S. Relationship: A GCC Perspective", **Middle East Policy**, vol. 21, no. 3, 2014, p. 65.

⁵¹ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, **op. cit.**, p. 42-44.

⁵² Ali Semin, "Yemen Krizi, Husiler Ve İran-Körfez Güç Mücadelesi", **İstanbul: Bilgesam**, no. 1201, p. 1.

⁵³ Esra Pakin Albayrakoglu, **op. cit.**, p. 96.

oil exports and re-exports of the UAE.⁵⁴ The UAE was tolerated to bypass the sanctions on Iran and benefitted from this tolerance by the USA.

Not all the UAE emirates have a similar perspective on Iran. For example, there were different reactions from the UAE during the Iran-Iraq War. The emirates other than Dubai and Sharjah preferred to side with Iraq and provided financial support to this country.⁵⁵ Despite the problems with Iran over Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunb islands the relations between Dubai and Iran have traditionally been better. Also, some of Dubai's most significant and effective merchant families (e.g., the Galadari) are of Iranian lineage. So, Dubai's position toward Tehran was softer than other emirates during the Iran-Iraq war.

Umm Al Quwain and Ras Al Khaimah also have closer ties with Iran as the most oppositional stance to Iran came from Abu Dhabi.⁵⁶ There are frequent flights to the major cities of Iran such as Tehran, Mashhad, Tabriz, Isfahan, and Shiraz from Dubai, which has close relations with Iran. In addition, goods subject to sanctions are directed to Iran via Dubai. Unlike the USA or the EU, the UAE does not impose restrictions on those who want to travel, reside and work in Iran. Iranians who travel to the UAE used to get their visas without any difficulty. In addition, there is no difficulty in establishing a company in these regions and it is estimated that in 2008 only, more than 500 Iranian companies existed in Dubai.⁵⁷ Iran's commercial incentives provide economic advantages to Dubai while it overlooked the risks of rising Iranian influence.⁵⁸

As Katzman points out, the three island problems and the tense relations following the visit of Ahmadinejad to the island of Abu Musa in 2012 did not disrupt the normal course of the trade relations between Iran and the UAE. Dubai also accepted

⁵⁴ "Gulf states set to start FTA talks with Iran", **Emirates** 24/7, September 11, 2008, (Online), <https://www.emirates247.com/eb247/economy/the-UAE-economy/gulf-states-set-to-start-fta-talks-with-iran-2008-09-11-1.225669>, 03 January 2019.

⁵⁵ Esra Pakin Albayrakoglu, **op. cit.**, p. 103.

⁵⁶ Frederic Wehrey, et al, **Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for US Policy**, Rand Corporation, 2009.

⁵⁷ Esra Pakin Albayrakoglu, **op. cit.**, p. 106.

⁵⁸ Robert E. Hunter, **op.cit.**, p. 44.

Ahmadinejad in 2007 as the highest-level visit from Iran since the 1979 Revolution by allowing him to make anti-USA speeches to large group of Iranians living in the UAE. There are almost 300,000 Iranian citizens in Dubai and this explains why Dubai is more lenient to Iran. Nevertheless, the UAE does not desire that this closeness will cause them to be in a difficult position. Abu Dhabi, on the contrary, agrees with the USA on Iranian sanctions.⁵⁹

As detailed above, the GCC-Iran relations do not follow the same course as the US policies. The United States is still the most important commercial and military partner for the GCC countries that wants to avoid the pressure of the neighboring Iran by the cautious declarations and limited agreements.⁶⁰ Prior to 1990, the US and GCC relations were in the form of an alliance, continued in the form of a strategical partnership for the two sides.⁶¹

In recent years, the relations between the UAE and Iran have been strained as a result of the USA's further sanctions on Iran. Not showing its lenience for the UAE exceptionalism, the US sanctions have weakened the trade relations between Iran and the UAE. After USA's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) according to which Tehran had agreed to restrain its (JCPOA) that limits Iran's nuclear activities and relieves some of the sanctions, the US President Donald Trump sharply raised economic sanctions on Iran even above the previous ones.⁶² Although trade with Tehran drop, the UAE is conforming sanctions of the United States on Iran. In 2013, there was \$20 billion in trade between both countries but it decreased to \$17 billion in 2017 due to sancions.⁶³ 27 percentage of imports of Iran as a most important non-oil importer was provided by the UAE in 2017. Due to the sanctions of the US, while non-oil exports of the UAE to Iran were \$17 billion in 2017, it turned to \$6 billion in the

⁵⁹ Kenneth Katzman, **Iran: US concerns and policy responses**, Diane Publishing, 2010.

⁶⁰ Esra Pakin Albayrakoglu, **op. cit.**, p. 108.

⁶¹ Joseph Kostiner, **op. cit.**, p. 56-57.

⁶² James Reinl, "Are tensions between US, Gulf allies and Iran coming to a head?", **aljazeera.com**, May 15, 2019, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/tensions-gulf-allies-iran-coming-head-190515175352574.html>, 25 May 2019.

⁶³ Alexander Cornwell, "the UAE fully complying with U.S. sanctions on Iran: official", **Reuters**, November 19, 2018, (Online), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-emirates-sanctions/the-uae-fully-complying-with-u-s-sanctions-on-iran-official-idUSKCN1NO1IV>, 25 May 2019.

first 8 months of 2018.⁶⁴ The purpose of the sanctions imposed by the USA on Iran was to limit Iranian influence in the Middle East. The UAE is one of the US allies in the Gulf and also a country against Iran's foreign policy and it supports these US decisions. The UAE is also in a coalition with KSA against the Houthi group backed by Iran in Yemen.⁶⁵

Perception of Iran as a competitor, Iran's Shiite expansionist policies, the occupation of the three islands of the UAE and nuclear program of Iran were perceived by the Gulf countries as a danger to the country's security. Therefore, Iran is seen as a national security threat and securitization of it has been made from time to time. For example, in 2016, The Council of the Arab League has blamed Iranian officials's provocative expressions towards Arab countries and warn Tehran to quit its anti-Arab media campaigns and provocative and hostile thought. The Council considered these acts as a kind of intervention to states's internal affairs.⁶⁶

Especially in Yemen, tensions between the United Arab Emirates-Saudi Arabia and Iran have been reflected in the statements of the countries. For example, in 2019, The UAE, the KSA, the UK, the USA made a statement after the attacks on the Gulf of Oman and the oil tanker in Fujairah. These countries reported that Iran's activities in Yemen or other regions destabilize the region and pose a threat to peace and security. In addition, these countries stated that they are concerned about the Iranian-backed Houthis attacks on Saudi Arabia and the support to Saudi Arabia has been announced.⁶⁷ As Iran's above-mentioned activities continue and tensions in Yemen do not cease, the tension between the UAE and Iran will continue to climb in the political arena.

⁶⁴ İsmail Numan Telci, "US sanctions on Iran and their impact on the United Arab Emirates", November 23, 2018, (Online), <https://thenewturkey.org/us-sanctions-on-iran-and-their-impact-on-the-united-arab-emirates>, 02.02.2020.

⁶⁵ Alexander Cornwell, "the UAE fully complying with U.S. sanctions on Iran: official", **Reuters**, November 19, 2018, (Online), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-emirates-sanctions/the-uae-fully-complying-with-u-s-sanctions-on-iran-official-idUSKCN1NO1IV>, 25 May 2019.

⁶⁶ "Council of the Arab League condemns Iran's interference in the internal affairs of Arab States", **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**, March 12, 2016, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2016/3/12/1232016-mofa>, 23.04.2020.

⁶⁷ "Saudi Arabia, UAE, UK, USA Express concerns over Iran's destabilizing activity, call for diplomatic solution", **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**, June 23, 2019, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2019/6/23/23-06-2019-UAE-LONDON>, 23.03.2020.

The increase in tension shows that the UAE will maintain to regard Iran as a security problem.

2.4. The US-UAE Relations

When the UK left the Gulf region, the USA took over its role. The rapprochement between the USA and the Gulf state increased during the Gulf war. Nevertheless, the idea of isolating the gulf area from Iran first started in the USA after the Iranian revolution and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets.⁶⁸ The Iran-Iraq war and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets in 1979 made the region more important for the US interests and made it to work harder for the security of the region.⁶⁹ As a result of these developments, the presence of the USA in the Gulf became more pervasive.

First of all, the Iranian Revolution which brought political Islam to forefront caused worries in the Gulf region and the western interests. Accordingly, this led to a fundamental change in the US policy towards the Gulf security. The USA saw Iran as a potential threat not only to the US allies in the Gulf, but also to access through the Strait of Hormuz due to its potential ability to disrupt the shipping of oil and gas. For this reason, the US aims to ensure the security of the oil-producing GCC countries in order to protect their economic interests.⁷⁰ The USA wanted to respond to these security concerns by military agreements with the GCC members and building military bases in the Gulf region.⁷¹

After the Iran-Iraq war and the end of the Cold War era, the US foreign policy took a new turn. In this time, another important event affecting the USA-GCC relations was the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. Because of the Iraqi threat, a close relationship was developed between several Arabian Peninsula states and the United States.⁷² After the 1990-1991 Gulf War, the United States signed agreements to cooperate with almost

⁶⁸ Richard Sokolsky, F.Larrabee, **op. cit.** , p. 33.

⁶⁹ Esra Pakin Albayrakoglu, **op. cit.**, p. 97.

⁷⁰ Steven M. Wright, "The United States and Persian Gulf security: The foundations of the war on terror", **Garnet & Ithaca Press**, vol. 12, 2007, p. 66. 93.

⁷¹ Shibley Telhami, **The role of the Persian Gulf region**, The Contemporary Middle East, 2006.

⁷² Steven M. Wright, **op. cit.** , p. 4.

all of the Gulf monarchies and established bases in that regard.⁷³ In fact, the USA was seen as the defender of the Gulf countries. However, it was not involved as an important physical or institutional partner in defense schemes. The role of the USA reflected that the Gulf states were not effective in defending themselves. That's because their armies were ineffective and inexperienced and their populations were less than 15 million.⁷⁴ So, they relied on the USA as the best option for defense.

In 1990, when Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait to stay there, many Arab countries including the UAE and the UN members formed a coalition against Iraq under the leadership of the USA. The Operation Desert Storm, launched in 1991, aimed to remove Iraq from Kuwait. In this operation, the USA used the UAE ports.⁷⁵ The main goal of the UAE in the Gulf war was to use the USA as the balancing factor against the Iranian weight in the region because they did not think that Saddam would occupy the UAE. Within the framework of this balancing policy, the UAE started to implement a stricter foreign policy. In line with this cooperation with the USA on balancing Iran in the region, the UAE acquired an advanced missile defense system against Iran's ballistic missiles. The UAE's response to the regional unrest in the Arab spring shows that it made more ambitious moves in its foreign policy in order to maintain the regional status quo.⁷⁶

The views of the GCC countries and the USA about the dangers in the region sometimes differ strategically, which can also be seen in the Arab Spring. While the GCC countries consider the Arab Spring as a cause of complete confusion in the region and thought that Islamist groups would benefit, the UAE and KSA especially see the Muslim Brotherhood as a threat to their domestic security. On the other hand, Washington adopted a softer, differing slightly from its Gulf partners.⁷⁷ In Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen, the USA did not oppose the changing of the status quo when the regimes of Ben Ali, Mubarak and Saleh began to be destroyed. The USA did not initially

⁷³ Oktay Bingöl, **op. cit.**, p. 32-33.

⁷⁴ Joseph Kostiner, **op. cit.**, p. 56-57.

⁷⁵ Darraj, Susan Muaddi, and Meredyth Puller, **op. cit.**, p. 43.

⁷⁶ Kenneth Katzman, **op. cit.**, p. 11.

⁷⁷ Abdullah K. Al Shayji, **op. cit.**, p. 61.

oppose the election of Muhammed Morsi in June 2012 after making sure that its interests would be protected.⁷⁸

Although their viewpoints differ relatively, the USA and the Gulf countries continued to act together in the region. As a way to demonstrate, the US commitment to the security of the states in the Persian Gulf was to strengthen the individual and national defenses of the Gulf States, including the sale of arms either by the US companies or by other Western states. As the USA and the Gulf countries' concerns about Iran's nuclear program increase, the United States continues to carry out this armament.⁷⁹ Weapon systems such as F-15 and F-16 aircraft, satellite-guided bombs, and radar and anti-missile systems were sold to these countries.⁸⁰ Since 2007, more than \$75 billion worth of arms sales were made by the USA to the GCC countries. Between 2004 and 2011, the USA transferred \$50.4 billion worth of new arms to them.⁸¹ Between 2014-2018, 52 per cent of the total the USA arms export was received by the Middle East countries, who ranked fourth of the world's top 10 arms-importing countries. (Russia supplied 9.6 per cent of the total arms transfers to the Middle East, while France supplied 8.6 per cent of it.)⁸²

In the case of defense, the Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) was signed between the two countries on 25 July 1994.⁸³ According to this agreement, the UAE allowed the US warships to visit the large Jebel Ali port in the country and to position their equipment there. In addition, during the Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Afghanistan operations, the UAE airfields were used by the USA.⁸⁴ This agreement also covers the training of the UAE troops by the USA.

Around 350 UAE soldiers are trained each year in the USA. At the same time, the USA also sells weapons to the UAE. For example, High Mobility Artillery Rocket

⁷⁸ Gamal M. Selim, "The United States and the Arab Spring: The Dynamics of Political Engineering", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2013, p. 255-272.

⁷⁹ Robert E. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁸⁰ Zachary K. Goldman, *op. cit.*, p. 590.

⁸¹ Abdullah K. Al Shayji, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁸² Pieter D. Wezeman, et. al., "Trends in International Arms Transfers, " , *SIPRI*, March, 2019, (Online), <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2019/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-international-arms-transfers-2018>, 27 May 2019.

⁸³ Kenneth Katzman, *op. cit.*, p12.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 9.

Systems (HIMARS) and Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) which worthies about \$750 million were sold to the UAE by the US in September 2006. The UAE played a pioneering role in the USA's establishment of a missile defense network across the Gulf. In 2008, it acquired an advanced defense system, namely the Terminal High Altitude Air Defense System (THAAD). As a result of the UAE's agreement in 2009 with Boeing Co. and Lockheed Martin Corp., a \$3 billion worth of military transport aircraft (C-17 and C130) was purchased. Also, in 2010, \$140 million worth of ATACMS were sold. And in 2013, 25 F-16 aircrafts were sold to the UAE.⁸⁵ The UAE started to have advanced and various military capacities due to importing arms especially from Western Europe and the US. The UAE supplied equipment that enlarged the achieve of its armed forces, including 8 long-range transport aircraft, 3 tanker aircraft and 10 corvettes in 2009-2018. In 2014-2018, France and the USA were the largest military suppliers to UAE.⁸⁶ Between 2003-2017, the United Arab Emirates was in the top five importers in fourth place by 4.4 global share.⁸⁷

Globally, the UAE was as the seventh largest arms importer country and 64 percent of arms imports of the UAE was supplied by the USA in 2014-2018. This country bought 5 missile defense systems, 1671 armed personnel carriers, and 124 short-range ballistic missiles from the USA over the years. Also, the UAE sent some of these armed vehicles were sent to the militias in Yemen and to Hafter forces after the Arab Spring.⁸⁸ As the main anti-democracy government, the UAE supported the military coups in the Middle East and even normalized with the Assad regime in Syria.

Specifically, in terms of military relations between the USA and the UAE, the proximity between the two countries can be seen. Both countries have deep relations and especially since Donald Trump took office, the relations developed even closer. That is because, in the Arab Spring, the Obama administration created a hesitation for

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 12.

⁸⁶ Peter D. Wezeman, Alexandra Kuimova, "Military Spending and Arms Imports by Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and The UAE", May 2019, **SIPRI**, (Online), https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/fs_1905_gulf_milex_and_arms_transfers.pdf, 03.02.2020.

⁸⁷ Dan Smith, "Armaments, Disarmament and International Security", 2018, **SIPRI Yearbook 2018**, (Online), https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/yb_18_summary_en_0.pdf, 03.02.2020.

⁸⁸ Pieter D. Wezeman, et. al. , "Trends in International Arms Transfers", **SIPRI**, March, 2019, (Online), <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2019/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-international-arms-transfers-2018>, 27 May 2019 .

the Gulf Countries but the Trump presidency reflected optimism for the mutual relations.⁸⁹ For both countries, Iran was seen as a danger and security problem in the region. It is possible to see the US hostility to Iran in the statements made by President D.Trump after the murdering of Qasem Soleimani, who was general in Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, by the USA. Considering that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was included in the list of terrorist organizations by the USA in 2019⁹⁰, Trump said that Iran will not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons, its nuclear program threatens the world, and Iran supports terrorism however, the US will not let it happen. He added that in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran created hell by supporting terrorism, so the US will impose additional sanctions to prevent Iran's aggressive attitudes.⁹¹ In addition, according to the statement made by the White House in 2019, the Trump administration tried to declare Muslim brothers as a terrorist organization.⁹² In this attitude towards Muslim Brothers, it is pointed out that the UAE and the United States use securitization in their foreign policies and it brought them closer.

It is necessary to mention the relations of the United Arab Emirates with Israel within the framework of its relations with the USA. The Emirates, which had an economic crisis with the USA in 2006, started to develop their relations with Israel in order to show that the UAE is an important and strategic partner of the USA.⁹³ However, this partnership was not only limited to this, it continued in a veiled manner especially after the Arab Spring. The ties between the two countries continue to further develop. Along with Saudi Arabia, the proximity of Trump' groom, Kushner, has

⁸⁹ "A New Era in the US-the UAE Relationship", **The National**, May 16, 2017, (Online), [https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/a-new-era-in-the-us-the UAE-relationship-1.85931](https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/a-new-era-in-the-us-the-UAE-relationship-1.85931), 27 May 2019.

⁹⁰ "Foreign Terrorist Organization", U.S. Department of State, (w.date), (Online), <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>, 12.05.2020.

⁹¹ Grand Foyer, "Remarks by President Trump on Iran", **White House**, January 8, 2020, (Online), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-iran/>, 12.05.2020.

⁹² Mandel Ngan/Getty, "White House to designate Muslim Brotherhood terrorist organization", BBC News, April 30, 2019, (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-48111594>, 12.05.2020.

⁹³ Sigurd Neubauer, "Israel: A Strategic Partner for the UAE?", **IndraStra Global**, 2017, (Online), https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/54765/ssoar-indraglobal-2017-11-neubauer-Israel_A_Strategic_Partner_for.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-indraglobal-2017-11-neubauer-Israel_A_Strategic_Partner_for.pdf, 21.03.2020.

improved cooperation with Israel. In addition, both the Emirates and Israel are against the Muslim brothers and led to the convergence of these two countries.⁹⁴

This section basically deals with the relationship between the United States and the United Arab Emirates. Were the relationship with the West to be considered, it would be seen that Western support for the UAE and the alliance of the Gulf Countries matter a lot. The West protects the safety of Gulf countries because of their friendly behavior and are increasing their military capabilities against anti-Western regimes such as Iran and other radical states. This support, when compared, is apparently not any greater than the one provided by the USA. Nevertheless, the West's need for gulf countries for oil and efforts to protect Israel also play an important role in this relationship.⁹⁵ In addition, the support of both the West and the USA is important for the UAE to have power in the region.

⁹⁴ Selim Öztürk, “Son Dönem İsrail-Körfez Ülkeleri Yakınlaşması”, **ORSAM**, no. 85, March 2019, p. 2-3.

⁹⁵ Anthony H Cordesman, **The Gulf and the West: Strategic relations and military realities**, Routledge, 2019.

CHAPTER THREE

FOREIGN POLICY OF the UAE BEFORE AND AFTER ARAB SPRING

3.1. Before 2011

Understanding the personality of a leader is important to understand a country's foreign policy. Sheikh Zayed, as the leader of the UAE until 2004, was influenced by Arabism in the 1970s and Islamism in the 80s and pursued a foreign policy for regional stability, maintaining a balance of power in the Gulf, and maintaining balanced relations with its neighbors. Preferring peaceful ways to solve the problems with other countries and using diplomacy as a tool enabled the UAE to protect his country despite the security problems in the region. The periods which directed the UAE foreign policy during Zayed's administration was divided by Almezaini into four periods. 1971-1978 was the founding period of the country and oil was used as a diplomatic tool in that period. Despite the invasion of its islands by Iran, it followed a quiet foreign policy and did not favour intervention. As a newly formed state the UAE tried to find allies by granting foreign aid. The regime survival was the most important issue in this period.¹In domestic politics, there was no significant threat because most of the country was Arab Muslim (Sunni), and the formation of a political party was not allowed. From 1979 to 1988, the Iran Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war emerged as major regional problems. During the early period, the UAE chose to remain neutral to the Iran-Iraq war in terms of foreign policy and joined the GCC, which was created for security concerns. The most important development in terms of the UAE foreign policy between 1989 and 2000 was the Kuwait's invasion by Iraq and the UAE strongly opposed to the invasion. At the same time, this intervention led to get closer relations between the US and the UAE. Between 2001 and 2004, the attacks of 11 September 2001, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the death of Sheikh Zayed in 2004 caused changes in the

¹ Khalid S. Almezaini, **The UAE and foreign policy: foreign aid, identities and interests**, Routledge, 2012.

foreign policy of the UAE. In fact, the critical turning point for the UAE was the death of Zayed bin Sultan in 2004.²

Before the Arab Spring, the KSA and the UAE adopted a moderate foreign policy. This type of diplomacy, which is called "quiet diplomacy", was defined by Martin Adelmann as a kind of foreign policy where diplomacy is preferred over sanctions and military interventions. The method of finding diplomatic solutions through negotiations is crucial here.³ The UAE that lacks sufficient military and human power relies on the USA for its defense and chose to maintain its national interest through methods such dialog and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. This policy did not change since the coming to power of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan in 2004 until the Arab Spring.⁴ However, as explained above, it should not be forgotten that in this years, Iran was seen as the biggest threat to country and regional security, and the UAE implement securitization in its foreign policy to Iran's behavior.

Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who became president after his father's death in 2004, has been the main driver of foreign policy decisions. After becoming the president, he joined the Arab Quartet which consist of Jordan, the UAE, Egypt and Saudi Arabia and sought to create a regional agenda, addressing important socio-political and economic issues for the Arab world. At the same time, after joining this Quartet, it distances itself from Iran and supported Western initiatives. It even shied away from a supporter of the Arab causes and turned into a country with stronger relations with the West. The new president has put more emphasis on the dispute of the three islands with Iran. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed also made reforms in domestic politics and reactivated the FNC and allowed 20 people from it to be elected by the public.⁵

² Ibid. , p. 35-36-39

³ Martin Adelmann, "Quiet diplomacy: the reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy", **Africa Spectrum**, vol. 39, no. 2, 2004.

⁴ Abdul Monem Al Mashat , " Politics of constructive engagement: The foreign policy of the United Arab Emirates" , **Cairo Press**, 2010, (Online), https://www.fue.edu.eg/pdfFiles/Publications/Abdul_Monem_Mohamed_Ibrahim_Al_Mashat_23223.pdf, 30 March 2019.

⁵ Khalid S. Almezaini, **op. cit.** , p. 45-46.

3.2. After 2011

Before 2011, the UAE focused on diplomacy of alliance and foreign aid in its foreign policy in order to maintain its existence more easily.⁶ According to Ehteshami, with the beginning of the Arab Spring, transformation in the foreign policy of the UAE have occurred and the country's aim became not only to prevent the spread of the Arab Spring to its own country, but also to implement interventionist policies against the sources it considered a threat to its security. The UAE has started to appear as an active player in the region, foreign policy making has become more interventionist that includes not only spending diplomacy and money but also a more military dimension. This policy has been noticed in Bahrain and Libya in 2011, in Yemen since 2015. The UAE joined outside interventions sometimes with the NATO, sometimes as a member of the GCC, and at other times acted together with the USA.⁷ In addition, military bases are another issue that has gained importance in the UAE foreign policy since 2014. These military bases have been established to use its hard power capabilities. Emirates focuses on sea trade and ports in the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. After 2014, the military bases on Perim and Socotra islands in Yemen, the Puntland regions and the Somaliland in Somalia and the port city of Assab, Eritrea was established by the UAE.⁸

According to Ehteshami, with the Arab Spring two important issues led to militarization in the UAE foreign policy. The first of these factors was the perception of threats to national security. For a long time, Iran has been perceived as an external threat to internal security. After the Arab spring, this perception has changed and is replaced by the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) that rose to power in Egypt and Tunisia as a new external threat. Of course, in this period, Iran's policies and its support for Shiite political structures caused worries about the possible regional order. However, as Muslim Brotherhood emerged as a more urgent new threat because the UAE were worried that MB affiliated groups would be influential in Egypt, Yemen and demanded change

⁶ Khalid S. Almezaini, *op. cit.*, p. 17-18-19.

⁷ Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Saudi Arabia as a Resurgent Regional Power," *The International Spectator*, vol. 53, no. 4, September 25, 2018, p. 38.

⁸ İsmail Numan Telci, Tuba Öztürk Horoz, "Military Bases in the Foreign Policy of the United Arab Emirates" *Insight Turkey*, vol. 20, no.2, Spring, 2018, p. 144.

in the Gulf status quo, too. Qatar and the UAE, who did not share the same opinions about the MB, began to have frictions in their foreign policy and bilateral relations.

Another foreign policy issue was the differences in the foreign policy approach between the Obama administration and the GCC countries because the USA did not prefer direct interventionism in the Middle East conflicts. This led to the UAE to be more active in its foreign policy maintain the status quo and security in the region. For this reason, the UAE reshaped its foreign policy toward militarisation because of perceived threats to its national security and intervened in the regional conflicts militarily, financially or politically and cooperated with the KSA.⁹

The impact of the Arab Spring, the rise of Muslim Brotherhoods, the possibility of their influence to make transformations in the region and the anxiety of the existing monarchies led to more militarization, as well as to further voicing the security discourse. While the securitization of Iran was already a foreign policy behavior, the same discourses started to be used against Muslim Brothers and Houthis after this period. Because especially as these two organizations and Iran continue to be mentioned as a security problem, the perception of their threats to national security is formed, it is easier to make attacks in foreign policy in accordance with their interests. For this reason, securitization is frequently referred after the Arab Spring.

3.3. Arab Spring

The 1967 defeat against Israel destroyed the popularity of Gamal Abdannasser and Arab nationalism, opening the ground for Islamism. After the death of the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel-Nasser in 1970, struggle emerged among Saddam Hussein, Hafez Assad and Gaddafi for the leadership of the Arab world. As a matter of fact, following the overthrow of Saddam with the invasion of Iraq, the assassination of Gaddafi along with the Arab Spring, and the weakening of Egypt, the quest for leadership within the Arab world still continues. The main axis of this struggle is evident in the relations between the Gulf countries. It would not be wrong to make mention of

⁹ Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *op. cit.*, p. 39-41.

a considerable regional power competition between Saudi Arabia Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁰

The late 2010 protests resulted in the overthrow of the Ben Ali regime, which lasted for 23 years, and then spread from Tunisia to Egypt, Libya and Yemen in the early 2011 and Jordan. The violent protests that began in Egypt ended the 30-year old Mubarak rule. The protests, which are not limited to these countries, then spread to Bahrain, Libya, and Syria.¹¹ As noted, the wave of the Arab Spring that began in Tunisia overthrew dictators in Egypt, Yemen, and Libya. The protests created short-term instability in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain where it was eventually suppressed.¹²

The GCC countries have followed different foreign policies since the first day of the Arab Spring. Because they were worried, they first adopted a wait-and-see approach and did not take action. However, they later adopted a more active opposition to the Arab Spring. These policies even resulted in military interventions.¹³ The UAE became more assertive and ambitious in both international and regional politics. Policy makers in Abu Dhabi began to prioritize state security in foreign relations.¹⁴ Their foreign policy in which they searched for solutions through diplomacy and negotiations before 2011 turned into a more interventionist style with the Arab Spring.

During the riots that began in 2011 in Bahrain, the protesters demanded democracy and reforms in the country ruled by the royal al-Khalifa family for almost 200 years.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the Gulf countries sought the continuation of the status quo

¹⁰ Ali Semin, *op. cit.* , p. 4.

¹¹ Samuel Helfont, Tally Helfont, "Jordan: Between the Arab spring and the gulf cooperation council", *Orbis*, vol.56, no.1, 2012, p. 83.

¹² Gülşah Neslihan Akkaya, *Körfez İşbirliği Konseyi: Krallar Kulübü ve Değişen Bölgesel Düzen*, SETA, August 2013.

¹³ Eugenio Dacrema , "New emerging balances in the post-Arab Spring: the Muslim Brotherhood and the Gulf monarchies," , *ISPI Analysis*, no. 155, January, 2013, p. 1-3.

¹⁴ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen , "Transformations in the UAE's Foreign Policy", *Al Jazeera Centre for Studies*, June 8, 2017, (Online) , http://studies.aljazeera.net/mritems/Documents/2017/6/8/2d9acc7f833e4e9eb2c97b8eb590e4bb_100.pdf, 28 February 2019.

¹⁵ Bill Law , " Bahrain GP: The BBC explains the background to the protests", *BBC news* , April 16, 2013 , (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-22122792>, 28 February 2019.

in the region and therefore they became actively involved in the struggle in Bahrain.¹⁶ The GCC countries intervened militarily and tried to prevent the spread of the tide.

The GCC countries, except for Qatar, supported the coup in Egypt in 2013 to restore the status quo. The KSA and the UAE played a critical role in Egypt before and after the coup. They were convinced the Saleh government to be overthrown in Yemen where they were involved in aftermath to misguide the democratic transition. The KSA, the UAE, and Bahrain were worried about the Muslim Brotherhood. They took a stand against it, by defining it a security issue.¹⁷ They also used the Arab Spring to maintain their geopolitical goals and sought to weaken Iran. For this reason, they supported the opposition against the Assad regime, the most important ally of Iran in the Middle East.¹⁸

During the early stage of the Arab Spring, there was a relative unity in the foreign policy of the GCC countries especially between 2011 and 2012. For example, they suggested the deputy Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi to replace Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen where the turmoil. In 2011, the GCC countries, along with the League of Arab States, supported the NATO-led intervention against Muammar Qadhafi, in line with the UNSC Resolution number 1973. To defend the regime in Bahrain, the GCC countries sent troops from their military forces to suppress the uprising there.¹⁹ Moreover, they contributed 10 billion dollars to Bahrain and Oman in 2011 to help them with their socioeconomic problems.²⁰ However, this unity later collapsed and problems arose especially because of the differences in foreign policies followed by KSA, the UAE, and Qatar.

In addition, there has been a competitive environment in North Africa for the investments of the GCC countries after 2011 and KSA, the UAE, and Qatar competed

¹⁶ Oktay Bingöl, "Arap Baharı Ve Orta Doğu: Çok Eksenli Güç Mücadelesinde Denge Arayışları", **Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi**, vol. 13, no. 2, 2013, p. 39.

¹⁷ Gülşah Neslihan Akkaya, **op.cit.**, p. 16.

¹⁸ Eugenio Dacrema, "New emerging balances in the post-Arab Spring: the Muslim Brotherhood and the Gulf monarchies," **ISPI Analysis**, no. 155, January, 2013, p. 1-3.

¹⁹ Joe Macaron, "GCC Division and Regional Challenges", **The GCC Crisis at One Year**, Ed. by. Zeina Azzam, Imad K. Harb, (w.date), p. 102.

²⁰ Caryle Murphy, "GCC to set up \$20 bn bailout fund for Bahrain and Oman", **The National**, March 11, 2011, (Online), <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/gcc-to-set-up-20bn-bailout-fund-for-bahrain-and-oman-1.413176>, 13 January 2019.

to establish political and financial influence in this region.²¹ The influence of Qatar especially on Islamists was visible in the democratic transitions of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco during in the first two years following the Arab Spring. However, this role of Qatar diminished after the collapse of the state in Libya, following a military coup in Egypt in 2013 that overthrew the Muslim Brotherhood. Meanwhile, The KSA and the UAE continued to increase their influence in North Africa. They sent billions of dollars to Egypt after the coup and promised to invest in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.²² After the 2013 coup, the UAE and KSA provided considerable assistance to establish and support political stability in Egypt. They said they would invest more in Egypt's real estate and agriculture while providing financial support through depositing money to Egypt's central bank as well as gas and oil subsidies.²³

The reason behind these behaviors of the Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates were their perspectives towards the Muslim Brotherhood. The UAE was concerned about the rise of the Islamist groups in the region, thinking that this would create opposition and instability in the country.²⁴ For example, at a GCC conference held in 2012, Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Foreign Minister, condemned the Muslim Brotherhood as an organisation that attacks to unity and sovereignty of nations. He also added, "Their thought doesn't recognise sovereignty or borders of nations".²⁵ By discourses, the Muslim Brotherhood were shown as threats to the stability and security of the country and they later became the reason for the attacks against the organization.

The position of the USA with regard to the Arab Spring was to wait and see and support the protesters in the region of the riots. Thinking that this democratic wave could spread to their countries, the Gulf countries wanted to transform the GCC into a more military structure and to make it a structure that would not need any external

²¹ Kristin Smith Diwan, "Future of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Gulf", **The Qatar Crisis**, no. 31, 2017, p. 60-62.

²² Russel E. Lucas, "How a few young leaders are shaking up foreign policy in the Gulf Cooperation Council", **The Qatar Crisis**, no. 31, 2017, p. 31-33.

²³ Kristin Smith Diwan, **op. cit.**, p. 60-63.

²⁴ Khalid A Al-Sayed, "GCC and Arab Spring", **The Peninsula Publishing**, 2013, p.111.

²⁵ Habib Toumi, Bureau Chief, "Muslim Brotherhood role in GCC to be debated at summit", **Gulf News**, October 30, 2012, (Online), <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/kuwait/muslim-brotherhood-role-in-gcc-to-be-debated-at-summit-1.1095660>, 15.04.2020.

support.²⁶ Of course, this situation led the GCC countries to follow more active policies in the Arab Spring countries because these countries wished to dominate the region. Thus, they changed their national security and foreign policies for the continuation of the status quo in the region.

3.3.1. UAE's Egypt Policy

The protests started in Egypt on 25 January 2011 after the fall of Ben Ali in Tunisia. The protesters went out to protest the worsening economic conditions, corruption, police cruelty, and political repression, and they wanted President Hosni Mubarak to step down.²⁷ Not only in Cairo, but also in other cities such as Alexandria and Asyut, many protesters including students and labor groups, joined the demonstrations. Over the time, the main axis of these protests became the Islamists, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood and to some degree the Salafists. The military did not defend Mubarak as he wanted his son to come to power after him, the army chose to pretend to side with the people in the streets. Despite the demonstrations, whenever Mubarek said that he would not leave his administration until the end of the year, the protests increased and the army finally decided to topple Mubarak.²⁸ The Mubarak regime was a US strategic partner and an ally crucial next to Israel with its strategic location. However, in February 2011, the Obama administration withdrew its support for the Mubarak administration and let it collapse.²⁹

Since the beginning of the Arab spring, the GCC countries have seen the uprisings as the most important crisis after the Iranian revolution for their country and the regional security.³⁰ One of the most important sponsors of the Mubarak regime in Egypt was the GCC countries (except for Qatar). Therefore, they condemned the demonstrations and announced that the GCC would support stability in Egypt, and

²⁶ Helfont, Samuel, and Tally Helfont, **op. cit.**, p. 84.

²⁷ Sharon Erickson Nepstad, "Mutiny and nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring military defections and loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria," **Journal of Peace Research**, vol. 50, no. 3, 2013, p. 337-349.

²⁸ Jack A. Goldstone, "Cross-class Coalitions and the Making of the Arab Revolts of 2011", **Swiss Political Science Review**, vol. 17, no. 4, 2011, p. 458-459.

²⁹ Christian Nünlist, "The Legacy of Obama's Foreign Policy", **CSS Analysis in Security Policy**, no. 188, 2016, p. 3.

³⁰ Mehran Kamrava, "The Arab Spring and the Saudi-led counterrevolution," **Orbis**, 2012, vol. 56, no.1, p. 97.

even the UAE's minister of foreign affairs visits to Egypt showed that it supported the Mubarak regime. This policy of the Gulf country led to hostility in the 18-day protests on the streets of Cairo.³¹

As a result of the protests that continued for 18 days, in 11 February 2011, Mubarak resigned from his duty which he has been carrying on for 30 years. Thus, on 30 June 2012, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) handed the country's administration to Mohamed Morsi, an important member of the Muslim Brotherhood as the oldest and largest group in Egypt after the first free election where Morsi defeated Ahmed Shafiq, last Prime Minister of Mubarak, in the second round.³²

The reason for the rebellions in 2011 and the overthrow of the Mubarak regime were economic problems such as unemployment, poverty. Nevertheless, the revolution did not improve the economic situation in the country. External trade deficit, government budget deficit, tourism incomes were all hit hard. In addition, the establishment did not allow Morsi much room to operate and he announced a Constitutional decree providing himself an extensive power and announced a referendum on an Islamic constitution led to huge controversies as to Morsi administration in a process that resulted in a military coup.³³ In 2013, Mohammed Morsi as the Egypt's first democratically elected president was overthrown by Al-Sisi of the military.³⁴

During the reign of the Morsi administration in Egypt, Morsi pursued a new foreign policy approach that annoyed both the status quo powers. Therefore, the USA, Israel, the UAE, KSA, who were disturbed by these new policies and discourses wanted Morsi to fall from power. They even preferred a government in which the

³¹ Yasmine Farouk, "More than Money: Post-Mubarak Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf", **Gulf Research Center**, 2014, (Online), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/179860/Egypt_Money_new_29-4-14_2576.pdf, 24 January 2019.

³² Hesham Sallam, "The Egyptian Revolution and the Politics of Histories", **PS: Political Science & Politics**, vol. 46, no.2, April, 2013, p. 247-252.

³³ Ben Smith, "Coups in Egypt", **Economist**, 2012, (Online), <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06680/SN06680.pdf>, 26 January 2019.

³⁴ "Abdul Fattah al-Sisi: Egyptian president may rule until 2034", **BBC News**, February 15, 2019, (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-47252315>, 27 February 2019.

military came to power over the MB administration.³⁵ After Morsi came to power, he tried to normalize relations with Iran. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited Egypt as a first since the Iranian revolution in February 2013. This rapprochement between the two countries also disturbed the GCC countries.³⁶

Within the GCC, there were disagreements about governance in Egypt. The UAE and Qatar, who have pursued active policies since the beginning of the Arab Spring, had different attitudes towards the Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar supported the Muslim Brothers and the UAE was the opposite. Especially, Qatar's support was seen after the election of Mohamed Morsi in 2012. Qatar promised to invest tens of billions of dollars in the Egyptian economy by transferring money to the Central Bank of Egypt. Turkey also provided financial aid and credit to Morsi government. On the contrary, the UAE was pleased to see Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi replacing the Morsi administration and the UAE promised to replace Qatar's investments.³⁷

With the support of the Arab Gulf states, Egypt's military and the country's old business elite, Sisi consolidated its rule. Egyptian economy would have collapsed, especially if there was no financial support from United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. In June 2013, after the fall of Morsi, these three countries promised to provide \$12 billion financial and oil grant to the Sisi administration. Especially, the KSA and the UAE saw this new administration in Egypt as an important partner to fight the Muslim Brotherhood. That's because these countries considered the MB as a threat to them, as will be mentioned later. At the same time the Egyptian military rule was seen as an ally for the ongoing competition with Iran.³⁸

³⁵ Nebi Miş, İsmail Numan Telci, "Devrimden Darbeye: Mısır'da Askeri Vesayet Dönemi", **Middle Eastern Analysis/Ortadoğu Analiz**, vol. 5, no.56, p. 25.

³⁶ Yasmine Farouk, "More than Money: Post-Mubarak Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf", **Gulf Research Center**, 2014, (Online), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/179860/Egypt_Money_new_29-4-14_2576.pdf, 24 January 2019.

³⁷ David B. Roberts, "Qatar and the UAE: Exploring Divergent Responses to the Arab Spring", **The Middle East Journal**, vol.71, no. 4, 2017, p. 546-547.

³⁸ Stephan Roll, "Al-Sisi's development visions: projects and power in Egypt", **Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik**, 2014, (Online), <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-396571>, 1 March 2019.

Between July and December 2013, the GCC countries invested \$10.7 billion was invested in Egypt, the the UAE became a larger supporter with \$4.2 billion.³⁹ Total aid from the Emiratis, the Saudis, and the Kuwaitis reached \$12 billion in 2014.⁴⁰ Again, in 2015, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Oman provided \$12.5 billion in aid.⁴¹ In 2016, the UAE provided another \$2.42 billion to Egypt, and various projects were undertaken by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), such as the construction of 60,000 new houses, building dormitories for 3,000 female students at an Egyptian university.⁴² In addition, Al-Sisi administration and the UAE adopted parallel foreign policies. For example, they showed their partnership by supporting the Haftar administration in Libya.⁴³

The closeness between the UAE and Egypt and the common movements in foreign policy are reflected in the discourses of the leaders. It is very important that the leaders of both countries perceive Muslim Brotherhoods and other Islamists organizations as their enemies. As the United Arab Emirates, Egypt saw Muslim Brotherhoods as a threat to national security and declared it a terrorist organization. This shows that the two countries securitization the same organization.

As an example of their close relations, in 2017, Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi met and showed their close relations. The Sheikh said that they are acting together with Egypt, fighting against terrorism and ensuring the regional stability. In addition, he added that the UAE will continue to stand by Egypt in the fight against

³⁹ Ahmed Galal , “Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Review H1-FY14”, **Arab Republic of Egypt Ministry of Finance**, February, 2014, (Online) , http://www.mof.gov.eg/MOFGallerySource/English/Mid-year_review_English_February27.pdf , 20 March 2019.

⁴⁰ Steven A. Cook, “Egypt and the Gulf: When a Free Lunch Is Not Free”, **Council of foreign Relations**, no. 82, May 13, 2013, p. 4.

⁴¹ “ Gulf states offer \$12.5 billion aid to Egypt”, **Al Arabiya News**, March 13, 2015, (Online), <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/business/economy/2015/03/13/Saudi-announces-4-billion-aid-package-to-Egypt.html>, 20 March 2019.

⁴² "Foreign Aid, " **Ambassy of United Arab Emirates** " , (w.date), (Online), <https://www.the UAE-embassy.org/about-the UAE/foreign-policy/foreign-aid-0>, 1 April 2019.

⁴³ “ Haftar ally the UAE says 'extremist militias' control Libyan capital”, **aljazeera.com**, May 2, 2019, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/haftar-ally-the UAE-extremist-militias-control-libyan-capital-190502144943188.html>, 1 April 2019 .

terrorism, and there are fraternal relations which depends on mutual respect between the two countries.⁴⁴

3.3.2. Muslim Brotherhood

While securitization of Iran was made by the United Arab Emirates before the Arab Spring, later the Muslim Brotherhood is perceived as a security threat to national security and securitization of it has been made by the UAE. Muslim Brotherhood was a reason to shape the foreign policy of the Emirates after the Arab Spring, led to collaboration with Khalifa Haftar in Libya and el-Sisi in Egypt, caused a diplomatic crisis with Qatar and it was declared as a terrorist organization by the UAE. However, their relationships with the UAE were not always bad.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt where it grew very fast. Later on, it spread to many Arab countries, e.g. Jordan, Syria, Libya, Tunisia, Palestine and the Gulf countries. As a matter of fact, the members of the MB, who had problems under the Nasser regime in Egypt, found a refuge in the Gulf countries. They began to spread there in time and this strength was felt especially at universities. Over time, Gulf countries have perceived their effects as a threat to their national security. It was the reason why campaigns against Muslim Brotherhoods in 90s were launched. Nevertheless, these relationships have not always been worse and continued in a fluctuating manner.⁴⁵

Banna explain the Brotherhood as an all-inclusive movement that is described as "a Salafiyya message, a Sufi truth, a Sunni way, a cultural-educational union, a political organisation, an economic company, an athletic group and a social idea". After Nasser came to power in 1956, the movement was pushed to underground. It changed the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood and the writings of Sayyid Qutb, an

⁴⁴ "His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed and el-Sisi discuss strengthening fraternal relations, regional and international issues", United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, September 26, 2017, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2017/9/26/26-09-2017-UAE-Egypt>, 27.04.2020.

⁴⁵ Eugenio Dacrema, "New emerging balances in the post-Arab Spring: the Muslim Brotherhood and Gulf monarchies", ISPI Analysis, no 155, January, 2013, p. 1-3.

important figure. Qutb's statements aimed both to criticize the corruption of Arab regimes in terms of spreading Islamic values and the Western regimes.⁴⁶

Looking at the direct interaction between the Muslim Brotherhood and the United Arab Emirates, after its independence from the UK in 1971, the UAE had no institution of higher education until 1976 when the United Arab Emirates University was founded. Until then, Emirati students had to go to Kuwait, Egypt, and other Arab countries to attain higher education. In the meantime, some Emiratis affiliated with the MB and/or became its members and shared its views. When they returned to the UAE after their education in Egypt, these people became the MB's representatives abroad. The Arabs who became members of the MB established their association under the name of "Islah Society".⁴⁷

In 1974, the Emirati branch of the Brotherhood, organized as "Jam'iat al-Islah wa-l-Tawjih al-Ijtima'i" (Reform and Social Counselling Association, hereafter al-Islah), has been deeply involved in the religious, social and educational affairs of the UAE. The members of the group held important governmental positions, such as the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Education, and Islamic Affairs.⁴⁸ By the 1990's, al-Islah had become the most influential non-state actor in the UAE, controlling the teachers' and lawyers' associations as well as the students'.⁴⁹ However, over the time, the Gulf countries began to see this phenomenon as a threat to national security. For this reason, they started campaigns against the Muslim Brothers in the 1990's.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ "Saudi and the Brotherhood: From Friends to Foes", **aljazeera.com**, June 23, 2017, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/saudi-brotherhood-friends-foes-170623093039202.html>, 12.03.2020.

⁴⁷ Mazhar al-Zo'by, Birol Başkan, "Discourse and oppositionality in the Arab Spring: The case of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UAE," , **International Sociology**, vol. 30, no. 4, December 18, 2015, p. 403.

⁴⁸ Courtney Freer, "The Muslim Brotherhood in the Emirates: Anatomy of a Crackdown", **Middle East Eye**, December 17, 2015, (Online), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/muslim-brotherhood-emirates-anatomy-crackdown>, 23 March 2019.

⁴⁹ Matthew Hedges, Giorgio Cafiero, "The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood: What Does the Future Hold?" , **Middle East Policy**, vol. 24, no. 1, March 19, 2017, p. 137.

⁵⁰ Eugenio Dacrema, "New emerging balances in the post-Arab Spring: the Muslim Brotherhood and the Gulf monarchies", **ISPI Analysis**, no.155, January, 2013, p. 1-3.

The UAE began to be bothered by the increasing influence of the MB. For this reason, in 1995, in order to reduce the role of the MB in education, the government brought radical changes and fired the people affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. The UAE also closed the Islah Society's administrative council and banned its activities. The UAE and the MB members in the country continued to maintain a complex and tense relationship until the emergence of the Arab Spring.⁵¹ Nevertheless, this bad course turned to a positive position for the MB with the Arab Spring where they gained a momentum in many countries such as Egypt.

In the Gulf, the first serious concerns and alarms related to the influence of the MB in the region emerged in 2011, particularly in Kuwait, KSA and the UAE. As a result, the UAE began to increase its pressure on al-Islah that was demanding a political reform. The reason behind that this organization was always blamed by the government as an extension of the MB in the UAE.⁵² Political Islam is seen as a threat in the UAE. That's because it symbolizes a different Islamic model which purpose electoral politics.⁵³ The Muslim Brotherhood is conventionally opposing to authoritarianism and authorise civil society activism that support pluralism and it is a threat to security of authoritarian leaders. In addition, Mohamed bin Zayed's thought about the MB is that leave a space for any political opposition group could make weaker the current autocratic order which rule over the region.⁵⁴

With the beginning of the Arab Spring, the state attitude towards Muslim Brotherhood was reflected in the statements made by the state. In 2012, Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's foreign minister, condemned the MB as *"an organization that harms the unity and sovereignty of nations"*. Thus, securitization of Muslim Brotherhood were made. The UAE took a firm stand against demonstrations and non-

⁵¹ Mazhar al-Zo'by, Birol Başkan, **op. cit.** , p. 404.

⁵² Pekka Hakala, "Opposition in the United Arab Emirates", **European Parliament, Directorate General for External Relations, Policy Department**, November 15, 2012 , (Online) , [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2012/491458/EXPO-AFET_SP\(2012\)491458_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2012/491458/EXPO-AFET_SP(2012)491458_EN.pdf), 12.03.2019.

⁵³ Fatima Ayub, "The Gulf and Sectarianism", **European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)**, 2013, (Online), https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR91_GULF_ANALYSIS_AW.pdf, 23.02.2020.

⁵⁴ Shafik Mandhai, "Understanding Mohammed Bin Zayed's war on opposition groups", **TRT World**, June 5, 2019, (Online), <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/understanding-mohammed-bin-zayed-s-war-on-opposition-groups-27274>, 12.03.2020.

governmental organizations that were perceived as threats to the state and arrested them.⁵⁵ In the same year, General Dahi Khalfan Tamim who is the Police Chief of Dubai warned the Muslim Brotherhood and stated that the Gulf was the red line for Muslim Brotherhood as Iran and warned them against their destabilizing movements.⁵⁶ He additionally compared the Muslim Brotherhood's threat with the Iranian threat and said it was no less serious a threat than that of Iran.⁵⁷ In another speech he made, the cause of this destabilizing danger was based on Muslim Brotherhood's tendency to seize power by implementing their own ideologies. General Tamim emphasized that the Brotherhood will capture power in the region by the overthrow of Gulf countries governments, so it is a threat to national security and stability.⁵⁸

As can be understood from the statements made, the United Arab Emirates approached the Muslim Brotherhood as a danger to the stability of the country. Possessing power of Muslim Brotherhood in the region and spreading of this power was not desired by the UAE because of the danger of destroying existing monarchies. Especially, with Muslim Brotherhood came to power in Egypt by election in 2012, further increased the signals of danger. These are the main reasons for the securitization of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Of course, this threat perception was not the same in all Gulf countries. Qatar, however, was in a position supportive of the MB, resulting in a split among the GCC countries.⁵⁹ While there were some sporadic disagreements among the countries in the history of the GCC, the Qatar crisis was the biggest led by the KSA and the UAE in 2017. The reason for this crisis was that the GCC countries were following different

⁵⁵ Ian Black, "Emirati nerves rattled by Islamists' rise", the Guardian, October 12, 2012, (Online), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/on-the-middle-east/2012/oct/12/uae-muslimbrotherhood-egypt-arabspring>, 12.03.2020.

⁵⁶ Bassam Za'za, "Dubai police chief warns Muslim Brotherhood over social media use", **Gulf News**, July 26, 2012, (Online), <https://gulfnews.com/uae/dubai-police-chief-warns-muslim-brotherhood-over-social-media-use-1.1053883>, 12.03.2020.

⁵⁷ Wafa Issa, "Police Chief defends criticism of US policies", **the national**, January 20, 2012, (Online), <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/police-chief-defends-criticism-of-us-policies-1.602687>, 12.03.2020.

⁵⁸ "Muslim Brotherhood is a grave danger to Gulf Security", **Gulf News**, June 25, 2013, (Online), <https://gulfnews.com/uae/muslim-brotherhood-is-a-grave-danger-to-gulf-security-1.1201863>, 12.03.2020.

⁵⁹ Eugenio Dacrema, **op. cit.**, p. 1.

policies about the MB and the Arab Spring.⁶⁰ Despite the MB and the GCC countries are almost identical concerning their religious approaches to public and private life, there are big differences between the two sides in terms of world-view, policy, society, and government.⁶¹

Other Gulf countries except for Qatar and Kuwait see the MB as a threat to regional and national security. That's because the Gulf states are afraid that the Brotherhood will be able to spread their influence to their own countries and monarchies after the success of the Brotherhood in North Africa.⁶² The Gulf countries are supporter of the status quo to maintain their monarchy in the region and they are worried that a change will put their privileged position at risk. Therefore, they tried very hard to prevent this development.⁶³ Qatar is not worried about the strengthening of the MB because it has a relatively pious population and its per capita national income is the highest in the world. For this reason, it is not afraid of an internal unrest. However, there are various social and economic problems such as unemployment in KSA, the UAE, and Kuwait. Therefore, they were uneasy about the spread of a possible revolutions and even reforms on their own countries.⁶⁴

3.3.3. Yemen

While the Arab Spring was spreading across the region, Yemen as an unstable state was also affected by this uprising. Iran, which was considered as a security threat by the United Arab Emirates, has an important place in Yemen policy of Emirates. Accordingly, in Yemen, Iran-backed Houthis are the reason of the operation with the Saudi Arabia and Houthis are seen as a security problem by both KSA and the UAE. In addition, in time, the UAE started to pursue its own interests in the country.

The Arab Spring affected Yemen. Even before 2011, the country struggled with many tensions and conflicts groups. When the Arab revolts reached Yemen, its instable

⁶⁰ Wojciech Grabowski , "The Muslim Brotherhood and the crisis in the GCC: Roots, issues and implications," , *Stosunki Międzynarodowe*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2016, p. 356.

⁶¹ Eugenio Dacrema, *op. cit.* , p. 1.

⁶² Kristin Smith Diwan, *op. cit.* , p. 60-63.

⁶³ Eugenio Dacrema, *op. cit.* , p. 3.

⁶⁴ Oktay Bingöl, *op. cit.* , p. 40.

environment turned into a more chaotic situation, which caused the collapse of government.⁶⁵ The country was first torn between the revolutionaries that demand democracy and the opponents of democracy. Together they forced the democratic transition out of its track. After the collapse of democracy with Houthis coup, the status quo powers (i.e. the KSA and Iran) turned against each other. Since then Yemen has suffered from a power struggle between Iran and the KSA-the UAE, the conflict has not been solved over 8 years.

During the Cold War Northern Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) was backed by the US and KSA and Southern People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) was backed by the USSR. In 1990, both parts of the country were unified and formed the modern Yemeni state. Ali Abdullah Saleh assumed the leadership position of the new state. However, even after this unification, riots continued to appear in the country. The most important one is the Houthi movement who belong to the Zaydi branch of Shia in the northern Yemen. In fact, they rebelled six times between 2004 and 2010. Especially after 2003, they became more active politically.⁶⁶

In the south, there was the Yemen Southern Movement (Hiraak Movement). This movement is not as threatening to the regime as the Houthis movement and did not use a separatist Islamic discourse.⁶⁷ The Houthis had a sharper rhetoric such as anti-establishment and anti-foreign intervention and anti-American and anti-Israeli attitudes. The Hiraak movement, on the other hand, consisted of soldiers and government officials who had been forcibly retired after the 1994 north-south war, and what they wanted was to return to pre-war positions.⁶⁸ They demanded equality between

⁶⁵ Thomas Juneau, "Yemen and the Arab Spring: elite struggles, state collapse and regional security," , **Orbis**, vol. 57, no. 3, 2013, p. 409.

⁶⁶ Zachary Laub, "Yemen in crisis", **Council on Foreign Relations**, April 29, 2016, (Online) , https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/190632/Backgrounder_%20Yemen's%20Ci...pdf, 17 April 2019.

⁶⁷ Katherine Zimmerman, "Yemen's Southern Challenge: Background on the Rising Threat of Secessionism," , **AEI's Critical Threats Project**, November 5, 2009, (Online), <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/yemens-southern-challenge-background-on-the-rising-threat-of-secessionism>, 01 May 2019.

⁶⁸ Peter Salisbury, "Yemen and the Saudi-Iranian 'Cold War'", **Research Paper, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs**, February, 2015, (Online), https://cdn.mashreghnews.ir/old/files/fa/news/1393/12/10/924869_652.pdf , 01 May 2019.

people in the North and the South and more power for local governments in the South.⁶⁹

The most important opposition at this stage was the Houthis and another one was the Yemeni al-Qaeda as a part of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The AQAP was created with the unification of the Yemeni and Saudi branches of al-Qaeda.⁷⁰ The terrorist activities of these groups caused instability in Yemen. A failed state of Yemen creates a threat to the whole region because it has provided a more appropriate environment for AQAP activities and positioning. In addition, U.S. government officials evaluated the AQAP as one of the most significant threats to the U.S.⁷¹ The Houthis and the AQAP was seen as a danger for regional status quo by both the GCC countries and the USA, so they were securitized by them.

On 11 February 2011, in Sanaa, the capital city of Yemen, people came out on the streets and demanded radical reforms in government. The aim of the opposition movement was to topple Saleh's rule and to give the control of the country to people.⁷² As a result of the protests against government, Yemen turned into a military and political struggle and the situation gradually turned to a civil war. Saleh insisted on staying power in the face of strong popular pressure. However, as a result of the ongoing turmoil, Saleh accepted the GCC's proposed agreement of reconciliation and agreed to end his long-time rule on November 23, 2011. In accordance with this agreement, he left his post to his deputy Mansour Hadi. Saleh was guaranteed that his immunity will be retained after withdrawing from the mission by the GCC. At the same time, he would continue to be an effective factor in Yemen politics and after he withdrew from the administration⁷³ and he maintained the presidency of the General People's Congress (GPC).⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Nicole Stracke, Mohammed Saif Haidar, "The Southern Movement in Yemen", **Gulf Research Center**, 2010, (Online), researchgate.net, 02 May 2019.

⁷⁰ Thomas Juneau, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

⁷¹ Christopher Boucek, "Evolution of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula", 2011, (Online), [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Christopher_Boucek_Article_Orient_IV_2011.pdf](https://carneгиеendowment.org/files/Christopher_Boucek_Article_Orient_IV_2011.pdf), 3 May 2019.

⁷² Thomas Juneau, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

⁷³ Ibrahim Fraihat, **Unfinished revolutions: Yemen, Libya, and Tunisia after the Arab spring**, Yale University Press, 2016, p. 34-40.

⁷⁴ Brian M. Perkins, "Yemen: between revolution and regression," **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, vol. 40, no. 4, 2017, p. 300.

The crisis in the country continued without any solution until 2014. On August 18, 2014, The Houthi leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi called for a protest against the Hadi administration and the crisis in the country increasingly escalated. Under the Saudi watching, The Houthis and Saleh followers plotted a coup against the elected government and occupied Amran province between Sana'a and Saada, than they occupied government buildings in the capital on 21 September 2014 while the Saleh loyalists' officers opened the arms depots of the military. On January 22, the Houthis seized the presidential palace and the prime minister's house. Then, the President Hadi announced his resignation from his duty and escaped to Aden on February 21, announcing that he withdrew his resignation and declaring that Sanaa was under the occupation of the Houthis. He adopted the city of Aden as the temporary capital of Yemen. On March 5th, after the Yemeni President Hadi's call for foreign intervention against the Houthis invasion in the country. Therefore, the Operation Decisive Storm was started by the Saudi Arabia on 26 March by launching an air strike against the strategic regions controlled by the Houthis.⁷⁵

Yemen is thought related with the Arabian Peninsula's security and it is inclined to spread its own instability to neighbours⁷⁶. So, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan, and Sudan all participated in the operation but these countries had security concerns behind their participation. That's because Yemen has a critical place for the stability and security of the GCC. A military intervention hoped to prevent security problems in the country and to deter Iran from involvement in the affairs of the GCC and other Arab countries. The GCC countries thought that the status of Yemen was important for the security of them.⁷⁷ The Operation included 100 Saudi fighter jets, 100,000 Saudi troops, 30 Emiratis fighter jets, 10 from Qatar and 6 from Jordan, 15 each from Bahrain and

⁷⁵ Ali Semir, "Yemen Krizi, Husiler Ve İran-Körfez Güç Mücadelesi", **İstanbul: Bilgesam**, no. 1201, April 3, 2015, p. 2-3.

⁷⁶ Emile Hokayem, David B. Roberts, "The War in Yemen", **Survival**, vol. 58, issue 6, 2016, p. 161-162.

⁷⁷ Ghassan Shabaneh, "Operation Decisive Storm: Objectives and Hurdles", **Aljazeera Center for Studies**, April 12, 2015, (Online), <http://studies.aljazeera.net/mritems/Documents/2015/4/13/2015413105654152734Operation%20Decisive%20Storm.pdf>, 4 May 2015.

Kuwait, Pakistan and Egypt air and naval forces.⁷⁸ While the US had expressed it would not become directly involved, it also said willingness to provide logistical and intelligence assistance in the country.⁷⁹ It was also provided military support to the coalition.⁸⁰

The operation did not resolve the conflict for the reason that the coalition could not use soldiers on the ground because of the reluctance of Egypt and Pakistan to send soldiers to fight with the Houthis. At the same time, the incapable Hadi government could not provide order in the country against the Houthis. Under the Saudi guidance, Ali Abdallah Saleh wanted to break away from the Houthis but he was killed by them as Iran was their main supporter militarily and diplomatically.⁸¹ The UAE supports the separatist groups in the south of the country⁸² because the UAE wanted to secure trade networks and to reduce Iranian effect in the Arabian Peninsula. Securing their interests in Yemen would maintain the UAE's interests in the Horn of Africa. Therefore, the UAE trained and strengthened southern forces with most of its resources.⁸³

After the crisis deepened in 2015, the southern part became mostly autonomous. The UAE aimed to control the shores of the Yemen to control ports and sea trade. Secondly, they were against the democratic government in Yemen as in Egypt. Similarly, the UAE especially opposed moderate Islamist parties and movements

⁷⁸Stig Stenslie, "Decisive Storm": Saudi Arabia's attack on the Houthis in Yemen", **Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center**, May, 2015, (Online), <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/191021/fdae163be3c9b498ae792fb7bd161c81.pdf>, 4 May 2019.

⁷⁹ "Operation Decisive Storm: Reshuffling Regional Order", **Aljazeera Center for Studies**, April 6, 2015, (Online), <http://studies.aljazeera.net/mritems/Documents/2015/4/7/20154783015689734Operation%20Decisive%20Storm.pdf>, 2 May 2019.

⁸⁰ Declan Walsh, Eric Schmitt, "Arms Sales to Saudis Leave American Fingerprints on Yemen's Carnage," **The New York Times**, December 25, 2018, (Online), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/25/world/middleeast/yemen-us-saudi-civilian-war.html>, (Online), 29 December 2018.

⁸¹ Riad, Domazeti, "Yemen Krizi: Stratejik hesapların girdabında 8. Yıl", February 15, 2019, (Online), <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz-haber/yemen-krizi-stratejik-hesaplarin-girdabinda-8-yil/1393817>, 28 February 2019.

⁸² Courtney Freer, "The Muslim Brotherhood in the Emirates: Anatomy of a Crackdown", **Middle East Eye**, December 17, 2015, (Online), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/muslim-brotherhood-emirates-anatomy-crackdown>, 23 March 2019.

⁸³ Naser Al Wasmi, "Yemen intervention advances the UAE goals on two fronts," **The National**, December 26, 2018, (Online), <https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/yemen-intervention-advances-the-uae-goals-on-two-fronts-1.806615>, 28 February 2019.

which has been shown in Yemen but it supported both Salafist groups and radical secular groups under the disguise of fighting the AQAP and the Hauthis. Since 2015, the UAE invested in equipping and training separatist forces and provided equipment for local loyal forces to them as an autonomous body in the south of Yemen.⁸⁴

In the military operations of the Arab Coalition, which began in Yemen in 2015, the military presence of the UAE consisted of 30 F-16 fighter jets, 4 thousand soldiers and nearly 500 private operations. While the KSA is more interested in reducing the Iran's influence in its southern border, the UAE is worried about China's new silk road project and tries to capture the ports of Yemen because it fears losing the importance of commercial centers such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi.⁸⁵ As one of the main actors, the UAE has captured all the port cities and coastal areas of Yemen, especially Aden, el-Mukelle and Muha. Despite all the objections of the legitimate Hadi government, the UAE continued to act indecently by developing special relations with the local tribes and organizing them for its own interests.⁸⁶ Moreover, the UAE forces also occupied airports and ports on the Yemeni island of Socotra as a critical point for trade in the Indian ocean. The flag of the UAE and images of Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, posted in the official buildings of the island.⁸⁷

The UAE does not directly get involved in any sectarian war in the region. Nevertheless, Emirates is indirectly involved in issues in various countries such as Yemen, by using a third party (proxy war).⁸⁸ The UAE and Saudi-led intervention in Yemen, Operation Decisive Storm, which started in March 2015, led to a surprising

⁸⁴ Peter Salisbury, "Yemen's Southern Powder Keg", **Royal Institute of International Affairs**, March, 2018, p. 6-7-12, (Online), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2018-03-27-yemen-southern-powder-keg-salisbury-final.pdf>, 1 March 2019.

⁸⁵ Riad Domazeti, "Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri'nin Yemen kaosundaki rolü", December 7, 2018, (Online), <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz-haber/birlesik-arap-emirlikleri-nin-yemen-kaosundaki-rolu/1332159>, 1 March 2019.

⁸⁶ Riad Domazeti, "Yemen Krizi: Stratejik hesapların girdabında 8. Yıl", **AA**, February 15, 2019, (Online), <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz-haber/yemen-krizi-stratejik-hesaplarin-girdabinda-8-yil/1393817>, 28 February 2019.

⁸⁷ "The UAE forces 'occupy' sea and airports on Yemen's Socotra", **aljazeera.com**, May 4, 2018, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/the-uae-forces-occupy-sea-airports-yemen-socotra-180504181423573.html>, 3 March 2019

⁸⁸ Cuneyt Yenigun, "Conflict Resolution for the Middle East: Sectarian Rapprochement" **Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies**, vol. 3, no. 2, 2016, p. 17.

effect. Before 2011, Emirati leaders preferred to show operational and strategic utility of the country to their international partners and participate in peacekeeping mission in Kosovo (1990), East Africa (1990), and Afghanistan (2008). The UAE and Saudi Arabia weren't thought to have the capability to be involved in dangerous, large and offensive missions like those in Yemen. In addition to them, any of the Gulf States set in motion their military forces under the GCC command on such a scale. It started a new era in security discourse of the Gulf. However, the entire performance of the Emirati, Saudi forces and consequence of intervention is not succeed.⁸⁹

Divergent strategies of the UAE and Saudi Arabia took the operation in different aims. While Saudi Arabia backs President Hadi, the UAE supports separatist Southern Transitional Council in Aden and the battles have complicated an already chaotic war of Yemen. It is obvious that the UAE and Saudi Arabia tend to recruit proxies in an armed conflict, yet their alliance against Houthis has recently been partially damaged. Although the UAE has been an effective partner in the coalition with Saudi Arabia, it has also structured its own route by supporting and establishing south local militia groups to control south Yemen, Aden and its strategic ports. However, Saudi Arabia struggles with regional opponents to protect its kingdom from threats and also sees neighbor Yemen as a strategic back yard. Against the UAE's ambition about the secession of the southern part of Yemen, Saudi Arabia knows that the separation of the country would not serve its interests anymore because it would lead to the Houthis' control of the north and an establishment of a permanent base by Iran at the southern borders of Saudi Arabia.⁹⁰

With the allies such as Salafi fighters, south Yemen separatists and local militias in the south, the UAE has a more operative role on the ground. The UAE is using special armies which are trained, funded and raised to crush political Islamist parties such as al-Islah and jihadi militancy. Across the southern coast, the Emiratis have constructed bases and camps, and a parallel state was set up by its own security ser-

⁸⁹ Hokayem, Roberts, op.cit. p. 157-159.

⁹⁰ Ali Younes, "The Divergent Saudi-UAE Strategies in Yemen", **Aljazeera**, August 31, 2019, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/analysis-divergent-saudi-uae-strategies-yemen-190830121530210.html>, 03.02.2020.

vices and it is not a part of the Yemeni government. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch put forth the presence of secret prisons which belong to the UAE and its proxy forces and they are blamed for torturing rival forces such as al-Islah members, activists anti-Houthi fighters. Also, the UAE have achieved its aim by setting up private armies, supporting secessionists in the southern part of Yemen and ruining the political system. Also, strategic waterways in the Red and Arabian seas are controlled by it. The country started bombing Sana'a with the Saudi-led coalition, Operation Decisive Storm, and Emirati independently continued its military attacked in Aden to control the city.⁹¹ Not only in Aden but also in Socotra, lying between the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula and Somalia, the UAE has dispatched armed forces and created bases against Iranian influence and Islamist extremists. The UAE has constructed local army units in Yemen (Socotra, Perim islands) to increase its authority throughout the Red Sea coast and it builds up commercial ports, conducts military missions because of the Bab al-Mandeb strait, a strategic route for oil. The reason behind intervention of the UAE into Somalia is the Somali pirates's sudden attacks to trade routes throughout the Horn of Africa, the way of the Middle East's busiest port and al Qaeda-linked Shabaab militants.⁹²

Although the United Arab Emirates is engaged in military interventions for its interests in the region, the intensified opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist groups also plays an important role in the interventions of the country. The role of seeing these groups as terrorist organizations is very important. Iran-backed Houthi groups are also seen as a terrorist group and both Saudi Arabia and the UAE are not willing to give the country's control to them. These groups have been seen as a threat to their countries and regional security. So securitization of these groups have been made by the UAE. Although time to time they moved away from the idea of the initial coalition, Iran, Huthies and the Islamists are the main driver of the KSA and the UAE's interventions to Yemen.

⁹¹ Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, "Yemen on the Brink:How the UAE Profiting From the Chaos of Civil War", **The Guardian**, December 21, 2018, (Online), <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/dec/21/yemen-uae-united-arab-emirates-profiting-from-chaos-of-civil-war>, 10.02.2020.

⁹² Noah Browning, Alexander Cornwell, "UAE extends military reach in Yemen and Somalia", **Reuters**, May 11, 2018, (Online), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uae-security-yemen-somalia/uae-extends-military-reach-in-yemen-and-somalia-idUSKBN1IC12A>, 12.02.2020.

To see the perspective of the UAE towards Iran and Hutsi groups, it is necessary to look at the officials' statements. Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan said that they will follow their policies to fight with extremist ideologies and terrorist groups to protect region. Moreover, he was talked about the Muslim Brotherhood, the Houthis, Daesh, Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah as terrorist organizations. It is also mentioned that these groups have access to weapons and funds.⁹³ In the Arab quartet headed by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Anwar Gargash, the interventions of Iran into the Arab countries internal affairs were addressed and it was said that Iran caused sectarian conflicts in Arab countries, provided arms to terrorist groups in the region, and the security of Arab countries was threatened by Iran. As an example, the ballistic missiles provided by Iran to the Houthis are mentioned.⁹⁴ Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for Legal Affairs, Ahmed Al Jarman, condemned terrorism and he stated the importance of acting together in the fight against terrorism. He also said that

"UAE has expressed its concerns about the offensive and expansionist policies of Iran and highlighted its rejection of the continuing Iranian intervention in the internal affairs of Arab countries .. The UAE highlighted its full commitment to the unity of Yemen and its respect for its sovereignty and independence ".⁹⁵

3.3.4. Bahrain

Demands for democracy and reform that emerged with the beginning of the Arab Spring also affected Bahrain, a small island state. When the riots started in 2011, Bahrain government could not suppress these movements and it asked the GCC countries for help. Upon this, the Saudi Arabia and the UAE sent their troops to suppress

⁹³ "H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed delivers UAE's statement at UN General Assembly", **United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation**, September 29, 2019, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2019/9/29/29-09-2019-UAE-New-York,01.06.2020>.

⁹⁴ "Arab Quartet condemns Iran's meddling into Arab affairs", **United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation**, April 13, 2018, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2018/4/13/13-04-2018-UAE-Iran,01.06.2020>.

⁹⁵ "UAE calls for unity of regional and international efforts to combat terrorism at Rhodes Conference for Security and Stability", **United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperations**, May 25, 2017, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2017/5/24/24-05-2017-UAE-RhodesII-Conference,14.03.2020>.

the protests. This support was determined by their anti-Iran sentiments. The Gulf countries, already disturbed by the uprisings in the region, saw the revolts in Bahrain as a threat to their national security. Because they thought that Iranian provocation was behind the demonstrations in Bahrain, they were worried that Iran, which they saw as a danger to their own security in the region, had an impact on Bahrain by using protesters. For this reason, they handled the events in Bahrain as a security problem, securitized the protests which was considered Iran-backed and later intervened the protesters on the request of the king.

After the fall of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, the protests began in Bahrain in 2011. With the start of the riots, Bahrain and other neighboring Sunni states blamed Iran for instigating uprising in the Gulf States. It should not be forgotten the ruling family in Bahrain, the “el Khalifa” family, belongs the Sunni sect. This uprising peacefully started in the Pearl Roundabout in Manama by young people⁹⁶ and they were demanding a new constitution, the establishment of an elected government, demanding a constitutional monarchy⁹⁷ and looking for smaller reforms rather than overthrowing the monarchy. Even though the protests did not carry any sectarian character, the majority of the Shiite youth participated to them.⁹⁸

When Bahrain encountered the opposition movement, the first reaction of it was trying to suppress the protests without using force. An example of such efforts is that the ministry of the interior promised to employ 20,000 new workers. In addition to the 2011-2012 annual budgets, the civil servant salaries were raised at the same time, and attempts at suppressing the uprisings were increased.⁹⁹ Bahrain economy was the weakest in the Gulf region. Bahrain GDP per capita was 28.78 billion usd in 2011, however in the same year other GCC member states had high numbers such as

⁹⁶ Brandon Friedman, “Battle for Bahrain: What one uprising meant for the Gulf states and Iran”, **World Affairs**, vol 174, no 6, p. 76.

⁹⁷ Stephen Zunes, “Bahrain’s arrested revolution”, **Arab Studies Quarterly**, vol. 35, no. 2, 2013, p. 154.

⁹⁸ Thomas Ambrosio, “Democratic states and authoritarian firewalls: America as a black knight in the uprising in Bahrain”, **Contemporary Politics**, vol. 20, no. 3, 2014, p. 333-336.

⁹⁹ Steffen Hertog, “The costs of counter-revolution in the GCC”, **Foreign Policy**, vol. 31, 2011, p. 4.

the UAE 350 billion usd, Qatar 167 million usd, Saudi Arabia 671 billion usd, Kuwait 154 million usd, Oman 67 billion usd.¹⁰⁰

However, these protests that started between February 14 and 17, 2011, then turned into a violent conflict. On 17 February, the police raided the tent established by the demonstrators without warning and seven activists were killed by the state forces.¹⁰¹ The aim of the demonstrators was to demand changes in the order of the autocratic kingdom, just like the demands of the demonstrators in Tunisia and Egypt. The crown prince, Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, first proposed a solution through a national dialogue but the protesters did not want to have a dialogue as the killing of seven people in the demonstrations created further complications. After this stage, the regime called on its loyalists for a support rally in front of a large Sunni mosque, Al-Fateh Mosque on 21 February. Of course, the aim here was to suppress the protests by showing a force and counter-discourse using the Sunni-Shiite divide. However, the demonstrations continued to maintain its large including the Sunnis.¹⁰²

In the demonstrations, 40 people were killed by the security forces, more than 1,600 people were arrested and more than 4400 were fired. This further increased the gap between the demonstrators and the regime in Bahrain, being a bad example of democratic revolutions.¹⁰³ The situation later turned into a Sunni-Shi'i conflict and the Bahrain government was forced to seek military assistance from the GCC countries against the uprising that were not able to suppress by the Bahrain itself.¹⁰⁴ Although, the demonstrations included mixed groups such as young people, old people, Shiite people, Sunni people, they were assumed linked to the external threat, namely to Iran. Therefore, it was seen as a Sunni-Shiite conflict by Bahrain government.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ "World Bank National Accounts Data", **The World Bank**, (Online), https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2011&most_recent_year_desc=false&start=1960, 03.02.2020.

¹⁰¹ Stephen Zunes, **op. cit.**, p. 154.

¹⁰² Cortni Kerr, Toby Jones, "A revolution paused in Bahrain," , **Middle East Report**, February 23, 2011, (Online), <https://merip.org/2011/02/a-revolution-paused-in-bahrain/> , 11 December 2018.

¹⁰³ Stephen Zunes, **op.cit.** , p. 149.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Slackman, "The Proxy Battle in Bahrain", **New York Times**, March 19, 2011, (Online), <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/20/weekinreview/20proxy.html>, 15 January 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Vânia Carvalho Pinto, "Exploring the interplay between Framing and Securitization theory: the case of the Arab Spring protests in Bahrain", **Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional**, vol. 57, no. 1, 2014, p. 168.

At the beginning of the uprising, the GCC countries observed the developments; afterwards they started to take more aggressive steps to show their support. First of all, they announced that they would provide financial assistance to Bahrain for their socio-economic developments and later, the request of King Hamad, the GCC countries sent troops to Bahrain on March 14 (SA, the UAE, and Qatar).¹⁰⁶ By sending the Peninsula Shield Force to Bahrain, the GCC countries helped Bahrain Defense Force arrest the protesters throughout the country. Between March 1 and June 1, the Bahrain government declared a state of national emergency.¹⁰⁷ Looking at the uprising in Bahrain, it is observed that the response of the GCC was different compared to the other countries facing the Arab Spring. For example, to support of the demonstrators in Libya, Qatar and the UAE created a no-fly zone according to the UN Resolution 1973, just the opposite they supported the Bahrain government in the uprising and helped suppress the demonstrations there.¹⁰⁸ When Bahrain's authorities requested police aid from the Gulf Cooperation Council, Saudi Arabia sent 1000 soldiers, the UAE sent 500 soldiers¹⁰⁹ and the demonstrations were suppressed. The entry of the Gulf countries into Bahrain in 2011 was called "occupation" by the opposition here.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, Khalid bin Ahmad al-Khalifa, the foreign minister of Bahrain, after being invited to the GCC countries and following the intervention of the GCC, said that the GCC troops would stay here until they were sure that the Iranian threat was alleviated in Bahrain.¹¹¹

Iranian perspective, regarding the overthrow of the Sunni regimes as an advantage for itself, Iran criticized the UAE-Qatar and KSA who sent troops to suppress

¹⁰⁶ Brandon Friedman, "Battle for Bahrain: What one uprising meant for the Gulf states and Iran", **World Affairs**, vol. 174, no. 6, 2012, p. 79.

¹⁰⁷ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Bahrain's uprising: Regional dimensions and international consequences", **Stability: International Journal of Security and Development**, vol. 2, no. 1, 2013, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Wojciech Grabowski, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the crisis in the GCC: Roots, issues and implications" **Stosunki Międzynarodowe**, vol. 52, no. 2, 2016, p. 362.

¹¹⁰ Jane Kinninmont, **Bahrain. Oil States in the New Middle East: Uprisings and stability**, Routledge, Ed.by. Kjetil Selvik, Bjørn Olav Utvik, 2016.

¹¹¹ "Bahrain: Gulf troops to stay as counter to Iran", **The Daily Star**, April 18, 2011, (Online), <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2011/Apr-18/136766-bahrain-gulf-troops-to-stay-as-counter-to-iran.ashx>, 11 March 2019.

the Shiite uprising that started in Bahrain¹¹² and condemned this protection of the ruling family.¹¹³ When the population of Bahrain is considered, it is seen that 3/4 of them are Shiites and this Shiite population, which is seen as a minority by the Sunni governments, is tried to be suppressed. When the Shiite groups rebelled in the Middle East for their rights, the Sunni regimes accused them of being agents of Iran. The regimes used the Iranian rhetoric to suppress the demonstrations that began in Bahrain and said that Iran was provoking the Shiites in Bahrain. The rhetoric of Iran's involvement in the events can be cited as the justification of the intervention by the GCC. Because, according to the GCC agreement, they have the right to do so to protect the member states from attacks by foreigners.¹¹⁴ It was also seen along with the Arab spring that the USA easily discarded the Mubarak regime. For this reason, the KSA and the UAE feared that they could face the same situation. These countries were worried about the possibility that the uprisings could occur in their own country. Therefore, they were effective in suppressing the Shiite uprising in Bahrain and sent troops to this country.¹¹⁵ That's because they did not want a democratic transformation led by the Shiites in Bahrain, and they feared that such a situation would spread to their own countries.¹¹⁶

With regard to sending troops to Bahrain, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan, Foreign Minister of the UAE, said "The Bahreyn demands us to suppress the tension in Bahrain and we have sent approximately 500 police officers".¹¹⁷ Also, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr Anwar Gargash, claimed "The UAE confirms that this action indicate the sign of its allegiance to its brothers in the GCC,". He also mentioned that unity must be ensured for regional security and stability, and sectarian

¹¹² Tarık Oğuzlu, "Arap Baharı ve değişen Bölgesel Dinamikler", *Ortadoğu Analiz*, vol. 3, no. 30, 20122, p. 34.

¹¹³ Ethan Bronner, "Bahrain's king declares 3-month state of emergency", *boston.com*, March 16, 2011, (Online), <http://archive.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2011/03/16/bahrain-king-declares-3-month-state-of-emergency/>, 11 March 2019.

¹¹⁴ Stephen Zunes, *op. cit.*, p. 156-158.

¹¹⁵ Tarık Oğuzlu, *op. cit.*, p 38

¹¹⁶ Stephen Zunes, *op. cit.*, p. 153-156.

¹¹⁷ "Gulf States send troops to quell Bahrain Protests", *France 24*, March 14, 2011, (Online), <https://www.france24.com/en/20110314-gulf-states-send-troops-bahrain-quell-violent-protests-UAE-Saudi-Arabia>, 14.04.2020.

conflicts should not be allowed.¹¹⁸ The Qatari prime minister and foreign minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, said that arrival of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia troops to Bahrain is related with the GCC treaty which states that partnerships must be established between the members when it is necessary.¹¹⁹ It should not be forgotten that even after Saudi and Emirates troops arrived in Bahrain, the King of Bahrain blamed foreign conspiracies for the riots in his country, and he implicitly stated that Iran has a role over this by affecting the Shia majority in the country.¹²⁰ Such statements were not seen only at the beginning of the Arab Spring. When Iran tries to intervene in opposition groups in Bahrain, Bahrain's royal family accuses Iran for provoking the Shiite majority in the country.¹²¹

The uprising in Bahrain clearly shows that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which see Iran as a threat to their national and regional security, were tried to maintain their own power by ensuring the security of the region, preventing the Shiite expansionist policies of Iran and saving the monarchy in Bahrain, which is a member of the GCC. The securitization of Iran and the demonstrations that started with the Arab Spring lies behind these moves.

After the Peninsula Shield Intervention, Saudi Arabia ve BAE stayed as an important supporter of Bahrain royal families and they made it especially with economic aids. Along with economic and security supports, the Bahrain family has been able to maintain its position against the Shiite opposing groups. The main purpose of the two countries is to prevent pressures by Iran. The main point here is to prevent Shia revolution in any Gulf Country. Because after the Sunni minority regime in Iraq fell in 2003, the only Arab state with Shia majority remained as Bahrain. The sole purpose is

¹¹⁸ Frank Kane, "UAE and Saudi Arabia send forces to Bahrain", **the national**, March 15, 2011, (Online), <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/uae-and-saudi-arabia-send-forces-to-bahrain-1.425312>, 14.04.2020.

¹¹⁹ "Saudi Soldiers Sent Into Bahrain", **aljazeera**, March 15, 2011, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/03/2011314124928850647.html>, 14.04.2020.

¹²⁰ "Bahrain hints at Iranian role over country's Shia uprising", **the guardian**, March 21, 2011, (Online), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/21/bahrain-iran-role-uprising-shia>, 14.04.2020.

¹²¹ "İran ile Bahreyn arasında gerginlik", **BBC**, May 16, 2012, (Online), https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2012/05/120516_iran_bahrain, 14.04.2020.

to protect the Sunni ruling family and prevent Iranian-backed Shiites from establishing a sectarian regime.¹²²

It is also necessary to say that some assistance was also provided by the USA. Since it is a regional partner, the USA supported the royal family in Bahrain. The protesters in Bahrain also had expectations from the USA, who pushed for the withdrawal of the Mubarak regime in Egypt and was among the supporters of democracy. However, this expectation did not yielded results. That's because America preferred the continuation of the status quo in Bahrain for its interests in the Middle East, the geopolitical aspect of Bahrain is important for the USA and Bahrain is a non-NATO ally. Therefore, it supported the regime.¹²³

3.3.5. Libya

The Arab Spring also affected Libya where violence started on 17 February 2011 against the Gaddafi ruling of forty-two years.¹²⁴ There has also been an intervention from the international arena to the deepening crisis. Libya is still a country of turmoil, rather than reaching democracy because of the interventions. The crisis deepened in 2014 when General Khalifa Haftar launched a military campaign by establishing a coalition called Operation Dignity to remove the Islamists from the Libyan political scene. In the face of this, Libya Dawn, created by Libya's revolutionaries, was fighting against Haftar and his allies. As a result, two separate parliaments were formed in Libya; the General National Congress (GNC) and the House of Representatives (HoR). The GNC was in the west of Libya and supported by Libya Dawn, and the HoR was supported by Haftar.¹²⁵

Taking into account the September 11 terrorist attack and later the invasion of Iraq, in order to prevent a similar situation to happen in his own country, Gaddafi made changes in his foreign policy and as a result, he started to have closer relations with

¹²² Mohammed Al-Rumaihi, et al., "The Gulf Crisis: Reshaping Alliances in the Middle East", **Gulf International Forum**, 2018. p. 48-49.

¹²³ Thomas Ambrosio, op. cit., p. 332-333.

¹²⁴ Andrew Garwood-Gowers, "The responsibility to protect and the Arab Spring: Libya as the exception, Syria as the norm," , **UNSWLJ**, vol. 36, 2013, p. 594.

¹²⁵ Ibrahim Fraihat, "Unfinished revolutions: Yemen, Libya, and Tunisia after the Arab spring", **Yale University Press**, 2016, p. 5.

the West. Upon the announcement of giving up weapons of mass destruction, senior officials from the USA and Tony Blair of England visited Libya to demonstrate that a mutual relationship was established between the countries. In contrast, Libya's relation with Arab World was going for worse. The reason behind can be cited as Gaddafi's self-righteous approach, which made him an unpopular leader. The harsh attitude in domestic politics further radicalized the opposition.¹²⁶ Gaddafi did not refrain from criticising the Arab disputes, either: *"Where is the Arabs' dignity, their future, their very existence? Everything has disappeared. Our blood and our language may be one, but there is nothing that can unite us."*¹²⁷

February 17 2011, Revolution started against Gaddafi regime and it depends on fundamental reasons such as political pressure, authoritarianism, prohibition to other political parties, gender inequality, corruption, problems of economic and political system, violation of human rights.¹²⁸ Gaddafi came to the power by a coup and he had been governing his country with an authoritarian regime. As the rulers of the country consisted of Gaddafi, his family, his tribe and his supporters, others felt politically and economically excluded. For this reason, the revolts of Arab Spring spreaded to Libya, lead to demonstrations here, too.¹²⁹

When the protests began in 2011, Gaddafi used force and threatened to kill the protesters. It alarmed the international community, later the UN human rights council warned him because of his attitudes.¹³⁰ The UN Security Council condemned the violence against the civilians in Libya. According to the decision adopted by the UN on March 17, 2011 (UNSCR 1973 (2011)), the necessity of protecting the civilians was specified and then the Gaddafi administration was found guilty of using excessive lethal force by the decision numbered 1070. The UN Security Council declared the no-

¹²⁶ Cantürk Caner, Betül Şengül, "DEVİRİMLER, KAOS VE İSTİKRAR ARAYIŞLARI İÇİNDE LİBYA: TARİHSEL VE YAPISAL BİR ANALİZ", *Uluslararası Afro-Avrasya Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 6, April 2018, p. 60-62.

¹²⁷ "Gaddafi Condemns Arab Leaders", Al Jazeera, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middle-east/2008/03/200861501453203859.html>, March 29, 2008.

¹²⁸ Abebe Tigire Jalu, "LIBYA: RELAPSE IN TO CRISIS AFTER MUAMMAR GADDAFI (SINCE 2011)", *TJPRC*, vol. 7, no. 4, August 2017, p. 4.

¹²⁹ Ertan Efeğil, "Ortadoğu'daki Gelişmelerin Analizi: Libya, Tunus, Bahreyn, Mısır ve Suriye", *Middle Eastern Analysis/Ortadoğu Analiz*, vol. 5, no. 59, 2013, p. 11-12.

¹³⁰ Spencer Zifcak, "The responsibility to protect after Libya and Syria, ", *Melb. J. Int'l L.*, vol. 13, 2012, p. 59.

fly zone in Libya in its 1973-numbered decision and announced protecting the civilians.¹³¹ NATO also responded to the UN call and NATO allies implemented arms embargoes on Libya, created a no-fly zone. On 19 March 2011, some of the UN members engaged in a military operation to prevent Gaddafi forces and NATO also provided air and sea assets to this intervention.¹³²

The UN's declaration of the no-fly zone received support from the Gulf countries. The UN and the EU moved with some of the League of Arab States, including the UAE to protect the civilians. The European Council invited the Arab States to join the operation together with them. It is clear that the League of Arab states played an important role in maintaining security in the region, and the council offered to cooperate with these states to implement no-fly-zone in Libya. In this way, the areas under threat by the Gaddafi regime could be protected. At the same time, the decision to implement an arms embargo on Libya was also requested from the participating states.¹³³

Previously, the reasons behind the Western non-intervention policies to Gaddafi were depends on economic reasons. After the Arab Spring started in Libya, Britain, France, and the United States favored the intervention there. Since they did not want to experience bad examples as like Afghanistan and Iraq, they chose to get help from the countries of Arab League, which also did not sympathize to Gaddafi, in order to spread the legitimacy of the intervention to a broad base.¹³⁴ Especially two countries, Qatar and the UAE, played important role in shaping public and political discourse. Both countries was seen as the earliest for demanding military intervention to Libya

¹³¹ Gürkan Doğan, Bülent Durgun, "Arap Baharı ve Libya: Tarihsel Süreç ve Demokratikleşme Kavramı Çerçevesinde Bir Değerlendirme", **Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi**, no. 15, 2012, p. 80.

¹³² "NATO and Libya (Archived)", **nato.int**, November 9, 2015, (Online), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_71652.htm, 28 November 2019.

¹³³ "Council Decision 2011/210/CFSP of 1 April 2011 on a European Union military operation in support of humanitarian assistance operations in response to the crisis situation in Libya (EUFOR Libya)", **Official Journal of the European Union**, April 5, 2011, (Online), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:089:0017:0020:en:PDF>, 10 November 2019; "Security Council Approves 'No-Fly Zone' over Libya, Authorizing 'All Necessary Measures' to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in Favour with 5 Abstentions", **United Nations**, March 17, 2011, (Online), <https://www.un.org/press/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm>, 10 November 2019.

¹³⁴ Ertan Efeğil, **op. cit.**, p. 12.

to overthrow Gaddafi regime.¹³⁵ In 7 March 2011, in the meeting of the GCC countries in Abu Dhabi, implementation of no-fly zone to secure rioters from Gaddafi bombing was demanded the UN Security Council.¹³⁶ Not only in the GCC but also in the Arab League voted no-fly zone and only Syria and Algeria was opposed to decision.¹³⁷

Demands from both the GCC countries and the Arab League were welcomed in the United Nations and it prepared a suitable environment for intervention to Libya. Thus, violence against the Libyan people was prohibited and a no-fly zone was established because the government lost its legitimacy and the arms embargo on Libya continued.¹³⁸ In addition, the states in the region, which saw Gaddafi administration as a threat to regional security, gave arms to the oppositions.¹³⁹ On 20 October 2011, the rebels captured and killed Gaddafi. The killing of Gaddafi and the dissolution of his administration led the country into a bigger chaos.¹⁴⁰

After the Gaddafi administration, a transitional government was established. First of all, The “National Transitional Council”¹⁴¹ which was worked between 2011-2012 failed, despite the support of the western countries. Because of the fact that there was no national army and local militia forces emerged, tribal competitions began, problems between the new administration was seen and the former state officials arose, the state institutions lost their functions and the judicial system could not work.¹⁴²

On 25 July 2012, parliamentary elections were held in Libya, which was thought to create a positive atmosphere, on the contrary, it caused more polarization among political groups, militias, and tribes. Consequently, two separate groups,

¹³⁵ Rory Miller, “Desert kingdoms to global powers: The rise of the Arab Gulf”, **Yale University Press**, 2016, p. 196.

¹³⁶ Hirak Jyoti Das, “The role of Qatar and UAE In the Libyan Civil War”, **Vivekananda International Foundation**, March 2019, (Online), <https://www.vifindia.org/sites/default/files/The-Role-of-Qatar-and-UAE-in-the-Libyan-Civil-War.pdf>, 18.02.2020.

¹³⁷ “Arab League backs Libya no-fly zone”, **BBC News**, March 12, 2011, (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12723554>, 18.02.2020.

¹³⁸ Ali Tuygan, “Arap Baharı ve Libya Örneği”, **Mülkiye Dergisi**, vol. 35, no. 272, 2011, p. 155-157.

¹³⁹ Ertan Efegil, **op. cit.**, p. 12.

¹⁴⁰ Ibrahim Fraihat, **op. cit.**, p. 21.

¹⁴¹ “National Transitional Council – Libya”, **ntclibya.org**, (w.date), (Online), <http://ntclibya.org/>, 12 December 2019.

¹⁴² Ertan Efegil, **op. cit.**, p. 12-13.

"Libyan Dignity" and "Libyan Dawn" (Grouping of Pro-Islamist Militias¹⁴³), were established. In order to prevent the Islamists from taking part in the government, Khalifa Haftar (who also played a role in the overthrow of Gaddafi) launched "Dignity Operation" for the implementation of a Sisi-style administration in Libya. Egypt, the KSA, and the UAE which saw the Islamists as a threat to their countries supported Haftar for his purpose. These countries organized an air strike against the Libyan Dawn Coalition in Tripoli in 2014 and supported the Dignity Operation.¹⁴⁴ The Emirates is shown the scene whenever the situation against the Muslim Brotherhood surfaces and together with Saudi Arabia struggled to prevent Qatar and Turkey from Libya after the fall of Gaddafi.¹⁴⁵

After the outbreak of the revolution in Libya in 2011, Qatar and the UAE actually provided political and humanitarian aid to Libya. Since the fall of the Gaddafi regime, the role of the UAE in Libya changed. The UAE has more militarily involved in an active role and was disturbed by the fact that Qatar helped some Islamic groups in Libya. Because, in the long run, it perceived them as a threat to its political and economic stability. One aim of the air strikes on Tripoli is to overcome this threat.¹⁴⁶ In accordance with this purpose, the support provided by the UAE to Haftar included not only military support but also political, economic and media support.¹⁴⁷ In 2014, according to the UN report, the UAE was breaking the UN embargo, which banned the arms and military aid to the groups in Libya, providing attack helicopters and military aircrafts to Haftar's forces. Moreover, this report stated that the UAE provided

¹⁴³ "Guide to key Libyan militias ", **BBC News**, January 11, 2016, (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19744533>, 12 December 2019.

¹⁴⁴ Hrant Kostanyan, Steven Blockmans, " Saving Libya from itself: What the EU should do now", **Centre for European Policy Studies**, 2014, (Online), <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/76797541.pdf>, 12 December 2019.

¹⁴⁵ M. Faraji, M. Karimianzadeh, " "The war crisis of the Middle East in perspective of political geography", **International Journal of Current Research in Life Sciences**, vol. 7, no. 2, February, 2018, p. 884.

¹⁴⁶ Guma El-Gamaty, "Qatar, the UAE and the Libya connection", **aljazeera.com** , Jun 12, 2017, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/06/qatar-the-uae-libya-connection-170612080219306.html>, 14 November 2019.

¹⁴⁷ Hrant Kostanyan, Steven Blockmans, " Saving Libya from itself: What the EU should do now", **Centre for European Policy Studies**, 2014, (Online), <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/76797541.pdf>, 12 November 2019.

material support and direct support to the LNA. (Libya national army which was led by General Khalifa Haftar ¹⁴⁸).¹⁴⁹

According to a report prepared by the UN panel of experts, the transfer of armored personnel carriers to Libya by the UAE was investigated. After the adoption of the “Resolution 2095” (2013), the ban on the transport of non-lethal materials was lifted from the embargo. However, since the organizational structure of the armed forces in Libya is unclear, it is not obvious whether these transfers were made. According to the panel, the UAE was violating the UN arms embargo. At the same time, research showed that in 2011, several articles of the United States Arms Export Control Act were violated by the UAE and their military materials were sent to Libya.¹⁵⁰

The UN attempted to take steps to restore the political order in the country after the Gaddafi regime. The UN-backed Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), which was signed in 2015 and not accepted by Haftar, is an agreement to plan Libya's political future and aims to create a single unity government in Libya. However, there were three governments in Libya to compete.¹⁵¹ Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj heads the Government of National Accord (GNA), an UN-backed government in Tripoli.¹⁵² Since 2014, Libya has been divided into two political rival governments: Tobruk and

¹⁴⁸ Ed Ram, Mohamed Ibrahim, “The self-styled Libyan National Army has launched airstrikes on Tripoli”, **BBC News**, April 29, 2019, (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-48089214/the-self-styled-libyan-national-army-has-launched-airstrikes-on-tripoli>, 12 November 2019.

¹⁴⁹ “Libya embargo violations: UN panel to report findings to UNSC,” **aljazeera.com**, March 1, 2018, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/libya-embargo-violations-panel-report-findings-uns-180301080019627.html>; Guma El-Gamaty, “Qatar, the UAE and the Libya connection”, **aljazeera.com**, Jun 12, 2017, (Online), <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/06/qatar-the-uae-libya-connection-170612080219306.html>; “December 2014 Monthly Forecast ;Africa,Libya”, **Security Council Report**, November 26, 2014, (Online), https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2014-12/libya_15.php, 14 November 2019

¹⁵⁰ “Letter dated 4 March 2016 from the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council”, **United Nation Security Council**, March 9, 2016, p. 30, (Online), http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_209.pdf, 12 January 2019.

¹⁵¹ Adel Abdel Ghafar, Mattia Toaldo, “Does the road to stability in Libya pass through Cairo?”, **brookings.edu**, June 1, 2017, (Online), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/06/01/does-the-road-to-stability-in-libya-pass-through-cairo/>, 12 January 2017.

¹⁵² “Khalifa Haftar: Libya's military strongman”, **BBC News**, April 8, 2019, (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27492354>, 12 January 2019.

Tripoli. Fayeze-al Sarraj heads the Presidential Council, while Haftar heads the House of Representatives.¹⁵³

The third group includes anti-Gaddafi militia groups. In addition, it does not seem that easy to achieve this unity. If we consider the roles of the regional actors concerning Libya at the same time, the reason for the difficulty of reconciliation can be better understood. For example, Qatar supports the Islamic allies in Libya from the beginning of the rebellion. In 2015, Qatar stopped supporting its proxies for a short time as a result of the US and the UN pressures, but in 2016 it continued to do so. The UAE was opposed to Qatar because it considered the Muslim Brotherhood and Political Islam as a danger to its regime, so Emirates supported Haftar. Haftar also acted politically, following policies close to the UAE and the KSA, and cut off the relations with Qatar during the period when these countries cut off their relations with Qatar. The GCC also supported Haftar's anti-Islamist policies and helped him gain more support in the country. With the aid of Egypt and the Emirates, Haftar achieved military victories in Benghazi and the Gulf of Sidra. In 2016, the UAE tried to bring Sarraj (Prime Minister of Libya) and Haftar together and reconcile, but this did not end well. These interventions by Egypt and the UAE led the country to a permanent civil war.¹⁵⁴ Weapon deliveries from the Gulf countries deepened the separation of the rebel forces. The UAE and Egyptian support to Haftar can be seen as a driving reason behind Haftar's failure to come to an agreement and establish the government unity.¹⁵⁵

Egypt and the UAE supported Haftar and his Libyan National Army (LNA) militarily and financially after the outbreak of the conflict. Thanks to the support of these two countries, Haftar's military wealth expanded in 2016. The LNA took control of much of Benghazi and turned to Oil Crescent, important resource rich in the east of Sirte. In spite of all these, to solve the confusion in the country, the road map approved by the UN for Libya came under the name of "Cairo declaration". Members from the

¹⁵³ Mary Fitzgerald, "Mapping Libya's factions", **London: European Council on Foreign Relations**, 2016, p. 2, (Online), https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR_Mapping_of_Libyas_factions.pdf, 12 January 2019.

¹⁵⁴ Karim Mezran, Elissa Miller, "Libya: From Intervention to Proxy War", **Atlantic Council**, July, 2017, (Online), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Libya_From_Intervention_to_Proxy_War_web_712.pdf, 12 January 2019.

¹⁵⁵ Wolfram Racher, "Was Libya's Collapse Predictable?", **Survival**, vol.59, no. 2, Marh 20, 2017.

House of Representatives and the Tripoli-based Council of State were brought together and were offered them to conclude an agreement for the 2018 parliamentary elections.¹⁵⁶ While the parties had still not come to an agreement by 3 April 2019, the announcement by Haftar were stating that he again started an attack against Tripoli and the UN and the EU condemned it. The EU is also making a serious effort to tell Haftar and the three countries supporting him -Egypt, SA, and the UAE- to leave their stands and withdraw.¹⁵⁷

Although the UAE, together with Egypt, was in favor of supporting Haftar, it differs from Egypt in that it was more eager for the negotiations sought by the UN. Because after they began to intervene in the Yemen crisis, the UAE became less connected with Libya. On the other hand, this doesn't mean that the UAE didn't provide weapons aid to Haftar and the militants, or that it has no political influence.¹⁵⁸

After the Arab Spring, in the changing foreign policy of the UAE over Libya, their concern about the Islamists' taking over the administration of the country has an important role. For this reason, they support anti-Islamist Haftar and provide him military assistance. The Emirates' Libyan Policy is in line with the KSA and Egypt. In addition, the strengthening of Haftar in Libya gives the UAE an advantage in line with its interests.

Support of the United Arab Emirates to Haftar in Libya is reflected in the discourses of the country's officials. Mohamed bin Zayed stated that the UAE supports the people of Libya and their security, sends their best wishes to Haftar because of the saving of Benghazi from terrorist groups and celebrates the national forces for their efforts against terrorist organizations. He also added that the position of the UAE towards the Libya's stability and its peoples's security determine the policies of

¹⁵⁶ Adel Abdel Ghafar, Mattia Toaldo, "Does the road to stability in Libya pass through Cairo?", **brookings.edu.**, June 1, 2017, (Online), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/06/01/does-the-road-to-stability-in-libya-pass-through-cairo/>, 12 January 2017.

¹⁵⁷ Patrick Wintour, "Libya: international community warns Haftar against Tripoli attack", *The Guardian*, April 6, 2019, (Online), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/06/libya-international-community-warns-haftar-against-tripoli-attack>, 13 January 2019.

¹⁵⁸ Mary Fitzgerald, "Mapping Libya's factions", **London: European Council on Foreign Relations**, 2016, p. 2, (Online), https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR_Mapping_of_Libyas_factions.pdf, 12 January 2019.

Emirate towards brotherly Arab country.¹⁵⁹ In accord with Haftar's policy in Libya, he condemned the opponent groups such as Kharijites and takfiri terrorists and denounced political Islam, Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic State (ISIL, ISIS or Daesh), Ansar al-Sharia. However he has connections with Salafist organizations such as Mad-khlists that have been militarily and politically active in Libya.¹⁶⁰ The KSA and the UAE support Haftar in Libya because of his approach to political Islam and Islamists groups. For example, Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the UAE, said "Priority in Libya (is) to counter extremism/terrorism and support stability in long drawn out crisis,".¹⁶¹ The reason behind it is that they do not want these groups, which they see them as a security threat, to take control of the government in Libya. For this reason, securitization of the problems in Libya were made and it was announced that Haftar was supported as a brotherly in the fighting against terrorism.

Supports of Turkey to Sarraj have changed the situation in Libya and undermined the Haftar power, so, the country entered a new era. Ministry of the United Arab Emirates related to Turkey's support said "Such intervention will negatively impact stability in the Mediterranean and will constitute a clear threat to Arab national security,".¹⁶² Therefore, the UAE has pronounced Turkey's involvement as a security threat, so, made securitizing its attitudes in terms of region. In contrast, Turkey said that the statements of the UAE were groundless and the UAE were unfounded and the United Arab Emirates provided military support to putschists. Turkey also condemned the

¹⁵⁹ "His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed receives Marshal Khalifa Haftar", **United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation**, July 9, 2017, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2017/7/9/09-07-2017-UAE-Libya>, 17.04.2020.

¹⁶⁰ Ali, Ahmed Salah, "Haftar and Salafism: A Dangerous Game", **Atlantic Council**, June 6 2017, (Online), <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/haftar-and-salafism-a-dangerous-game/>, 17.04.2020.

¹⁶¹ Aziz El Yaakoubi, "Haftar's ally UAE says "extremist militias" control Libyan capital", **Reuters**, May 2, 2019, (online), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-emirates/haftars-ally-uae-says-extremist-militias-control-libyan-capital-idUSKCN1S80AO>, 14.04.2020.

¹⁶² "UAE condemns Turkey's decision to send troops to Libya", **United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation**, January 4, 2020, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2020/1/4/04-01-2020-UAE-Libya>, 14.04.2020.

UAE because of its movements which led to destabilization especially in the Libya, Syria, Yemen and the Horn of Africa.¹⁶³

3.3.6. Repercussions of Arab Spring in the UAE

The effects of the Arab Spring were also shown up in the Emirates, which perceived the uprisings as security problem and began to follow an interventionist foreign policy. In some Gulf countries, the Muslim Brotherhood sought to create political pressure on the ruling families by using regional public movement. Also, the Brotherhood members participated in public petitions in the UAE, and their main demand here was political reforms in the FNC elections.¹⁶⁴

Together with the influence of the Arab Spring, the intellectuals, businessmen, students, and other groups in the UAE peacefully began to express their demands in order to have more political rights, and they tried to announce them through internet posting. Some of the youngs in the UAE invite people to protests on 25 March 2011 by using Facebook and Twitter. However, it could not turn into a big demonstration because the UAE government forbade access to some social media sites.¹⁶⁵

In fact, while the waves of the Arab Spring led to major transformations in the great Middle East geography and tens of thousands of people poured into the streets in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. In the UAE, 133 individuals including university professors, journalists, civil servants, and intellectuals sent letters to the President and demanded reform in the political system. Later, in April 2011, the Lawyers Association, the Teachers Association, Al Shohoh National Heritage Association, and the United Arab Emirates University Faculty Association wrote a letter for the same demands with the 133 petitioners. The petitioner's demands were that all

163 "SC-30, 30 Nisan 2020, Dışışleri Bakanlığı Sözcüsü Hami Aksoy'un Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri Dışışleri ve Uluslararası İşbirliği Bakanlığı'nın 30 Nisan 2020 Tarihli Ülkemizi Hedef Alan Açıklaması Hakkındaki Soruya Cevabı", Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dış İşleri Bakanlığı, April 30, 2020, (Online), http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-30_-bae-db-ve-uluslararasi-iliskiler-bakanliginin-ulkemizi-hedef-alan-aciklamasi-hk-sc.tr.mfa, 14.04.2020.

164 Kristin Smith Diwan, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

165 Kenneth Katzman, **United Arab Emirates (the UAE): Issues for US Policy**, DIANE Publishing, 2010.

members of the Federal National Council, half of which are normally appointed by the electoral college and the other half by 7 rulers, are to be elected by the right of voting.¹⁶⁶

Upon these requests, the UAE made some arrangements in early 2011 in order to prevent further actions. For example, government increased the salaries of the soldiers who were or would be retired from the Defense Ministry 70 percent and the size of the Electoral College was enlarged to 129,274 from 6689 in September 2011. As high as 100 percent increase in the salaries was given to the employees of the Ministry of Health, the judicial authorities, and the government teachers. Sheikh Khalifa raised the salaries of all federal government employees in the name of the 40th National Day¹⁶⁷ and 6000 new job opportunities were offered to the Emiratis.¹⁶⁸

In addition to such preventive soft measures to calm the public, more stringent measures were also taken. Fahad Salim Dalak, Ahmed Mansour, Nasser bin Ghaith, Ahmed Abdul Khaleq, and Hassan Ali Khamis, known as the "the UAE Five" and demanding reform, were arrested by the UAE in 2011. The Lawyers Association and the Teachers Association's elected boards were dissolved and the UAE appointed its own officials to there. Also, until the end of 2012, important figures of Emirates Islah Society were arrested again. 72 people, most of whom were Islah members, had been arrested by the UAE by the end of 2012.¹⁶⁹ Later, more than 10 Egyptians, who were described as leaders of the Islamic group in Egypt, were arrested.¹⁷⁰ In the poorer cities of the northern UAE such as Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah, the Al-Islah organization found more supporters and many of these members were put on trial.¹⁷¹ Nearly 100

¹⁶⁶ Mazhar al-Zo'by, Birol Başkan, "Discourse and oppositionality in the Arab Spring: The case of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UAE", **International Sociology**, vol. 30, no. 4, 2015, p. 405.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Steffen Hertog, "The costs of counter-revolution in the GCC", **Foreign Policy**, vol. 31, 2011, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ Mazhar al-Zo'by, Birol Başkan, **op. cit.**, p. 406.

¹⁷⁰ "The UAE uncovers Muslim Brotherhood cell, arrests members", **Gulf News Report**, January 1, 2013, (Online), [https://gulfnews.com/the UAE/the UAE-uncovers-muslim-brotherhood-cell-arrests-members-1.1126333](https://gulfnews.com/the-UAE/the-UAE-uncovers-muslim-brotherhood-cell-arrests-members-1.1126333), 15 February 2019.

¹⁷¹ Lori Plotkin Boghardt, "The Muslim Brotherhood on Trial in the UAE", **Washington Institute for Near East Policy**, April 12, 2013, (Online), [https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-muslim-brotherhood-on-trial-in-the-the UAE](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-muslim-brotherhood-on-trial-in-the-the-UAE), 15 February 2019.

Emirates members of Al-Islah, which was inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, were arrested for forming a hidden organization to overthrow the regime.¹⁷²

The attitude of the United Arab Emirates has been influential not only inside of the country but also abroad. The attitude of the UAE towards the Muslim Brotherhood was the main determinant of its regional policy after the Arab Spring. Therefore, after 2011, it has made significant investments in anti-Muslim Brotherhood partnership, especially in Egypt and Libya.¹⁷³ Moreover, in 2014, according to its federal laws on the fight against terrorism, it accepted Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization.¹⁷⁴

3.3.7. Qatar

After the Gulf War of 1991 and the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990, the most important conflict between the GCC countries was the Qatar crisis. This crisis took place between the KSA, the UAE, Bahrain, and Qatar. This dispute began with the differences in the policies of the countries about the Arab Spring.¹⁷⁵ This problem between Qatar and the KSA-Emirates coalition has remained as an important problem in regional politics.¹⁷⁶

Developments since 2011 with the starting of the Arab Spring partly weakened the GCC cooperation, which was established in 1981 for common interests and based on basis of partnership. The emergence of the Arab Spring and the increasing role of the Islamist groups in politics in the North Africa revealed the different perspectives and divergences in the threat perceptions of Doha and Riyadh, the Abu Dhabi and

¹⁷² Kristin Smith Diwan, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁷³ Giorgio Cafiero, Daniel Wagner, "How the Gulf Arab rivalry tore Libya apart", **The National Interest**, December 11, 2015, (Online), <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-the-gulf-arab-rivalry-tore-libya-apart-14580>, 17 February 2019.

¹⁷⁴ "The UAE Blacklist 82 Groups as "Terrorists"", **Al Arabiya News**, November 15, 2014, (Online), http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/11/15/the_UAE-formally-blacklists-82-groups-as-terrorist-.html, 18 February 2019.

¹⁷⁵ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Implications of the Qatar Crisis for regional security in the Gulf", **Al Sharq Expert Brief**, June 29, 2017, (Online), <https://research.sharqforum.org/2017/06/29/implications-of-the-qatar-crisis-for-regional-security-in-the-gulf/>, 2 February 2019.

¹⁷⁶ Russel E. Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. 31-33.

Manama. According to Qatar, the KSA and the Emirates were started to be seen as a threat to Qatar's national security because of the diplomatic debate which started in 2014 and the blockade and sanctions they imposed on Qatar in 2017. In addition, these three countries began to see Qatar as an opponent of regional security¹⁷⁷, so the KSA and the UAE accused Qatar because of supporting Hamas, Iran, and the Muslim Brotherhood, and terrorism.¹⁷⁸

In order to understand why these diplomatic crises emerged, the developments during and following the Arab Spring should be examined. In fact, it is seen that with the beginning of the Arab Spring, there was a consensus among the GCC countries; however, it did not take too long. For example, Qatar did not object to the role taking of the UAE-KSA to suppress the uprising in Yemen, the KSA-Qatar-the UAE supported the military intervention in Libya. Furthermore, Qatar also supported the GCC intervention in Bahrain.¹⁷⁹ The GCC used the Peninsula Shield Forces to stop the uprising in Bahrain, which was the largest intervention of the GCC has ever performed. This intervention was supported by military forces of the Qatar, the UAE, KSA, and Kuwait.¹⁸⁰

However, this common action soon turned into a competition. Unlike other countries in the GCC, Qatar supported the regime change that began in the Arab world. It also provided financial aid to the Islamist groups, for example, to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, to Ennahda in Tunisia, and to various militia forces in Syria and Libya. On the contrary, in order to prevent Qatar's interests in the region, the KSA and the UAE tried to overthrow Morsi and supported the opposing militia forces in Syria, and they supported the Khalifa Haftar in Libya. Initially, the groups supported by Qatar gained power in both Egypt and Tunisia. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the

¹⁷⁷ Imad K. Harb, **Measures of Stalemate In The GCC Crisis**, The GCC Crisis at One Year, Ed. by. Zeina Azzam, Imad K. Harb, 2018.

¹⁷⁸ Marc Jones, "Hacking, bots and information wars in the Qatar spat", **The Qatar Crisis**, no. 31, 2017, p. 8-9.

¹⁷⁹ Russel E. Lucas, **op. cit.**, p. 34.

¹⁸⁰ Silvia Colombo, et. al., "A formative stage: Relations between GCC and North African countries after the Arab spring", The GCC in the Mediterranean in light of the Arab Spring, 2012, (Online), https://www.academia.edu/10605464/A_Formative_Stage_Relations_between_GCC_and_North_African_Countries_after_the_Arab_Spring, 27 March 2019.

Nahda movement in Tunisia won the elections.¹⁸¹ During the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, Qatar ruler Sheikh Hamad saw it as an opportunity for interests of his country, however, Abu Dhabi leader Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed called it as a threat to regional stability and security.¹⁸²

Later, in Egypt, the Mohamed Morsi regime was overthrown by a military coup, which was supported by both the KSA and the UAE. In Tunisia, the Nahda movement withdrew from power and Nidaa Tounes, supported by the UAE-KSA, came to the power. In Libya and Syria, these competing countries continued to support different groups and provided weapons and media support to them. Moreover, it led to a more devastating impact on the countries.¹⁸³

So why does Qatar not oppose to the Muslim Brotherhoods and follow different policy than the other countries? That is because in Qatar has a small population, the per capita income of the country is very high and people have high welfare standards. Therefore, there is little chance of an uprising against rulers.* On the contrary, the population of the KSA is 32.94; the UAE is 9.4 million, and Kuwait is 4.137 million. The differences in economic income in these countries are bigger, which means there are more people to be controlled and the social disorganization is greater.¹⁸⁴ It is, therefore, easier for any uprising to affect people in these countries. The possibility of economic problems causing uprising is also understood from the outbreak of the rebellions in the northern emirates with their poorer populations. For this reason, Qatar supported the strengthening of the Muslim Brotherhood while the KSA, the UAE, and Kuwait did not and it led to disagreements between them and then to the ongoing crisis.

The Arab Spring in Egypt and Libya clearly showed the difference between Qatar and the UAE policies. The Saudi-Emirati-Bahraini and Qatar crisis is actually a diplomatic dispute. These three countries withdrew their ambassadors from Doha in

¹⁸¹ Michael Stephens , “Why key Arab countries have cut ties with Qatar and what Trump had to do with it”, **POMEPS Brief**, no. 31, p. 12.

¹⁸² Cinzia Bianco, “Gulf Security after 2011: A Threat Analysis”, **Middle East Policy**, vol. 25, no. 2, p. 31.

¹⁸³ Russel E. Lucas, **op. Cit.**, p.34.

*2.639 million citizens, look at the www.data.worldbank.org

¹⁸⁴ Eugenio Decrama, **op. Cit.**, p. 5.

2014.¹⁸⁵ Compared to the 2014 crisis, the crisis in 2017 reached a more serious dimension. Although in 2014 the KSA-the UAE-Bahrain withdrew its ambassadors from Qatar, they later sent their ambassadors again.¹⁸⁶ Crisis in 2017 started with the alleged hacking of the Qatar news sites and social media, and Qatar claimed that the perpetrators were people working for the UAE.¹⁸⁷ In the report allegedly published by hacking, it was written that the Qatar ruler criticized the tense relationship between Iran and the Gulf countries, and asked for support for Hamas and Hezbollah. Although Qatar claimed that this statement was not true, the KSA and the UAE banned Qatar's broadcasting organs in their countries.¹⁸⁸

The diplomatic crisis in 2017 later reached a different dimension and the UAE and the KSA imposed a land-sea-air embargo because they claimed that Qatar contributed its support to Islamist terrorism.¹⁸⁹ On 5 June, these countries announced that they cut off their relations with Qatar and gave Qatar citizens 14 days to leave their countries. They also forbade their citizens to travel to Qatar and did not allow Qatar planes even to use their own airspace. On the other hand, they offered Qatar a specification of 13 articles for the normalization of the relations. This specification included cutting off the relations with Iran, cutting monetary aid to the organizations they declared as terrorists (such as Muslim Brotherhood) and closing the Turkish military base.¹⁹⁰ They also tried sanctions such as economic blockades. In addition to asking Qatar to cease

¹⁸⁵ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Implications of the Qatar Crisis for regional security in the Gulf", **Al Sharq Expert Brief**, June 29, 2017, (Online), <https://research.sharqforum.org/2017/06/29/implications-of-the-qatar-crisis-for-regional-security-in-the-gulf/>, 2 February 2019

¹⁸⁶ Sami Aboudi, et. al., "Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain end rift with Qatar, return ambassadors", **Reuters**, November 16, 2014, (Online), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gulf-summit-ambassadors/saudi-arabia-the-uae-and-bahrain-end-rift-with-qatar-return-ambassadors-idUSKCN0J00Y420141116>, 19 February 2019.

¹⁸⁷ Robert Windrem, William M. Arkin, "Who Planted the Fake News at Center of Qatar Crisis?", **nbnews**, July 18, 2017, (Online), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/who-planted-fake-news-center-qatar-crisis-n784056>, 22 February 2019.

¹⁸⁸ "6 soruda Katar krizi", **BBC News**, July 6, 2017, (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-40159120#backtotop>, 25 February 2019.

¹⁸⁹ Sascha Dov Bachmann, "The current crisis in the Persian Gulf in the context of hybrid warfare", **Australian Defence Force Journal**, no. 204, March 22, 2018, p. 53.

¹⁹⁰ "Qatar crisis: What you need to know", **BBC News**, July 19, 2017, (Online), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-40173757>, 26 February 2019.

support for the MB, they also forced it to stop supporting all of the pro-MB organizations in the Gulf.¹⁹¹

The KSA-the UAE blockade was a soft power because these countries implemented blockade, some diplomatic actions against Qatar. For example, Qatar citizens were prevented from entering and leaving their countries. In addition, by pressures, their own citizens were forced to return to the KSA and the UAE. On the other hand, in fact, this blockade does not comply with the international law or the GCC laws.¹⁹² It did not only fail, but also caused fragmentation within the GCC.¹⁹³

As briefly summarized by Grabowski, the general appearance of the Qatar crisis among the GCC countries is as follows. a) Qatar supports the Muslim Brotherhood. b) the KSA, the UAE, and Bahrain were the parties who withdrew their ambassadors from Qatar. c) Oman preferred to keep away from these events. d) Kuwait tried to solve the problem by acting as a mediator.¹⁹⁴ Qatar, on the other hand, reshaped its economy and foreign relations as a result of the land and sea blockade imposed by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt. It refused to surrender to the blockade and chose to revive its own production. It strengthened its army and further improved its relations with countries like Iran. It denied supporting terrorism and left the OPEC because of this diplomatic crisis.¹⁹⁵ The crisis that Qatar experienced with its neighbors also caused an improvement in the Qatar-Turkey relations in both commercial and economic terms.¹⁹⁶

The diplomatic crisis has worsened relations and revealed differences of opinion between the Gulf countries and it is therefore important. Especially the crisis shaped around the perspective of Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist organizations. The

¹⁹¹ Kristin Smith Diwan, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁹² Sascha Dov Bachmann, *op. cit.*, p. 57

¹⁹³ David B. Roberts, "Qatar, the Ikhwan, and transnational relations in the Gulf", *The Qatar Crisis*, no. 31, 2017, p. 54-57.

¹⁹⁴ Wojciech Grabowski, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

¹⁹⁵ Ben Hubbard, "That Punishing Blockade? 'We've Moved On,' Qatar Says", *The New York Times*, December 19, 2018, (Online), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/19/world/middleeast/qatar-blockade-goods.html>, 4 March 2019.

¹⁹⁶ Robert Mogielnicki, "The new economics of Qatar-Turkey relations", *Middle East Institute*, August 30, 2018, (Online), <https://www.mei.edu/publications/new-economics-qatar-turkey-relations>, 5 March 2019.

attitude of the United Arab Emirates to the Muslim Brotherhood has been apparent since the beginning of the Arab Spring and the UAE does not want this organization to be strengthened by the region. The UAE declared the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization because Emirates thought it would destabilize the region and saw it as a threat to national security. For this reason, Qatar's support for Muslim Brotherhood or Islamist organizations has been described as supporting of terrorism by the UAE. It is seen in the discourses made by the GCC countries. For example: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the UAE, Mohammed Gargash, said "Neighbouring Qatar should dedicate to the rules of stability and security of the Gulf. It has to quit the role of the main supporter of terrorism and extremism in the region."¹⁹⁷ Also, the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Al Nahyan, claimed "Doha hasn't interested with its brothers and its neighbors. It is interested in instigation, subversion, extremism and terrorism,". Sheikh Al Khalifa, Bahrain's Foreign Minister also explained that the Muslim Brotherhood had harmed Egypt, shed blood in Egypt or elsewhere, therefore they (Bahrain, the UAE, Egypt, the KSA) perceived Muslim Brotherhood and others who sympathized them a terrorist organization.¹⁹⁸

As it is seen, the statements of both the UAE and other GCC countries have drawn attention to the relationship between Qatar and terrorist organizations (by their definition). Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood has been explained as support for terrorism. This is actually due to the fact that these countries securitization of the Muslim Brotherhood. They legitimized their moves by saying that these organizations, which they call the terrorist organization, have damaged their security and unity.

¹⁹⁷ "Dr. Anwar Gargash: Qatar should commit to rules of security, stability of the Gulf", **United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperations**, June 8, 2017, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2017/6/8/08-06-2017-UAE-Qatar>, 15.05.2020.

¹⁹⁸ "Separation will continue until Qatar changes its course: H.H. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed", **United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperations**, July 6, 2017, (Online), <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/MediaHub/News/2017/7/6/06-07-2017-UAE-Qatar2>, 15.05.2020.

CONCLUSION

The UAE has seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah.¹⁹⁹ It has important geopolitical position and important seaports.²⁰⁰ At the same time, the UAE has become an oil-rich country after the discovery of oil and its advantage is seen in the emirates of Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Dubai.²⁰¹

The location of the UAE makes it an important state because of its existing oil reserves but it also makes the country vulnerable to outside threat. When Sheikh Zayed had the control of the country, the foreign policy of the UAE was affected by cultural elements, especially with regard to his 'fellow Arab'. The foreign policy of the UAE in this period can be divided into two phases as 1970–89 and 1990–2004. While the period of 1970-89 was mostly influenced by Islam and Arabism, 1990-2004 was affected by both security issues and cultural factors. The new foreign policy after Sheikh Zayed's death in 2004 changed the UAE approach in the regional context. Being a member of the "Arab Quartet", their pro-western position have brought about changes in the vision of the UAE. But it also led to an increase in the relations of the UAE with the world powers. The active foreign policy of the UAE helped this micro-state to survive.²⁰²

The UAE had regional security concerns since its establishment and experienced important changes in its foreign policy after the Arab Spring in 2011. Although it saw the 1979 Iranian Revolution as a serious security threat to its national security, it did not engage in a military struggle with Iran. In fact, it maintained its economic relations with Iran. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in the 1990s marked a turning point

¹⁹⁹ John Duke Anthony, John A.Hearty, "Eastern Arabian States:Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman", Ed.by. David E. Long,Bernard Reich, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, (w.date), p. 150.

²⁰⁰ The Official Portal of the UAE Government, **government.ae**, (Online), <https://www.government.ae/en/information-and-services/infrastructure/civic-facilities/seaports>, 5 May 2019.

²⁰¹ "World Bank Country and Lending Groups", **The World Bank**, 2017,(Online), <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>, 02 May 2019.

²⁰² Khalid S. Almezaini, **The UAE and foreign policy: foreign aid, identities and interests**, Routledge, 2012.

in the foreign policy of the UAE as it joined the GCC, which was established in 1981 with security concerns, having realized that they could not defend themselves. All these events led to a close relationship between the US and the UAE. Although the Western view of the Middle East changed with 9/11, the UAE has taken steps together with the US to prove its alliance. It is evident that until the Arab Spring, the UAE did not make any military intervention unilaterally for its own interest. However, after 2011, it pursued a more aggressive foreign policy within the changing regional order.

With the arrival of the Arab spring in 2011, the UAE has begun to be seen as an active player in the region. In fact, the country which did not seek military solutions and used to prefer the solutions through negotiation processes and diplomacy before 2011. This attitude began to change into a more interventionist policy. Therefore, the main question of my thesis is whether or not the UAE foreign policy changed after Arab Spring? If so, what kind of differences are observed in these policies? Are there any military and economic reasons behind the UAE foreign policy after the Arab Spring? Did the UAE use its military instruments in this process? What is the goal of the UAE in adopting the interventionist policies? What were the issues the UAE saw as a security threat and what did it do to prevent them?

Accordingly, the interventionist policies of the UAE were clearly seen in the crises of Bahrain and Libya in 2011 in Yemen since 2015.²⁰³ In the case of Egypt, the UAE played an important role in the success of Sisi's military coup and it tried to topple the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood which was seen as an important threat to its own regime. In addition, it established military bases in Socotra and Perim Islands in Yemen, the Puntland and the Somaliland regions in Somalia and the port city of Assab, Eritrea.²⁰⁴ Both military interventions and military bases of the UAE indicate that the country follows active policies in the region to have a dominant position in sea trade and logistics. As the Arab Spring has changed the regional order, the UAE has been involved in preventing this process both militarily and economically in order to

²⁰³ Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Saudi Arabia as a Resurgent Regional Power", *The International Spectator*, vol. 53, no. 4, September 25, 2018, p. 38.

²⁰⁴ İsmail Numan Telci, Tuba Öztürk Horoz, "Military Bases in the Foreign Policy of the United Arab Emirates," *Insight Turkey*, vol. 20, no. 2, Spring, 2018, p. 144.

maintain the regions status quo for its own security and regime survival. Its military bases outside its expected scope are a clear example of the increasing military character of its foreign policy. This thesis explained the UAE's military interventions vis-a-vis the geopolitical changes in the Middle East and the UAE's voluntary policies to defend Western interests in the same region.

There is a change towards militarization in the foreign policy of the United Arab Emirates however it is clear that the most important issue for the country is security both before and after the Arab Spring. While shaping its foreign policy, it made all moves on the axis of security. Generally, Emirates have taken a position against the factors it perceived as a threat. Especially, Iranian and Muslim Brothers were perceived as an external threat and it was reflected in statements and attempts to put them on a legitimate basis. For this reason, Copenhagen school is mentioned as the best defining theory for the thesis. The establishment of the GCC, the intervention in Bahrain, the support to overthrow the Morsi administration, the aid of the Haftar, the backing of the separatist groups in the south of Yemen and the opposition to the Houthis can be evaluated in this context. The manner in which it acted to protect itself against the securitizing elements are actually aimed at gaining strength and providing both political and economic interest. An example of this is the military base which they established in Somaliland.

The United Arab Emirates did not prefer to intervene in Iran directly and militarily since both countries have economic relations. In addition to that, Iran relatively has stronger military capabilities than the UAE and it is a permanent, established state. Iran is still seen as a security problem, but the competition between these two countries continues through groups in different countries. The UAE counts Iran as a state that disrupts security and stability, and sometimes accuses it of supporting terrorism. However, the Muslim Brotherhood threatened the existing monarchies rather than causing a sectarian conflict in the region. This time, securitization of issue is not a state, but an organization, a group. The perception of this group as a security threat has paved the way for the intervention to be made in the region, where order and stability have deteriorated, especially with the influence of the Arab Spring. The countries of the

Gulf (including in the UAE), who were concerned about the confusion in their own countries, intervened in the Islamic groups, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. To understand the extent of security perception, it will be sufficient to look at the announcement of Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. In addition, Iranian-backed Hutsi groups were perceived as threats to regional security and interventions have continued.

Although the UAE gives great importance to its security as a newly established country, it is obvious that it entails outside assistance to do this. Most of this support is provided from America. In addition, the West maintain military and economic support and the most important reason here is that the country has oil reserves. Interested in the UAE's alliance against what is seen as a threat in the region is another reason for it. As long as West continues to be with the UAE to protect its interests, Emirates will continue to have a word in the region.

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