

SAUDI ARABIA AND QATAR RELATIONS ON CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION

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ABSTRACT;

Purpose: In this study, it will be studied how big the influence and role of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the conflicts that occur in the Middle East region.

Methodology/approach: In this study, the author uses the library research method by analyzing some of the data that the author takes from books, journals, and other reliable sources.

Results/findings: The results of this study are the discovery of threats to political economy stability and Saudi Arabia's national interest over the alliance made by Qatar with Iran. In the conflict that occurred, Qatar strengthened its country's relations with Iran, especially in the realm of production of natural resources, oil and gas, LNG. The LNG cooperation was so successful that it was considered a threat to the stability of Saudi Arabia's oil trade.

Limitations: The limitation in this research is because the research method carried out by the researcher uses the library research method. The author realizes that there are several aspects that the author may not be able to analyze. This happens because of the limitations of the authors in obtaining the data sources needed to analyze the topics in this study, namely the influence and role of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the conflicts in the Middle East.

Contribution: Hopefully, this research will become a reference for knowledge about the role and influence of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the conflicts that occur in the Middle East region. In addition, the authors hope that this research can be used as a reference material for further research to be able to examine aspects that have not been discussed in this study.

Keywords: *Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Conflict, Middle East*

INTRODUCTION

The occurrence of international relations is a must as a result of interdependence and the increasing complexity of human life in the international community so that independence does not allow a country to close itself to the outside world (Perwita & Yani, 2014: 3-4). Indeed, there are some cases where a country remains stable and can fight for the sake of maintaining the principle of being anti to the outside world, for example until now there are North Korea, Cuba, or Iran which are even deliberately isolated from the outside world. But even so times have changed, it is no longer the same as in the era when Japan implemented a policy of pure isolation, so even though they apply the politics of isolation, North Korea, Cuba, and Iran are both just isolating themselves from an understanding or ideology that is contrary to the principles and the character of the nation is not about things such as trade, cooperation as well as bilateral relations (Nathanael, 2020).¹

¹ Akhyari Hananto, (2019), “Pelajaran dari Timur Tengah: Mengapa Qaar keluar OPEC?”, Good News, Januari 16,

Saudi Arabia and Qatar are two Arab countries that are included in the Middle East region. Qatar is a small country adjacent to Saudi Arabia, while Saudi Arabia is a large and wide country. There is a news released by the official media belonging to Saudi Arabia in 2017.² The news discusses the news which states that there are accusations against Qatar stating that Qatar has supported groups that are considered militant and spread the content of violent ideologies. The news that was released was considered as Qatar's move to carry out hegemony from reporting in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia which at that time accused Qatar of financing and supporting terrorist groups (Ghozali, 2021).

Then things got worse when Qatari leader Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani said Iran was a great power at a military ceremony. The statement then sparked the anger of Saudi Arabia (Harretz Reuters, 2017). The news that was released had an impact on the relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the two Arab countries experienced a rift in bilateral relations which led to the termination of diplomatic relations. Saudi Arabia from the beginning has criticized the reporting carried out by Qatari media about the Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi Arabia considers that Qatar defends groups that are considered militant by Saudi and other Arab countries.³ The Muslim Brotherhood is a group or organization that calls itself an Islamic organization and is included in the political party system which is the oldest in the Arab region or the Middle East region (Yuni, 2007). Qatar is also involved in an agreement with Sunni and Shia groups in Iraq and Syria, the deal aims to get two agreements.

Problem

Qatar and the militant groups agreed on 2 goals, the main goal being the guarantee of the return of 26 Qatari hostages as well as members of the kingdom who were kidnapped and held by Shiites. The second agreement is that militant groups within Syria allow and allow humanitarian aid to enter and evacuate safely and peacefully (Solomon, 2017).⁴ Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic relations with Qatar in June 2017. The severance of diplomatic relations did not happen only once, Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic relations with Qatar in 2014 with the root of the problem Qatar forming cooperation in defense forces with Iran. Ben Smith's writing in the Briefing Paper with the title "Qatar Crisis", explains the official reason for the termination of diplomatic relations between the two countries because of allegations from Saudi Arabia that consider Qatar's support for sects such as the Muslim Brotherhood and terrorists from radical groups.⁵ Saudi Arabia provides 13 conditions for Qatar if it wants to improve cooperative relations and diplomatic relations. The 13 demands include: Ending political relations with Iran, secondly, closing its military bases in Turkey. Third, cut ties with all organizations that are considered militant and terrorists by Arab countries. Fourth, stop various forms of financial support for organizations and individuals deemed militant and terrorists by Arab countries

Fifth, return the figures or individuals who are considered terrorists to their countries of origin. Sixth, closing the Qatari media Al-Jazeera. Seventh, Qatar stops intervening that affects the sovereignty of countries within the region. Eighth, issue or pay compensation fees and all forms of losses incurred including loss of life caused by Qatar's risky policies. Nine, fixing his country's policies regarding cooperation in the military, political, social and

² Ben Smith, (2017), " *Qatar Crisis*", Briefing Paper No CBP 8030, House of Commons Library, Juni 30,

³ Matt Smith, (2019) "*Bagaimana Qatar Mengatasi mbargo Ekonomi?*" BBC News, Januari 16

⁴ Broto Wardoyo, (2018) "*Rivalitas Saudi-qatar dan scenario Krisis Teluk*", Jurnal Hubungan Internasional, Vol 07 No. 01, Naskah Publikasi Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia

⁵ Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A. M., (1984). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc.

economic fields with Saudi and other GCC countries. Ten, eliminating all forms of communication with political opposition parties and parties against Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries. Eleven, closed and terminated all news agencies that had been publicly or directly funded by Qatar. The eleventh and twelfth are regarding Qatar's obligation to agree by granting a monthly audit which must be carried out in the first year then agreeing to all the terms and then in the second year an audit for four months and once every ten years in subsequent years. Qatar must approve all requests within ten days (Ben Smith, 2017).

Based on this view, it can be stated that every action that is decided by a country in the international sphere will carry out previous calculations regarding the national interest of its country, such as the attitude of Saudi Arabia which cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar which in response was shown strongly that Saudi Arabia had an interest in its goals. for the country in the economic field. The relationship between these countries is interesting to analyze because in the conflict it illustrates that in the conflict Saudi Arabia considers Qatar as the continuation of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy in various aspects.⁶

Research Methods

In this research, the research method used is descriptive qualitative. The use of this qualitative descriptive method is used to describe and describe the object of research in accordance with the existing facts. The qualitative descriptive method used by the author will describe all the circumstances that occurred, namely the conditions that were in accordance with the facts that existed when the research was being carried out. While the type of research used by the authors of this research is literature review research. The literature review carried out by the authors in this study is to examine several trusted journals, research results, and articles obtained from e-journals and several other reliable sources. The data collection technique used by the author in this study is to analyze several journals, previous studies, and articles obtained from trusted sources and record or take some of the things needed in this study. Meanwhile, the data analysis used in this research is using Miles and Huberman's data analysis. Miles and Huberman's data analysis has several stages in analyzing data, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions (Miles & Huberman)

Discussion

Diplomatic Relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar

Saudi Arabia and Qatar are two countries located in the same geography. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have the same culture and characteristics of the same country. Saudi Arabia has a wider area than Qatar. Both countries are Arab countries and also Islamic countries. The area owned by Qatar is not large even the area does not reach 50% of the area owned by Saudi Arabia. In 2002 Al Jazeera which is Qatar's official media, published news about the Saudi royal family, the news was considered to have cornered the royal family⁷. The incident ended in the withdrawal of Diplomatic relations. Relations that often fluctuate between Saudi and Qatar also have various reasons, conflicts The relationship between the two countries is not necessarily caused by politics and media coverage, even the territorial borders cannot be separated from the background for the torn relations between the two countries. In 1970, the

⁶ Harretz Reuters, (2017), "*The Qatar-Iran gas field behind the diplomatic war in the Middle East*", Haaretz, juni 7,

⁷ J. Dwi Narwoko dan Bagong Suyanto, (2005), *Sosiologi Teks Pengantar dan Terapan*, Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group

two countries disputed the border that occurred around Khawar al-Udayd where The incident also involved the United Arab Emirates as well, which was surprising because the area contains abundant oil and natural gas resources. Saudi Arabia, which at that time opposed and submitted a protest proposal for the construction carried out by Qatar in collaboration with Abu Dhabi (UAE), namely the construction of the Dolphin oil pipeline which was considered by the Saudis to pass through its Khawral-Udayd region (Broto, 2018). Relations between the two countries were well established until 2017. Qatar's official media released a news report about the Muslim Brotherhood which Saudi considers to be defending terrorist groups. Qatar has defended terrorist and militant groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Hamas as well as promoting a message about these groups in his official media. The news that was released led to the attitude taken by the Saudis, namely the severance of diplomatic relations.⁸ With this, a simple conclusion can be drawn where the two neighboring countries often experience differences of opinion to conflicts that result in political relations between the two.

Conflict between Saudi Arabia and Qatar and the Severance of Diplomatic Relations

In June 2014, Saudi Arabia withdrew its diplomats because Qatar had violated the agreements in the GCC. Together with the UAE and Bahrain, Saudi Arabia withdrew diplomatic relations with Qatar. The severance of diplomatic relations was based on allegations that Qatar betrayed and interfered in the affairs of GCC countries. others (Philip Gardon et al, 2019). The heated relations between the two countries eventually reached the height of the conflict which caused Saudi Arabia to cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar and recalled its ambassador who was in Doha. Relations between the two countries had improved again after eight months of tension.⁹ Mediation between the two countries was carried out intensively which then Saudi Arabia gave several conditions and must be met by Qatar if it wanted to return to cooperation with Saudi Arabia. Qatar agreed to the conditions given then Saudi returned its ambassador to Doha, the second relationship the country be good and the cooperative relationship is going well

In 2017, or three years after the previous conflict, there was news broadcast by Qatar's official media Al Jazeera which led Saudi Arabia to accuse Qatar of providing support for terrorist movements. The news carried by Qatar's official media is considered as one of Qatar's efforts to hegemony reporting in the Middle East. After the assumption of Qatar's support for militant and terrorist groups, then came the statement made by Qatar's leader, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at the time military ceremony alluding to the great powers in the region by mentioning Iran in the statement sparked further anger in Saudi Arabia (Harretz Reuters, 2017). The Qatari anti-media campaign was carried out by the people of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh and was picked up and discussed by the official Saudi media Sky News Arabic. The media also discussed the United States President Donald Trump in Riyadh who discussed Qatar's stance.¹⁰

The impact of the severance of diplomatic relations by Saudi Arabia on Qatar

⁸ Hasya Hanifan, (2021), *Blokade Qatar Oleh Empat Negara Semenanjung Arab Dilihat Dari Paradigma Konstruktivis*, Jurnal PIR Universitas Indonesia Vol. 5 No. 2

⁹ Kamran Jebreili, (2017), "Krisis Teluk, Laba Qatar Airways Naik Jadi 540 Juta Dolar", VOA Indonesia, Desember 16.

¹⁰ Yuni Yustika, (2007), "*Konsep Tujuan Pendidikan Islam Ikhwanul Muslimin*", (Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati) Bandung,

The severance of diplomatic relations by Saudi Arabia against Qatar, where in its decision Saudi Arabia chose to embargo all forms of transportation that went into Qatar's territory either from land, sea, or air so that the main and biggest impact for Qatar was on its economy (Hasya, 2021). Before the blockade, 60% of Qatar's imports go through countries that are boycotting transport routes to their country, including food ingredients, so the Qatari government must seek other routes for food transportation to be able to operate, namely through Turkey and Iran. Qatar then increases domestic production to import tens of thousands of goods. cow.¹¹ Qatar in dealing with conflicts that occur, ensures the supply of food and goods by working hard to improve its economic relations with countries outside the region. Qatar's minister of commerce is working hard to improve economic relations with the United States and Germany. with the US Secretary of Commerce and Treasury.¹² They mentioned that Qatar had ordered billions of dollars worth of Boeing aircraft for Qatar Airways and invested some capital in the US (Matt, 2019). Qatar's gas reserves are very large, even Qatar is in the third largest position in the world. Qatar shipped 81 million tons in 2017 or 28% of the world's total amount.

Qatar also exports 600,000 barrels of oil per day but Qatar has left the oil producing cartel namely OPEC and wants to concentrate on gas (Matt, 2019). At the beginning of 2019, Qatar chose to leave membership in OPEC, especially on January 1, 2019 Qatar officially left the Organization. At the end of 2018 the Qatari Minister of Energy gave a statement that Qatar's decision to withdraw from the OPEC organization has studied ways to increase its country's role in the international arena. A long-term strategy has been prepared and Qatar wants to focus on natural gas production. This decision has absolutely nothing to do with the blockade by Saudi Arabia (Akhyari, 2019). Oil exports carried out by Qatar are only around 2% of the supply of oil belonging to the OPEC Organization, but with Qatar's withdrawal from the organization, it will free up its country's sovereignty because it is no longer bound by the agreement. Organization. Sanctions that have been imposed by Saudi and other gulf countries have no effect on the revenue of Qatar's airline, namely Qatar Airways, the airline announced that its airline revenue was rising reached 540 dollars (Kamran, 2017).

Conclusion

The Gulf region is an area that has been awarded mining resources, be it gas, minerals, or oil. In terms of geographical position, this area itself is located in a strategic position. Not only that, the Gulf region is also rich in history because through the golden age of Persia when it ruled the world and then in the next period, the golden age of Islam began in the Gulf region. So it is not surprising that in the end political interests lured this region into becoming the ruler of the Gulf region. This awareness of the importance of the Gulf region then encourages countries that are in the coastline of the Gulf region to increase integration with each other which is useful for protecting and advancing the Gulf region itself.¹³ Moreover, because it is based on a common identity and interests, the integration of the Gulf region is

¹¹ Solomon, Erika, (2017), "*The \$1bn hostage deal that enraged Qatar's Gulf rivals: Doha reportdley paid AlQaeda affiliate and Iran to win Release of Royal Hunting Party.*" Financial Times, Juni 6,

¹² Muhammad Ghozali Rahman, (2021), *Hubungan Arab Saudi Dan Qatar Pada Konflik Di Kawasan Timur Tengah Tahun 2017*, Skripsi, Program Studi Hubungan Internasional, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

¹³ Philip Gardon, dkk, (2019), "The Qatar Crisis: Causes, Implications, Risk, and The need For Compromise", The Institute For National Security Studies, Tel Aviv Univercity

not too difficult to carry out and the form of such integration is regional organizations formed in the Gulf region itself. As is well known, regional organizations themselves are considered important in today's international political arena. This can be seen from the growing development of the European Union, NAFTA, ASEAN, etc.

Especially when referring to the success of the integration of European countries that form the European Union. However, when the politics of interest dominates this region, the unification of the countries of the Gulf region into a perfect regionalism is something that is difficult to realize. With its main advantages, the economic aspect does not cause the integration of the Gulf region to be stable. The character of the Gulf region countries that interfere in the domestic affairs of fellow Gulf region countries is the main problem that cannot be overcome. The superiority of one aspect or several aspects such as the economy or the military has actually caused the Gulf region countries to increasingly pursue supremacy in the region. Where this is very evident in the case of the diplomatic crisis involving Saudi Arabia and Qatar in 2017.

Qatar, which actually has good intentions in every effort to become a conflict mediator, is then considered a threat to Saudi Arabia and its allies in the Gulf region. Qatar, in fact, has proven that the assumption that Qatar is on the side of those who are opposite to Saudi Arabia and its allies is a form of Qatar's national interest to live independently and not depend on other parties. Examples such as Saudi Arabia's accusation that Qatar is a defector in the Gulf region because it supports and has good relations with Iran, Qatar can refute because in fact Qatar is still a strategic area for the United States for its national interest in fighting terrorism and becoming a stabilizer of the Middle East.¹⁴

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