The New Security Order in the Persian Gulf: Conditions, Opportunity and Obstacles

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Abstract

Different conditions, presents an opportunity and also challenges that they can impact on the structure and processes of the Persian Gulf. For over three decades, the question of who controls the Persian Gulf has formed the basis for America's massive military buildup in the region and in turn for forming security dilemma. At the heart of the region's security dilemma is a clash of conflictual visions: in one hand, Iran sees US"s interventionist policy as the most important factor of insecurity in the region and then seeks the departure of U.S. forces so it can exert rightful authority over the region, on the other hand, the Persian Gulf Arab states want the continuing presence and influence of the United States to balance Iranian power in the region. Then, the major question in this article is the effects that conditions (opportunity and obstacles) on formation a security order in the Persian Gulf. In the other word, what is the effect this conditions on formation a security order in the Persian Gulf? The hypothesis that addresses this question is: the conditions presents an opportunity to take a first step toward creating a new security order in the region, one that could improve relations between Iran and the Persian Gulf Arab states and facilitate a lessening of the U.S. military commitment and presence. Of course, it is imaginable that resolving this impasse will not be easy. The method of research in the article is the descriptive- analytical one which on the basis of is done theoretical deduction.

Keywords: New security Order, Persian Gulf, Iran, US, Arab countries

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Introduction

Security order in the Persian Gulf has been always the most important concern not only to the states of the region but also to the external powers. Since the Persian Gulf is accounted as a strategic region and the same time it has experienced the bloodiest conflicts of the 20th and 21st centuries, security and its related considerations have been at heart of policy calculations of the region's politicians. The security concerns generally focuses on the balance of power and related considerations, such as regional rivalry, and international and regional stability. These security challenges embody in the perceptions of policymakers in the region and in Washington and elsewhere. In the according, today there is a considerable debate about what stances is taken by the Persian Gulf countries. Some argue that Persian Gulf countries are opposing this agreement because they perceive results in promoting Iran's position in the region.

Persian Gulf countries have been sensitive about Islam because it is not only considered as a faith but also as a law. It seems that promoting Iran's position and the subject of security in the region of Persian Gulf have become a mystery in which lack of presentation of a suitable solution will lead to more intervention of trans-regional countries and detachment of effective bounds between the countries of the region. While all the states of the Persian Gulf share in general a joint security worries, but each country has its own worries and concerns. Definitely, stability in the production, flow and price of oil, non- intervention in domestic affairs and long-term economic development will be the common concerns of the oil exporting countries of this region. The United States' continued engagement in the region has already been determined by its interests. The United States has had a longstanding historical presence in the Persian Gulf and therefore, should follow a policy that does not allow any regional actor to achieve supremacy. In the other word, containing a kind of balance of power that controls expansionist tendency of regional powers is at heart US's policy in the region which it is considered in any study.

According to this attitude, the United States as in the past will adopt a policy that protects its regional allies with a reliable security umbrella. The major question in this article is the effects that conditions (opportunity and obstacles) on formation a security order in the Persian Gulf. In the other word, what is the effect this conditions on formation a

security order in the Persian Gulf? The hypothesis that addresses this question is: the conditions presents an opportunity to take a first step toward creating a new security order in the region, one that could improve relations between Iran and the Persian Gulf Arab states and facilitate a lessening of the U.S. military commitment and presence. Of course, it is imaginable that resolving this impasse will not be easy. The method of research in the article is the descriptive- analytical one which on the basis of is done theoretical deduction.

1- Theoretical Approach

The appropriated and suited theoretical approach in the article is an old and important in International Relations: Balance of Power theory (BOP). Initially, we should understand the logic and related assumptions that formulate the BOP theory. Two assumptions are of central relevance. First, the most important structural feature of international system is considered to be anarchic, with no high-authority being formally enforced on its agents (Waltz 1979, 88). From this view point other feature that is inherited in anarchy is "self-help" nature of the system, and because states do not have a world government to resort to in a situation of danger, they can only try to increase their capabilities relative to one another through either internal efforts of self-strengthening, or external efforts of alignment and realignment with other states (Waltz 1979, 118). Second assumption is the statism: states are the principle actors in the international system, as they "set the terms of the intercourse", monopolize the "legitimate use of force" within their territories, and generally conduct foreign policy in a "single voice" (See: Waltz 1979). Hence states are also considered to be unitary actors in the international system. This latter assumption is important because if non-state or transnational actors are powerful enough to challenge state actors, power configuration in the world may no longer be considered in terms of polarity but, instead, in terms of the number of layers of policy "networks"[2]. This essay bases its argument on these two core assumptions about the regional system as well because they have been widely accepted not only in realism and neorealism but also in neoliberal institutionalism (See: Keohane 1984). Thus, they are not derivative from exclusively realist or neorealist beliefs such as relative power maximization.

However, as this essay mentions, once we accept the two core assumptions (that of anarchy and that of states being principle actors), and the balance of power, as Waltz suggests, is a "result" –an outcome variable that reflects the causal effect of the explanatory variables which are, in his theory, anarchy and distribution of power in the international system. Now, it is necessary that I go back to the two core assumptions and see what explanatory variables can be derived from these assumptions that will have some observable implications with regard to balancing. The likelihood of balance of power is, therefore, a function of these variables which, as boil down to: 1) intention, notably the intention or the perceived intention of the major powers in the system, 2) preference of the states, particularly that between absolute and relative gains, and 3) contingency, often related to the availability of new information in a given situation, which may exogenously change the first two variables.

The intention, or the perceived intention of a major power, determines whether balancing will be preferred by secondary states over other options such as bandwagoning. We can think of this in terms both why smaller states sometimes succumb to the sphere of the strongest power in the system and why they sometimes stay away from it, or challenge it by joining the second biggest power if there were one. In his analysis of the conditions for cooperation under the security dilemma, Robert Jervis shows that when there is pervasive offensive advantage and indistinguishability between offense and defense (the "worst case" scenario), security dilemma between states can be so acute that it can virtually squeeze out the "fluidity" necessary for any balance of power to occur (Jervis 1978, 186-189). By incurring incorrect "inferences", offensive advantage and offense-defense indistinguishability ultimately serve to alter the perceived intention of the adversary as being aggressive or non-aggressive (Jervis 1978, 201). This will then dictate the smaller states' decision to whether balance the move. If, however, the major power is perceived to have not only a non-aggressive intention, but also a benign intention of providing certain public goods, smaller states may choose to free ride on these benefits while submitting to the major power's sphere of influence in return; an outcome of so-called "hegemonic stability" may then ensue (Keohane 1984, 12).

Second, balance of power is closely related to the states' preference for relative versus absolute gains. From an offensive realist point of view,

John Mearsheimer contends that states concerned with balance of power must think in terms of relative rather than absolute gain – that is, their military advantage over others regardless of how much capability they each have. The underlying logic here is at once intuitive—given a self-help system and self-interested states, "the greater military advantage one state has…the more secure it is" (Mearsheimer 1994-95, 11-12)—and problematic since the auxiliary assumption that every state would then always prefer to have maximum military power in the system (Mearsheimer 1994-95, 12) is practically meaningless. Similarly, Joseph Grieco points out that with the ever present possibility of war in an anarchic system, states may not cooperate even with their allies because survival is guaranteed only with a "proportionate advantage" (Grieco in Baldwin ed., 127-130). The concern for relative gain predicts that states will prefer balance of power over collective security because the latter requires that states trust one another enough to completely forgo relative gain through unilateral disarmament, which is inherently at odds with the idea of having a positional advantage for self-defense (Mearsheimer 1994-95, 36).

Although there are many variations of balance of power theory and interpretations of the concept, all are premised on the minimum of a tendency and the maximum of a law like recurrent equilibrium model. According to this model, imbalances and concentrations in military and material capabilities among the great powers are checked, and the equilibrium is restored in order to ensure the survival of the major powers in the international system. The great powers have several mechanisms to restore the balance, including internal military buildup where economic wealth is converted into military power, the formation of counterbalancing alliances, passing the buck of balancing to another state, partition and compensation in postwar peace settlements, and emulation.
In contrast, many scholars find that secondary and tertiary states are more likely to bandwagon or join with the more powerful state or coalition of states rather than balance against it. Based on structural realism as advanced by Kenneth Waltz in Theory of International Politics , the self-help anarchic system and shifts in the relative distribution of capabilities mean that balances of power recurrently form in the international system. How states balance will depend on the distribution of capabilities among the greater powers.

Meanwhile, the neoliberal institutionalist cooperation theory essentially presumes the pursuit of absolute gain over relative gain for states to achieve cooperation (Keohane 1984, 68). On a broader scale, therefore, the pursuit of relative gain would undercut international cooperation in general, in both high and low politics. It is safe to say that in practice, states are concerned with both relative and absolute gains to different degrees under different circumstances. Scholars like Duncan Snidal and Robert Axelrod have rigorously demonstrated the complexity of situations in which these two competing interests dynamically interact and change over time (Snidal in Baldwin ed. and Axelrod 1984, Chapter 2). In general, though, a prevalent preference for relative gains and, more specifically, military positionality among states increases the likelihood of balancing relative to collective security. If states tend to favor absolute gains instead, we are more likely to see phenomena such as deep international institutions and pluralist security communities.

1- The necessities of a new security order

A stable regional order in the Persian Gulf is a critical necessity for stability not only in this region but also in the Middle East. Such an order would be an outcome of the policies of Iran, the United States and the other states of the Persian Gulf. Today, the security preference of most regional governments is to re-establish the kind of balance of power in the Persian Gulf they once felt comfortable under, a balance maintained by friendly relations with a major regional power and backed up by a more distant US presence.

Under the current situation, if nothing serious happens, one should perceive that to reinstall regional security, the best path to establish regional order in the Persian Gulf region is to restore a sort of balance of power which would be consisted of Iran, Saudi Arabia (Ashrafpour,2013).

Amongst regional states, Iran, due to its political and military power, and Saudi Arabia, due to its economic power, are the two countries which able to play the mentioned role. America should accept the significant role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region's security and change its foreign policy regarding Iran. President Obama seemed to be determined to do so, but has been unsuccessful so far (ashrafpour, 2013).

Although Saudi Arabia and Iran are at each other's throats in various proxy conflicts, a regional security track could tackle transnational challenges of mutual concern, such as threats to maritime

security, piracy operations, and terrorism. The Persian Gulf Arab states, Iran, and surrounding regional powers all face a common threat to shipping lanes from maritime piracy and terrorism. Attacks in the Strait of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb, two vital shipping routes, could block significant oil transports and severely damage the regional and global economy.

For over three decades, this unanswered question has formed the basis for America's massive military buildup in the Middle East's most strategically important region, the vital waterway through which around 30 percent of all seaborne-traded oil passes.[1] The unstated reason behind American involvement has been to prevent one single power from controlling the region's resources. Through a combination of physical presence, training and arms sales to Persian Gulf Arab allies, and, in the case of Iraq, military intervention, the United States has become deeply enmeshed in the region's security affairs.

The results of this involvement have been mixed for both American interests and the region's instability. Yet successive U.S. administrations have found it exceedingly difficult to extricate the United States from the region. The removal of the threat posed by former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein did nothing to change the power imbalance behind Persian Gulf insecurity and indeed worsened it by opening a vacuum that has been filled by Iran. At the heart of the current dilemma is a clash of visions between the two sides of the Persian Gulf littoral: Iran seeks the departure of U.S. forces so it can exert what it regards as its rightful authority over the region (which it believes is self-evident in the area's geographic name). Meanwhile, the Persian Gulf Arab states desire a continued American presence to balance what they see as Iran's historical ambition of promoting its position. The countries have reacting to Iran's regional policy on the below cases:

- The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a key pillar of the existing order, excludes Iran, Iraq, and external powers with a significant role in the region. Moreover, it does not provide a platform for dialogue on many security challenges or for reducing tensions, managing crises, preventing conflict, and improving predictability.
- A new and inclusive regional security dialogue and Iranian integration with regional structures could

create opportunities to lower Arab-Iranian tensions in the Persian Gulf.

- A more stable security regime would lessen Persian Gulf state dependence on U.S. military presence and create a balance of power in the region. more favorable to U.S. interests (Wehrey, 2015).

A new window of opportunity may be opening to resolve this dilemma. The convergence between Iran and Arab states, albeit a distant one, of creating a new security order in the Persian Gulf, one that could improve relations between Iran and the Persian Gulf Arab states and help reduce the American military commitment and presence. This has been accompanied by the concurrent rise of a more militarily capable bloc of Persian Gulf Arab states who could presage a new era of confidence.

In the Persian Gulf, the region's only multilateral security forum -the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)- suffers from a number of shortcomings. First, as currently configured, the GCC is little more than a de facto collective defense alliance directed against Iran. It excludes Iran, Iraq, and outside powers with a strong stake in the security of the region, such as China, the European Union (EU), India, Japan, Russia, and the United States. Second, the GCC provides no multilateral venue for crisis management, conflict resolution, or implementation of measures to strengthen stability. In addition, it does not offer a mechanism for countries in the Persian Gulf to candidly discuss threats and security needs (Wehrey, July 14, 2015). This is particularly problematic because GCC countries face multiple, cross-border challenges that require greater multinational cooperation. Opening a new multilateral framework to Iran could be one additional tool in a broader regional strategy. That said, low-level dialogue between the Persian Gulf states and Iran could be an important first step in reducing tension and influencing Iran's outlook. Further, this new multilateral forum could expand to a more regularized dialogue on Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

2- U.S. interests and strategy in the Persian Gulf

Persian Gulf has been historically an important geopolitical and geostrategic region which on has been paid attended trans-regional powers. Among the other powers, U.S. especially aftermath British withdrawal from Persian Gulf tried to fill this vacuum of power. Since the unique statute of the region, U.S. has defined it as a region which it on has vital interests. Accordingly, the American involvement and presence

in Persian Gulf has become one of the major structural features in the region.

America's historic interests in the Persian Gulf were unaltered by the events of September 11. If anything, the terrorist attacks demonstrated that conditions and events in the Persian Gulf, and in the wider Middle East, are of even more immediate importance to the security and safety of the American people than we realized on September 10 (Sokolsky, 2003: 33-34).

The end of the Cold War presented the United States with an opportunity to pursue a fundamentally different type of strategy in that region; a policy of friendly but more detached and contingent relations with the regional states, in distinction to the existing U.S. policy of close and enduring political, military, and personal ties with friendly regimes. The Clinton administration identified both Iraq and Iran as significant threats to America's interests in the region. It developed a policy, known as 'dual containment', to deal with those threats by isolating both countries regionally, cutting them off from the world economic and trading system, and encouraging a regime change in Iraq.

In the period between the Persian Gulf War and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the strategy of dual containment of Iraq and Iran was a key driver of American military planning and force posture for the region. During these years, the overriding U.S. concern was preserving access to Persian Gulf oil at reasonable prices; the Persian Gulf states acquiesced to a significant U.S. military presence on their soil despite the domestic costs. At the end of the Clinton administration, it seemed safe to assume that the regional security environment would continue to evolve more or less on its present trajectory and that the challenge confronting the United States was how to manage U.S. forward presence for the long haul under increasingly stressful conditions. This premise is no longer valid. The strategy of dual containment, which is just barely alive, is expired.

A more inclusive, legitimate, and effective security order in the Persian Gulf would serve Persian Gulf states' interests but some question is that weather the order also serves U.S.' interests. In his September 2013 speech at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, U.S. President Barack Obama identified the United States' core interests in the region: confronting external aggression against U.S. allies and partners; maintaining a free flow of energy; preventing the development or use of

weapons of mass destruction; and dismantling terrorist networks (White House Office of the Press Secretary, Sep. 24, 293).

In the 1990s, Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries started to strengthen their military power and armament. It seems there were two reasons to do so. First, they had no other choice to protect and defend themselves against any possible threats. Second, to satisfy the United States. As they requested the U.S. to establish security in the region, they wanted to accomplish their own share. While political and security elites in Persian Gulf countries are trying to perfect an international power balance in the region, the entire Middle East is undergoing a socio-political transformation that is largely bypassing traditional forms of "Realpolitik". Amid the hyperbole regarding Iran's nuclear program and Iraq's continuing chaos, a much larger and potentially more explosive phenomenon has been steadily developing from Northern Africa to the Persian Gulf (Ashrafpoor, 2013).

US's strategy in the Persian Gulf is undergirded by six major premises.

First, the United States seeks maintain a minimum level of essential engagement to secure its core interests in the region and to sustain this engagement over the long haul while reducing costs and risks. United States has defined its paramount national security interest in the Persian Gulf as "maintaining the unhindered flow of oil . . . to world markets at stable prices" (U.S. Energy Information Administration, Nov. 10, 2014). The importance of the Persian Gulf to the global economy remains undiminished and will only increase over the coming decades. September 11, however, starkly emphasized that energy is not the only U.S. interest in the Persian Gulf region—or even necessarily the most important. Any strategy aimed at defeating terrorism with global reach must focus heavily on the Persian Gulf region (Sokolsky, 2003: 10).

Second, countries in the Persian Gulf region must take primary responsibility for their own defense.

Third, many of the challenges confronting the Persian Gulf cut across national boundaries and therefore can only be addressed through multilateral cooperation.

Fourth, mounting domestic pressures, rather than direct Iranian aggression, present the greatest long-term challenge to the stability of the GCC states that has fueled Sunni extremism (Wehrey, 2015).

Today, the security preference of most Persian Gulf governments is to reestablish the kind of balance of power in the Persian Gulf they once felt comfortable under—a balance maintained by friendly relations with a major regional power and backed up by a more distant U.S. presence. They are also moving cautiously in developing ties to Iran. Those ties, for now and the foreseeable future, will be limited to cooperation on trade, commerce, police matters, and sharing of intelligence on drugs and narcotics trafficking. They are not likely to conclude any significant security pact whose terms would include a demand for the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from the region. Persian Gulf governments prefer to avoid antagonizing their larger and dangerous neighbors, but they also realize that American commitments to their security and a presence, however invisible they may pretend it is, allow them the freedom to negotiate with former enemy Iran and, at some point in the future, current enemy Iraq (Pollack, 2003: 87).

The US cannot afford any strategic illusions about Iran, or does not believe that future developments will somehow eliminate the need for a major and continuing US strategic presence in the region. The US treats Iran as a potential nuclear power. It has simply moved too far, and diversified too much in expanding its nuclear technology base and long-range missile capabilities. It also will retain both chemical and biological options (Cordesman, Apr. 14, 2011).

Fifth, the Persian Gulf Arab states are intended implement meaningful domestic reforms to provide more sustainable security for their citizens, reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies, and diminish opportunities for Iranian meddling. There are sharp limits, however, on what the United States can do to encourage these reforms (Wehrey, 2015).

Sixth, America does not choose sides in the sectarian and geopolitical rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia but tries instead work to establish a new equilibrium between the two countries. Creating a framework for more constructive and sustained U.S. engagement with Iran could increase U.S. leverage with other countries in the region.

America's approach to Persian Gulf security has not included a commitment to work with states in the region to build a more inclusive security structure that would include the GCC states, Iran, Iraq, and other important outside powers. Yet, a functioning multilateral security forum would reinforce America's current security strategy for the Persian Gulf

and many of the premises underpinning it. It would shift more of the responsibility for fixing the region's problems to local states, where it properly belongs, while encouraging responsible stakeholders from outside the region to share more of the security burdens. Other problem is that in the Persian Gulf, U.S. security relations with regional states are built not on shared values, of which there are few, but instead on relative shared interests. In fact, one of the key challenges for US's policy in Persian Gulf has long been how to manage the divergence between interests and values, a challenge that will only grow more difficult in the years ahead (Sokolsky, 2003 : 5).

3- Formulation of the regional security arrangement

The features of Persian Gulf have potentially the significant impacts on the security environment in the region. Despite these lead to intensifying tensions between the regional states especially strong actors such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, but at the same time can provide appropriate situations for the new security architecture in the Persian Gulf as such be differentiated from the existing uncompleted structure, GCC, in the region.

Given the unsatisfactory state of security in the Persian Gulf, new arrangements need to be devised in order to escape the perennial cycle of instability that has plagued the region. Any security arrangement should take into account the failures of the past and consider the strategic circumstances that exist today. The new common security framework should include all the actors involved. The common security framework, which has roots in cooperative security model, is based on a set of assumptions about the relative security stance of an actor vis-à-vis the others. Cooperative security has an extended definition. The general definition of cooperative security refers to a security system in which the military endeavors are not the primary focus. In this respect, the main concern is development of structures to attain a comprehensive and positive vision of security. In other words, cooperative security involves achieving proper measures to involve interested parties in order to resolving hostilities before they turn into violence and to use peaceful options. The idea of common security is that all states will find greater relative security through obligations to limit military rivalries rather than through attempts to gain dominance (Kraig, 2003: 8). Such security architecture assumes that regional rivals that can be potential enemies will accept the same legal and offensive constraints on behavior as

friends, despite the existence of considerable mutual mistrust. In this context, financial and human resources of the regional states are used primarily for socio-economic development, rather than for bilateral military alliances with external powers or for suppressive police forces (Kraig, 2004: 139).

Now the important question is that what is the best overall strategy for creating a new security order in the ground of Persian Gulf? Initially, there are two broad strategies, political and functional, as an introduction and they are not mutually exclusive.

A political strategy would be based on the assumption that the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran is the key challenge to the entire enterprise and without some easing of Saudi-Iranian tensions, progress in constructing a new regional security forum will be problematic. The two countries have profound differences on a host of regional security issues, and many of these divides will never be fully bridged. But for all their differences, Saudi Arabia and Iran do share common interests in opposing the self-proclaimed Islamic State, avoiding direct conflict, preserving the sanctity of borders, and maintaining the free flow of oil and freedom of navigation. It might be possible, therefore, for the two sides to reach some understandings on agreed-upon rules of the road that could meaningfully reduce sectarian tensions in the region and create a more favorable political climate for a new security architecture (Wehrey, 2015).

A more functional approach to jump-starting a regional security dialogue would bring together experts in and possibly out of government to discuss transnational challenges where potential members share common interests. These could include drug-trafficking and illegal-smuggling prevention, environmental remediation, energy cooperation, climate change, earthquake monitoring, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, natural resource management, medical and healthcare collaboration, and maritime security cooperation. Cooperation in one area could spill over into other areas. Success in these functional discussions could also drum up support for the more ambitious goal of building new rules to anchor a new security organization.

Of these two options, the functional, bottom-up approach is probably best suited to make early progress in the Persian Gulf, given continued Saudi-Iranian antagonism and the other difficult political shoals that have to be navigated. It would be better to create flexible and informal

opportunities for dialogue among government officials on less controversial and more technical issues. This dialogue could take place even if Saudi Arabia and Iran remain at loggerheads with each other.

A functional approach to starting a regional security dialogue would bring experts together to discuss transnational challenges where potential members share common interests. However, it seems that efforts to pave the way for meaningful cooperation in the Persian Gulf should start with a new security initiative. Trust building measures and security reassurances could lead to a common security framework. Subsequently, one may see a spillover to other fields, which in turn would reinforce the security arrangement put in place. During the past three decades, the Arab states of the Persian Gulf have spent billions of dollars on arms purchases and have entered into security alliance with the United States. Far from bringing any sense of security, this has created an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion. Their military ties with external powers have raised public concern and dissatisfaction (Peimani, 2003: 134- 135). This could potentially become a major security threat from within to the rulers of most of these counties (Wehrey, 2015).

4- Challenges to a security arrangement

What now is needed is a collection of more modest and feasible objectives that will bolster confidence in the Persian Gulf and lay a foundation for a more durable architecture. The construction of a viable architecture faces a number of uphill battles. The most fundamental one is rooted in contested visions of Persian Gulf security. In order to define any viable security arrangement in the Persian Gulf, it is necessary to understand the security concerns of the actors (Iranian and Arab Views on Persian Gulf Security) involved.

Iran as an important actor in the region seems unsatisfied with the security arrangements implemented by foreign powers to date. Iran feels that its rightful position as leading power in the Persian Gulf has been denied. Iran also believes that its pursuit of nuclear energy has been completely peaceful and the "American provoked sanctions" are unjust and in violation of Iranian peoples' right to have access to such energy. In contrast, the United States unreasonably argues that Iran is well-endowed with natural resources and this persistent insistence on pursuit of nuclear enrichment has no justification. Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf Arab states will continue to demand external military backing to balance what they see as Iran's demographic, economic, and military might. To assert

what it sees as its rightful leadership role, Iran will continue to demand a Persian Gulf that is free from U.S. and all foreign forces (Wehrey, may 22, 2014). Some Iranian officials make no distinction between the Persian Gulf states and the "arrogant" United States and perceive these countries as pawns in America's strategy of encircling Iran. In contrast, other group in Iran believe that the nuclear deal could pave the way for Iranian engagement with the smaller Persian Gulf states to drive a wedge between them and both Saudi Arabia and the United States. They floated trial balloons on a rapprochement with the Saudi ruling elite (Zarif, 2015). The Arab Persian Gulf states still hold deeply ingrained fears and a skeptical reading of Iran's intentions.

Iran's neighbors have also grown mindful of Tehran's intentions. Statements by Iranian officials and certain measures taken by the Iranian armed forces in the past few years have only intensified this concern. In July 2007, Kayhan Daily wrote in an editorial that Bahrain is more like a province of Iran than an independent country (Shariatmadari, Husayn, 2007). In January and April of 2008, incidents between US ships and Iranian speedboats raised international concerns over Iran's intentions to undermine the security of the Persian Gulf (Cordesman, 2003: 38). In September 2008, Iran assigned the 20,000-man Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) navy rather than the less confrontational regular navy to Persian Gulf defense. This deployment followed by the opening of a new naval base on the strategic Strait of Hormuz one month later. In the same year, Iranian marine forces upgraded their Assalouyeh naval base, establishing "an impenetrable line of defense at the entrance to the Sea of Oman," according to an Iranian admiral (Tehran Times Political Desk, Oct. 30, 2008). Yet, Islamic Iran has been far from being aggressive to the other actors. In the last two centuries Iran has never invaded its neighbors but has itself been invaded for at least twelve times. Even when it could retaliate, Iran didn't help coalition forces for crushing Saddam (Kesselman, 2009: 315-316). But these remarks and military fortifications has delivered mistrust to other neighbors.

Aside from clashing Iranian and Persian Gulf Arab views, another stumbling block is endemic disunity in the GCC itself. Recent shifts in regional dynamics and the domestic complexions of the GCC have slightly tempered this disunity.

First and foremost, the perception's Arab states on threat from Iran—as the GCC sees in the country's military, financial, and diplomatic support

for Bashar Asad in Syria; support for the Houthis in Yemen; and its control of the powerful Shias in Iraq—has resulted in an unprecedented show of GCC unity. The Saudi-led operation in Yemen in particular has been an rallying point. Even the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which was previously nonchalant about the Houthis, has participated, committing ground combat forces and shifting its fighter aircraft from attacking Islamists in Libya to conducting sorties over Yemen.

Another and more worrisome display of cohesiveness has occurred on the domestic security front. The intelligence services of the GCC are cooperating at unprecedented levels, sharing blacklists of dissidents, denying visas to foreigners critical of GCC regimes, and making arrests on one another's behalf. Even in Kuwait, previously one of the more open and tolerant of the GCC monarchies, the security services have arrested politicians, activists, and bloggers for offenses ranging from criticism of the Saudi-led Yemen operation to "insults" against the Saudi royal family, as the Interior Ministry put it (Al-mutairi, Mar. 14, 2015). In Bahrain, the dragnet of detentions has been even larger (Wehrey, 2015).

A third and less obvious source of Persian Gulf unity has been the development over the past decade of a new Persian Gulf cultural identity known as khaliji (meaning Persian Gulf). Part of this is top-down, reflecting the strategy of regimes—particularly those in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Doha—to make the Persian Gulf a crossroads of global commerce, art, education, and sport. But the new Persian Gulf nationalism is also bottom-up. Commentators frequently note that with the weakening or collapse of the Arab world's historic cultural centers through civil war, invasion, and revolution—in the Levant, Iraq, and Egypt—the center of gravity has shifted by default to the Persian Gulf (Wehrey, 2015).

In the economic realm, the Persian Gulf has seen an uptick in intra-GCC investment. Recent plans for Persian Gulf Arab nuclear power and diversified energy have spurred further cooperation. The growing weight of Persian Gulf national airlines vis-à-vis American carriers has been another source of unity and national pride.

Despite these developments, a number of structural sources of disunity exist and, on balance, outweigh the recent signs of unity. Much of this divergence is rooted in familial disputes, territorial squabbles, and simple facts of geography. The last factor is especially evident in the GCC's longtime outlier Oman, which has historically considered itself more of an Indian Ocean power with arguably stronger links to Iran than the Arabian Peninsula. This was demonstrated by the role Oman played in facilitating the secret, back-channel discussions between high-level

U.S. and Iranian diplomats that laid the basis for the subsequent negotiations with Iran.

There are a number of looming developments that could exacerbate these structural differences. As the Persian Gulf states face monarchical succession challenges, there may be a temptation for the ruling regimes in some countries to meddle in the leadership transition processes of their neighbors to shape them to their advantage. On the economic front, a shift by Persian Gulf states in the future away from rentier economic models could create greater disunity. The Persian Gulf states historically have shown a preference for bilateral trade deals with external powers—Bahrain's negotiation of a free trade agreement with the United States incensed Saudi Arabia, which accused it of breaking ranks with the GCC.

Conclusion

Persian Gulf as a region that has politically and economically importance for extra regional powers always has been in exposed on foreign interventions. However, this region alike other regions has structure and processes which provide it for chances and challenges on security. Now, Persian Gulf is engaged in a security dilemma that effecting total regional process and led the region to a structure based on polarity. Accordingly, the region has seen conflict and gap that not only impacts negatively on regional states interests but also on foreign powers ones. Nevertheless, there are conditions that are imaginable chances for cooperation that part of it is shown in security architecture in the region. Since dominance perception of regional structure is balance of power thus rivalry is become major procedure by actors. Presence and influence of the great powers, that always has been inevitably reality in the Persian Gulf, has added complexity of security concerns. Although some experts present political and functional strategies for developing regional cooperation but logic of balance of power and rivalry based on it, mutual misperception and threat, and distributive role played by foreign powers are major obstacles against formation a new security order. But these realities don't deny any possible for security architecture and convergence of regional actors especially Iran and Saudi Arabia. To use opportunity in special economically and trade or culturally may introduce regional states to different situation. In this case, logic of the balance of power will change, as instead of rivalry and conflict is placed coordination and cooperation.

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