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UAE-Saudi relations in the new order of West Asia: from convergence to divergence

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, the Arab unrest in 2010, which started in Tunisia and spread to other Arab states in a short time, is considered a turning point in the political history of Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa. These measures, which started with the overthrow of some Arab countries such as Tunisia and Egypt, gradually led to civil wars, proxy battles of powerful countries, and even the withdrawal of troops from neighboring countries by some governments, with the extensive and diverse interference of other regional and extra-regional countries. The process of these changes and the resulting results have always been more important for the countries of the southern border of the Persian Gulf, or in more appropriate terms, the governments of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, which include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab

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Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman. Because the commonalities and similarities in various political, economic, and cultural fields among the member states of the Council and the fear of unrest spreading within their political borders have caused the above countries to take measures to prevent such a thing. In the meantime, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, due to various reasons such as size, population, foreign exchange earnings, inherent characteristics of leaders, and regional competition, seek their desired changes in the context of regional trends more than others. These two countries, in addition to the deep commonalities and sense of brotherhood they have among themselves, are always involved in competition with each other for various reasons, such as maintaining the balance of power, especially on the part of the UAE, the authoritarian leadership of both countries, and territorial disputes left over from the colonial era. It is from this point of view that the convergence and divergence between these two countries is important in the shadow of the new developments in the Middle East region.

Methodology is always considered a function of the theory used in scientific and research works, on this basis and with the theory used in this work, an attempt will be made to explain the methodology of the present writing to the reader. The category of security is one of the fields of study that, despite a long history for mankind, a significant period has not passed since its systematization as an academic discipline. In this work, according to the use of Stephen Walt's threat balance theory and the need-to-know concepts such as power, size, population, economic capabilities, as well as geography, offensive capabilities and hostile intentions, the methodology of this article is a combination of methods Quantitative and qualitative crosswise. In other words, some areas such as the economy area can be analyzed through quantitative methods of contract analysis and based on this, the security and competitive status of actors can be analyzed. While in some other areas such as social security, and freedom of expression, intentions and behavioral characteristics of leaders cannot be investigated simply and based on quantitative methods; In this case, using the qualitative method and paying attention to the intentions of the actors is more prominent. Considering the political characteristics of the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the simultaneous use of quantita-

tive and qualitative methods leads the readers of the present work to a correct understanding of the relations between these two actors.

According to the studies conducted on the intergovernmental relations between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the existence of internal differences between the above countries regarding various regional issues clearly shows that these governments, despite all the political, economic, and cultural commonalities, at the same time in dealing with the issues and The problems that arise in the field of foreign policy have national and sometimes personal implications, which is why they sometimes try to take parallel and even opposing actions. It is worth noting that these measures appear and appear more from the side of the smaller country, the United Arab Emirates, in front of the Saudi government, because Saudi Arabia always considers itself the leader of the Arab countries and expects support from other members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. ; It was for this reason that he reacted militarily to the changes in Bahrain and economically to Qatar to prove to everyone that he is not indifferent to the developments in the Arab countries around him, especially the governments of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, and that his interference in He considers their affairs as a natural matter and a reserved right for himself. In the meantime, according to the approach they have drawn for themselves in the field of foreign politics, the Emirati rulers are always trying to maintain their independence and balance of power against this larger government while accompanying the Saudi government in various regional issues, in addition to protecting themselves from The flames of anger of the Al Saud rulers also promote their national and family interests, which is evident in the UAE's behavior in Yemen and diplomatic relations with Iran and Syria.

The new order of West Asia, which is the result of the great changes caused by the Arab events of 2010, showed more than ever the continuity and intertwining of the Arab states of the region, especially the states of the Persian Gulf. These governments, which have come together in the framework of a regional organization such as the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, led by Saudi Arabia and with the support of the other pillar of the council, the United Arab Emirates, are sensitive to the spread of waves of Arab unrest to the territories under their rule and any movement in this direction They have suffocated sperm. This coop-

eration, which has been established over the years and especially between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, is more than anything due to the sharing of their broad interests in regional dimensions. Regardless of the inherent characteristics of their ambitious leaders, both the Saudi and UAE governments have converged on various issues such as the unrest in Bahrain, the war in Syria, and the battle in Yemen due to the sense of competitiveness with each other and the need to balance power against Iran. However, during this period, they have diverged and split, especially concerning the manner of diplomatic relations with Iran and Bashar Assad's government in Syria, as well as how to manage the war in Yemen. Of course, it should be noted that the role of the United Arab Emirates in the emergence of divergence with the Saudi government is more colorful because maintaining the balance between the two powerful countries of Iran and Arabia on both sides of the Persian Gulf, as well as maintaining independence and achieving special political-economic interests in the pursuit of regional issues. It is of special importance for the Bin Zaid family in the UAE.

Key words: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, New Middle East, Convergence, Divergence