

TURKISH-SAUDI RELATIONS: FROM A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE
IN THE PERIOD FROM 2003 UNTIL 2013

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ABSTRACT

TURKISH-SAUDI RELATIONS: FROM A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE PERIOD FROM 2003 UNTIL 2013

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The thesis aims to understand how the relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia evolved in the 2000s, through applying the regional level of analysis. It looks at interaction between these two regional powers in the Middle East after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the Arab uprisings in 2011 in a comparative way through examining the regional contexts created after these events and how the foreign policy of Turkey and Saudi Arabia reacted to these contexts. The thesis tries to figure out how the regional relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, which ranges between regional cooperation and regional competition, affected the political, economic and military relations between Ankara and Riyadh through the period of study between 2003 until 2013. The thesis argues that the regional context had impacted the Turkish-Saudi relations positively after the US invasion of Iraq and negatively during the Arab uprisings and mainly in the Egyptian uprising in 2013. The thesis uses the Regional Security Complex Theory, Securitization and De-Securitization in order to understand the regional interaction between Turkey and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East.

Keywords: Turkish foreign policy, Saudi foreign policy, the Middle East and the Arab Spring.

ÖZ

BÖLGESEL PERSPEKTİFTEN 2003-2013 DÖNEMİNDE TÜRKİYE-SUUDİ ARABİSTAN İLİŞKİLERİ

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Bu çalışmada Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan arasındaki ilişkilerin 2000’li yıllarda nasıl bir değişim sürecinden geçtiği bölgesel bir analiz çerçevesinde incelemektedir. ABD’nin 2003 yılındaki Irak işgali ve 2011 yılında patlak veren Arap Baharı’nın ardından oluşan bölgesel bağlamları ve bu bağlamların Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan’ın dış politikalarında ne tür karşılıklar bulduğu karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenerek, iki bölgesel gücün arasında Ortadoğu bölgesinde meydana gelen etkileşimler irdelenmektedir. Çalışmada, Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan arasında bölgesel işbirliğiyle bölgesel rekabet arasında değişim gösteren çeşitli bölgesel ilişkilerin, 2003-2013 yılları arasında, Ankara ve Riyad’ın siyasi, ekonomik ve askeri ilişkilerini nasıl etkilediği araştırılmaktadır. ABD’nin Irak işgalinin Türk-Suudi ilişkilerini olumlu yönde etkilediği ancak 2013 yılındaki Mısır ayaklanmaları başta olmak üzere Arap Baharı’nın bu ilişkiler üzerinde olumsuz bir etki yarattığı savunulmaktadır. Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan’ın Ortadoğu’daki bölgesel etkileşimini kavramak için Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Teorisi’nin yanı sıra güvenikleştirme ve güvenlikdışlaştırma kavramları da kullanılmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Türk dış politikası, Suudi dış politikası, Ortadoğu ve Arap Baharı.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Turkey and Saudi Arabia are considered as two important regional powers in the region of the Middle East. Saudi Arabia is the second after Norway in having the largest foreign currency reserves. It is the second global producer of crude oil after Russia and act as a swing producer capable of determining the global price of oil. It is also an influential actor in Arab politics and Muslim world politics owing to its financial capabilities, its leadership position in the Arabian Peninsula and its leverage on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Council (OIC). On the other hand, Turkey is a member in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and a candidate member to the European Union (EU). It has a diversified economy with Gross Domestic Product estimated by USD 800 billion and big population around 75 million. Turkey has been an active player in the Middle East politics during the cold war and after, in addition to other regions like Middle Asia, Middle and East Europe owing to its strategic location.

Since the establishment of the Turkish republic in 1923 and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, the relations between the two countries are highly responsive to the regional outcomes in the Middle East and how each country approaches to these outcomes. The bilateral relations respond (positively or negatively) to the meta-events that takes place in the Middle East politics affecting both countries and the approach each country adapts in dealing with it. The thesis argues that the regional meta-events in the Middle East and the way each country deal with them have an impact on Turkish-Saudi bilateral relations. The Turkish-Saudi relations started to enter in a new era in 2003 after the US invasion of Iraq and the rise of a pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP) to power in Turkey with its new approach to

the Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East. The implications of the war on Iraq in 2003 (will be defined as the Iraqi effect in the thesis) either on Iraq or other Middle Eastern countries has brought the national and regional interests of Ankara and Riyadh closer in a way that helped both countries to discover their potentials for boosting their bilateral relations. After 2003, the profile of the relations between the two countries achieved historical records in the number of high level visitations, number of bilateral agreements, the trade balance, size of investment, arms sales and more important the improvement of the perception of Turkey in Saudi Arabia and the perception of Saudi Arabia in Turkey.

Conversely, the popular uprisings in different Arab countries in 2011 left a negative impact on the Turkish-Saudi relations, as both countries followed different approaches to the uprisings and their regional interests were not similar in all cases. Turkey supported the uprisings as it perceived the uprising would lead to a harmonic relation between Arab societies and their new rulers and as a step towards ensuring regional peace and security, while Saudi Arabia considered the uprisings would lead to chaos and instability for a long time. The difference between their approaches and their regional ambitions of were highly clear in the course of events in Egypt either during the anti-Mubarak uprising in 2011 or the political change took place in July 2013. The Turkish-Saudi relations had lost the momentum that it gained after the US invasion of Iraq, the high level official visitations became low, the trade balance did not achieve high records similar to the previous period, political relations deteriorated as Saudi Arabia lobbied against Turkey in the elections of the United Nations Security Council in 2014.

The thesis examines how the outcomes of the regional meta-events and the responses of each country to these events play a role in Turkish-Saudi bilateral relations under the regional impact of the war on Iraq in 2003 and the Arab uprisings in 2011 on the political, economic and military levels.

The introductory chapter includes a literature review on Turkish-Saudi relations, a historical background on the Turkish-Saudi relations, the regional level of analysis, theories and concepts that will be applied in the study. The second chapter examines the outcomes of the US invasion of Iraq on the Iraqi political scene, the rise of

Iran's influence, the weak reaction of the Arab regional system and the empowerment of sub-state actors (Shi'a-Sunni-Kurds). It examines also the spill over of these outcomes on other Middle East countries like Lebanon which was highly responsive to the Iraqi effect as it witnessed the Sunni-Shi'a sectarian strife in the events of May 2008, the empowerment of non-state actors *Hizballah* and the noticeable rise of Iran in the Lebanese internal affairs. The chapter also illustrates how Turkey and Saudi Arabia reacted to the situation in Iraq and Lebanon and how this new regional environment created a ground for boosting their bilateral relations. Finally the third chapter throws the light upon the geopolitical consequences of the Arab uprisings on the region and how Turkey and Saudi Arabia perceived this meta-event in a different way and restored to different tools in dealing with it. Then it paraphrases the course of the Egyptian uprising and the Syrian uprising and how both Turkey and Saudi Arabia reacted to them. Finally it clarifies how the Turkish-Saudi bilateral relations get negatively affected in this period of time and how the media in each country perceived the other.

The methodology used in collecting data on the research topic relied on official statements by Turkish and Saudi governmental institutions, official declarations by head of state in each country, Foreign Ministers and other officials, reports by business associations and companies in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The author reviewed the media coverage in Turkey and Saudi Arabia on the relations between the two countries and their policies towards the regional issues in the Middle East. The author also conducted a field research during a visit to Saudi Arabia in May 2015 in order to make interviews with Saudi journalists, ex-diplomats, Saudi academicians and businessmen who are interested in the Turkish-Saudi relations.

The thesis focuses on the regional level of analysis in order to find out how the relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia have evolved in the 2000s. The thesis uses the Regional Security Complex Theory as a theoretical framework to understand the regional interaction between Turkey and Saudi Arabia and the overlapping in their regional and national interests during the period of study in addition to using conceptual frameworks like Securitization and De-securitization

which proved its suitability in interpreting how Saudi Arabia and Turkey securitized the regional outcomes of the war on Iraq in 2003 and the Arab uprisings in 2011.

The main research question of the thesis is: what is the impact of regional outcomes in the Middle East on the Turkish-Saudi relations in the period from 2003 until 2013?

1.1 Literature Review on Turkish-Saudi Relations:

The literature on Turkey-Saudi relations is rather limited. In Turkish literature, there is more interest in explaining the evolution of the relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia through writings that focused on the shift in the Turkish foreign policy in the 1960s and 1970s and approaching the Muslim countries. Other bodies of Turkish literature, mainly Op-eds and investigative reports in Turkish newspaper, address the Turkish-Saudi relations from the perspective of the rise of political islamists in the Turkish political scene, the rise of Islamic finance in the Turkish economy in 1980s and the relations between Turkish islamists and other countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Turkish secular newspaper Cumhuriyet published several reports in 1990s by a famous investigative journalist Uğur Mumcu on the political economy of the Turkish-Saudi relations during 1980s and this journalist wrote a book called “Rabıta” on this issue¹. In 2000s, the Turkish-Saudi relations found its place in the literature that studies relations between Turkey and the Middle East under the rule of AKP. While in the Saudi literature, the interest of studying Turkish-Saudi relations is present rather in the writings that focus on Saudi Arabia and the Middle East during the 1991 Gulf war and after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.

For the period of the study, the role of Iran and the impact of the rise of Iranian influence on rapprochement between Turkey and Saudi Arabia is one of the main issues that were discussed in the Turkish and Saudi literature. Sinem Cengiz, in her Master thesis entitled “Turkish-Saudi relations within the context of internal and

¹ Mumcu, Uğur. *Rabıta*, Tekin Yayınevi, Istanbul, 1997.

regional dynamics during the 1990s and the 2000s”², considered the domestic, regional and international factors on Turkish-Saudi relations during the 1990s and 2000s. Cengiz concluded that the balance of power in the region which leans toward Iran was an important factor in the development of the relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. She found out that the problematic issues in the Middle East, such as the Palestinian issue, Syrian conflict, Iranian nuclear threat and instability in Iraq pushes the two countries towards each other’s. However Cengiz’s argument about the role of Iran in Turkish-Saudi relations could not explain the deterioration in the relations during the Arab uprisings which took place simultaneously while Iran was still rising regionally. In other words, Iran continued to rise regionally and this did not force Turkey and Saudi Arabia to mend their ideological differences which appeared during the Egyptian political change in July 3rd 2013 and after. Another issue was the regional balance of power in the Middle East which was considered by Cengiz as a potential area for cooperation between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, turned to a field of competition between them. During the Arab uprisings, Turkey and Saudi Arabia were in a regional rivalry as Turkey was seen as a pillar in a regional alliance composed of Qatar, Egypt (under rule of Muslim Brotherhood) and *Hamas* in Gaza, while Saudi Arabia continued to favour a policy that prolongs the regional status quo and ensuring the stability of the GCC regimes, Jordan and Morocco and it was suspicious from the regional rise of the Muslim Brothers. Not only that, but also the removal of the Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi from power has revealed clearly how Saudi Arabia was provoked by the Turkish regional role and its high profile cooperation with Muslim Brotherhood.

Contrary, another article written by Meliha Benli Altunisik titled “Bitter Frenemies”³ pointed out the difference between the Turkish and Saudi perspectives

² Cengiz, Sinem. ““Turkish-Saudi relations within the context of internal and regional dynamics during the 1990s and the 2000s”, Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, March 2015.

³ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. “Bitter Frenemies The Not-Quite-Alliance Between Saudi Arabia And Turkey”, *Foreign Policy*, May 2012, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2012-05-15/bitter-frenemies> .

towards the rise of Iran in the region and how the two countries want different things in the region and they try to get them differently. The article addressed the issue of Iran's rise from a different perspective; she argues that "Turkey wanted to counter balance Iranian power in the region through soft balancing. Specifically, Ankara would undermine Tehran's influence in Palestinian politics and its dominance in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria by getting closer to those states itself", while "Saudi Arabia, in the eve of the US invasion of Iraq, began building alliances with states that shared its outlook, a "Sunni axis," so to speak, to combat the "Shia arc", like allying with Egypt and Jordan and it wanted to include Turkey. She also mentioned about the different tracks followed by Saudi Arabia and Turkey to the developments of the Arab uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria, by highlighting the strife between their positions and the differences in their priorities even in Syria. Altunisik ended the article by saying that the opportunities for rapprochement between Turkey and Saudi Arabia arise from time to time, but still there are hard limitations to their relationship owing to their different approaches and priorities. The article paraphrased the impact of the Iranian rise in the Turkish-Saudi relations, however it could not predict that the different approaches of Turkey and Saudi Arabia in dealing with the Arab uprisings would leave an impact on the bilateral relations after the political change occurred in Egypt in July 2013, since the article was written in May 2013.

The discrepancy between the priorities and the perspectives of Turkey and Saudi Arabia was studied by Crystal A Ennis and Bessma Momani in their article entitled "Shaping the Middle East in the Midst of the Arab Uprisings: Turkish and Saudi foreign policy strategies"⁴. They sort out the evolution of the foreign policies of Turkey and Saudi Arabia, their activities, their motivations and challenges to their involvement in the region. They argue that the Arab spring was a moment when the Arab world caught up with the Turkish experience and that the Turkish model represents an alternative to the dominant political tendencies in the region, namely

⁴ Ennis, Crystal A and Moman, Bessma. "Shaping the Middle East in the Midst of the Arab Uprisings: Turkish and Saudi foreign policy strategiest", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 34, Issue 6, 2013, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/01436597.2013.802503#.Ve6y7hGeDGc> .

Rentierism (like: Saudi Arabia), Radical Islamism (like: Iran) and political authoritarianism (like: Egypt). In the article, a comparison between the Turkish approach and the Saudi approach to the course of events after 2011 shows that Turkey has adopted a principled stance towards the developments in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria unlike Saudi Arabia which followed the security view point inasmuch as securing the regime stability of the GCC countries and in light of its regional rivalry with Iran. However the article did not address the impact of this distinctness on the bilateral relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Although the article discusses clearly the divergence between the policies which reaches the level of conflictual; the article did not frame out areas of regional between the two countries.

Also there are several op-eds written by Turkish and Arab journalists talking about possible political alliance between Turkey and Saudi Arabia during the Arab uprisings in face of Iran like Sinan Ülgen's article entitled "Turkey could form an alliance with Gulf states"⁵ in Al-Sharq Al-Awsat. Ülgen mentioned that having the same goal in Syria during the uprising and adopting policies that seek regional stability against the Iranian policies in the region are main motives behind the rise of an alliance between Turkey and the Gulf. In addition to that, he says that the other regional countries need the economic capabilities of both Turkey and GCC countries and that the restrained US policy under US president Barack Obama indulges the rise of such alliance. Another Op-ed written by a Turkish scholar, Bülent Aras, in Al-Arabiya website entitled: "Time to go it alone: Saudi Arabia, UAE and Turkey"⁶. He argued that the USA is going to pack up and leave from the Middle East politics and that the regional countries would go to form alliances in order to secure their interests upon the US withdrawal from the regional politics. He

⁵ Ülgen, Sinan. "Turkey could form an alliance with Gulf states", Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, January 2014, <http://english.aawsat.com/2014/01/article55327539/debate-turkey-could-form-an-alliance-with-the-gulf-states> .

⁶ Aras, Bulent. "Time to go it alone: Saudi Arabia, UAE and Turkey", Al-Arabiya, January 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2014/01/15/Time-to-go-it-alone-in-the-Middle-East-Saudi-Arabia-UAE-and-Turkey.html> .

proposed forming an alliance between Turkey, Saudi Arabia and UAE since their individual policies would not lead to success and the three countries have the potential to offer something positive to the region's development trajectory and secure their own interests. However Aras and Ülgen do not touch the idea that UAE and Saudi Arabia are approaching Iran in a way different than Turkey, and these different approaches restricts any alliance could rise between Turkey, Saudi Arabia and UAE. Also Aras and Ülgen do not provide an argument for Turkey and UAE to deal with the issue of Muslim Brothers; as Turkey insists on including them, while the UAE looks at them as a direct threat on the UAE's national security. Finally, Aras has referred to the issue of the US withdrawal from the region without giving a description to the way the USA is going to deal with its interests after its withdrawal and in case of the USA not withdrawing, he did not mention the nature of relations that can take place between Turkey, Saudi Arabia and UAE.

The literature on the Turkish-Saudi relations in the period of study discusses the impact of the political change took place in Turkey in 2002 and in Saudi Arabia in 2005 on the evolution of Turkish-Saudi relations. In his paper entitled "Turkish-Saudi Relations: How Ideological Differences Surpassed Mutual Interests"⁷ Al-Shammari argues that the steps taken by the AKP government in changing Turkey's orientation to other destinations beside the west was similar to the newly adopted Saudi foreign policy that sought also diversifying orientations towards the new rising regions in the world. The newly adopted foreign policies of Turkey and Saudi Arabia have contributed to further development of bilateral relations which was not on a high profile owing to the differences in the political systems and ideologies. Al-Shammari says that the two countries have put their mutual interests above their ideological and political differences, and their bilateral relations developed in a noticeable way. Conversely, both countries started to put ideological differences back on the track during the Arab uprisings as he refers to the different perspective of each country toward the uprisings Turkey adapted a civilizational perspective

⁷ Al-Shammari, Abdullah. "Turkish-Saudi Relations: How Ideological Differences Surpassed Mutual Interests", unpublished paper.

that criticizes the basic foundations of the Arab ruling regimes, describes them as inherits from the colonial period who gained their legacy from symbolic, nationalistic and ideological actions not from the wide participation of the people and that these regimes were trying to apply the western political virtues without paying attention to the cultural value systems of the Muslim societies. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia adopted a security perspective while watching the fall down of its allying regimes that it was relying on them in its regional plans after the US withdrawal from Iraq and in facing the Iranian expansionist policies in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen. He ends his paper by saying that the Arab Spring was a real examination for the Turkish-Saudi relations which ended the momentum of the Turkish-Saudi relations started from mid-2005 until the end of 2010.

There are also reports published by Turkish Think Tanks on the amplification of the Turkish-Saudi relations under the rule of AKP government in Turkey. Muhittin Ataman wrote two descriptive analytical reports on the evolution of the Turkish-Saudi political, economic and cultural relations in 2009⁸ and 2012⁹. He reasoned the development of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia firstly to the political change took place in Turkey through the rise of AKP into power and the different approach it followed in dealing with the Arab world, and secondly to the regional developments in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine where the stances of Turkey and Saudi Arabia were close to each other's.

1.2 Historical Background of the Turkish-Saudi Relations:

The differences between Saudi Arabia and Turkey in the political systems and state-society relations have shaped the perceptions of the governments in each country towards each other's. Turkey is a secular state which formulates its public policies

⁸ Ataman, Muhittin. "Türkiye-Suudi Arabistan İlişkileri: Temkinli İlişkilerden Çok-Tarafli Birlikteliğe", ORSAM, September 2009, http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/Uploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/2009912_muhittin.sonints.pdf

⁹ Ataman, Muhittin. "Turkish-Saudi Arabian Relations During the Arab Uprisings: Towards a Strategic Partnership?", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2012, http://file.insightturkey.com/files/pdf/insight_turkey_vol_14_no_4_2012_ataman.pdf .

on non-religious principles, while a country like Saudi Arabia acquires its legitimacy (domestically, regionally and internationally) from being a Muslim country that hosts the Holy mosque and applies Sharia law in the political, economic and social life¹⁰. Owing to differences in foreign policy, ideology, political systems, no effort exerted for developing the bilateral relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia until mid-1960s¹¹.

In the 1970s, the relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia started to be activated as a result of events that took place in that period. Turkey endorsed a different orientation in its foreign policy amid at getting wide international support to its standpoint on the Cyprus issue. It looked for approaching Muslim countries, became a member in the OIC in 1969 and established official relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1975¹². In response to these developments, Saudi Arabia reacted positively and did not oppose Turkey's military intervention in Cyprus 1974. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia was one of the main destinations sought by the Turkish migrants in 1970s and 1980s to take part in the infrastructure projects in different cities of the kingdom which attracted Turkish workers (estimated number of Turkish migrants to Saudi Arabia reached 130,000 migrants) and Turkish construction companies¹³.

The changes in Turkish foreign policy proceeded by the domestic changes and rise of Islamic-based political figures in mid 1980s had encouraged Saudi Arabia to

¹⁰ Ataman, Muhittin. "Türkiye-Suudi Arabistan İlişkileri: Temkinli İlişkilerden Çok-Tarafli Birlikteliğe", *Ortadoğu Analiz*, Vol. 1, No 9, September 2009, P.75, http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/2009912_muhittin.sonints.pdf .

¹¹ "Turkish-Saudi Relationship: From Partnership to Tension", Rawabet Center for Research and Strategic Studies, January 2015, <http://rawabetcenter.com/archives/2707>.

¹² Arakan, Mahmut Bali. "Turkey and the OIC: 1984-1992", *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, Vol. XXIII, Ankara University, 1993, P.102 .

¹³ Unan, Elif. "Microeconomic Determinants Of Turkish Workers Remittances: Survey Results For France-Turkey", Paper presented to a conference on Inequalities and development in the Mediterranean countries, Galatasaray University, Istanbul, May 2009, <http://gdri.dreem.free.fr/wp-content/g3-1unan-dreem-1.pdf> .

invest in the Turkish market. In 1980s, upon the endorsement of the economic liberalization agenda by Turgut Özal's government in Turkey, Saudi Islamic banks started to flourish in the Turkish economy, many Islamic NGOs were established in Turkey and Saudi Arabia developed economic ties with the pro-Islamic Turkish businessmen and politicians (widely known in Turkey by the followers of Milli Görüş)¹⁴. In 1985, three big Saudi Islamic financial institutions like: Albaraka Turk Özel Finans, Faisal Finans (owned by Prince Mohamed Al-Faisal Al-Saud) and Family Finans were opened in Turkey¹⁵. Saudi Arabia developed financial partnerships with the main figures of the Anavatan Party (ANAP) or those political figures known for their pro-Islamic orientation through these financial institutions. Korkut Özal (the brother of president Turgut Özal) and Eymen Topbas were in the founding committee of the Albaraka Turk Özel Finans, while Prince Mohamed Al-Faisal chose Salih Özcan and Tevfik Paksu to establish Faisal Finans. Moreover the Turkish media claimed that Faisal Finance and Albaraka Turk were active in organizing and sponsoring a great many social, cultural, and political activities and being in partnerships with other religious foundations like Islamic Insurance Institution (Islami Tekaful Kurumu and World Muslim League in Turkey, which is known for its donations, developing relations with Muslim Brotherhood figures like Muhammed Qutb “a brother of the Muslim Brotherhood's intellectual Sayyid Qutb”, organizing conferences and youth camps, constructing mosques and building Islamic centers inside and outside Turkey, funding pro-Islamic Magazine like: *Hilal* and *Darul Malul Islami* in addition to funding the paper expenses of more than 50 publishing companies, newspapers, and magazines known for their Islamic activities¹⁶.

¹⁴ Koni, Hakan, “Saudi Influence on Islamic Institutions in Turkey Beginning in the 1970s”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 66, No 1, Winter 2012, <http://yoksis.bilkent.edu.tr/pdf/files/5945.pdf>.

¹⁵ Uras, Gungor. “Katılım Bankaları (Faizsiz Bankacılık) Finans Sisteminin Bir Parçası Oldu”, *Milliyet*, May 2011, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/katilim-bankalari-faizsiz-bankacilik-finans-sisteminin-bir-parcasi-oldu/ekonomi/ekonomiyazardetay/19.05.2011/1392052/default.htm> .

¹⁶ Koni, Hakan, *Op.Cit.*

During the Gulf War in 1991, both countries were on the same side of the international coalition led by the USA against Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Saudi Arabia helped Turkey financially through loans in order to overcome the bad repercussions of the war on the Turkish economy¹⁷. However the relations witnessed a cooling at the end of 1990s as a result of the deterioration of Turkish-Syrian relations over Syria's support to the Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK) and the dissidence on the usage of the Euphrates river. Saudi Arabia lobbied against Turkey's request for a loan from the World Bank to finance building dams on the Euphrates River which goes from Turkey to Syria¹⁸. However these activities later was halted down, Saudi investors sold their shares in these banks during 1990s when new secular governments came to power in Turkey and changed their foreign policy orientation¹⁹..

1.3 The Regional Level of Analysis:

The phenomenon of the cold war between the United States and Soviet Union had its own effect on the international relations between states and the discipline of International Relations as well. During the cold war, the super powers were highly involved in many regional, inter-state conflicts and proxy wars, as they see these conflicts a part of their global conflict. Conflicts around the globe were seen as a part of the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union and their ideological differences. The cold war's influence on the discipline of International Relations was high, as the International level of analysis and its systematic approach had an overlay on the regional, national and individual levels of analysis.

¹⁷ "Turkish-Saudi Relations: The Reality and The Future", Fiker Center for Studies, April 2015, <http://www.fikercenter.com/ar/p/news/view/5537f36adf1e7> .

¹⁸ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "Bitter Frenemies The Not-Quite-Alliance Between Saudi Arabia And Turkey", *Foreign Policy*, May 2012, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2012-05-15/bitter-frenemies> .

¹⁹ "Faysal Finans'ı "Prens" sattı", <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/1998/10/12/ekonomi/eko01.html>.

In the 1990s and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the cold war's effect on internationalizing local and regional conflict has come to an end. Scholars started not to look at the regional and local conflicts from the perspective of the bi-polar global conflict between the western bloc (led by the US) and the eastern bloc (led by the ex-Soviet Union). While some worked on developing the theories used by the international level of analysis to fit in the new unipolar international system. Other scholars started to revise the old workings on regionalism written in the end of 1950s and 1960s in order to develop new approaches that can explain regional conflict and cooperation, security on the regional level and interactions between states in certain region which continued to live conflicts even after the end of the cold war²⁰.

The prioritization of the regional level of analysis existed during the cold war; however it was not prominent owing to the overlay of the international level of analysis. Leonard Binder has developed the concept of 'Subordinate International System' to question the overemphasis of the bipolarity in international relations on studying the Middle East. His objective was to bridge the gap between area studies that explore foreign policies on socio-historical contextual bases and International Relations in which its generalizations are based on ideal models, on the Middle Eastern Studies. Binder argues that *"It is erroneous to look upon the Middle East as being in the "middle" between the United States and the Soviet Union."* He adds that, *"If bipolarity is a useful term in describing certain contemporary aspects of international politics, it is inadequate to describe either relations within the Middle East or between the major powers of the bi- polar system and this subordinate system. And that the Middle Eastern states will more likely feel compelled to act in*

²⁰ Thompson, William. "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Proposition Inventory", *International Studies Quarterly*, 17, 1, March 1973. See also, Binder, Leonard. "The Middle East as a Subordinate International System", *World Politics*, Vol. 10, April 1958. And Zartman, William. "Political Science", in Leonard Binder (ed.), *The Study of the Middle East, Research and Scholarship in the Humanities and the Social Sciences*, John Wiley, New York & London, 1977. And Cantori, Louis J. and Spiegel, Steven L. *The International Politics of Regions*, Prentice-Hall, California, 1970. And Haas, Ernst B. *The Uniting of Europe. Political, Social, and Economic Forces 1950-1957*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958. And Lindberg, Leon N. and Scheingold, Stuart A. (eds), *Regional Integration: Theory and Research*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.

terms of their own complex system so as to preserve their individual positions within the Middle Eastern structure"²¹. He has utilized this concept in understanding interactions between Arab countries, Arab countries and non-Arab countries (Turkey, Iran and Israel). Such concept, Subordinate International System, was utilized later by other scholars to study different regions like West Europe, South East Asia, West Africa and Latin America beside the Middle East²².

Different Schools of International Relations, mainly those who belong to the post-positivist schools or named as "The Fourth Wave of International Relations Theories", has contributed, through their ideas, concepts, analogies, in understanding how events take place on the regional level. Barry Buzan utilized the concepts of securitization and de-securitization of the Copenhagen school in his "Regional Security Complex Theory"²³. Mohammad Ayoob used the perspective of the English school and its concepts of Regional Society and Regional Community. Others tried to develop approaches in which their objective was not to discuss philosophical debates between schools of International Relations, but to better understand the emergence and variation of regional security orders like David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan²⁴. In their book, "Regional Orders", David Lake and Patrick Morgan's objective is to understand different regional security orders in different regions, the main factors playing role in these orders and to identify when and how great powers, like the United States, can best contribute to regional

²¹ Binder, Leonard. "The Middle East as a Subordinate International System", *World Politics*, Vol. 10, Issue 03, April 1958, P. 427. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2009495> .

²² Cantori, Louis J. and Spiegel, Steven L., "International Regions: A Comparative Approach to Five Subordinate Systems", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4, Special Issue on International Subsystems, December 1969, pp. 361-380, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/3013600?sid=21104899128981&uid=4&uid=2&uid=3739192>

²³ Buzan, Barry, and Waeber, Ole. *Regions and Power: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

²⁴ Lake, David A. (ed.) and Morgan, Patrick M. (ed.), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, Penn State University Press, 1977.

stability. They put some primary arguments that prove that “the regional level stands more clearly on its own as the locus of conflict and cooperation for states and as a level of analysis for scholars seeking to explore contemporary security studies”.

Firstly Lake and Morgan argue that “*regions are now more salient features of international politics*”. The regions after the cold war have become the rising venue of conflicts and cooperation in comparing with the past. Regional conflicts, fuelled by individual, national and regional factors, are to stay at the regional level since the great powers’ ability to intervene in these conflicts has diminished and their interest in supporting local and regional conflicts has declined. Unresolved conflicts and enemy relationships that existed during the cold war and continued to exist after the cold war (Such as: Arab Israeli conflict, Iranian-Arab confrontation and *internal Arab cold war*) has proved that the management of regional conflicts will be driven largely by regional considerations and must be undertaken by the states belonging to the region²⁵.

Secondly Lake and Morgan also argue that, “*the end of the cold war has opened possibilities for more cooperative regional orders*” by saying that ultimately the responsibilities now fall on local states to manage their own conflicts. They give examples on Arab countries and Israel’s decision to enter in a peace process after having devastating wars since 1948, the African Union’s steps toward collective security and the eastern and western European countries’ integration in the European Union. Although managing regional conflicts and achieving cooperative frameworks has witnessed success and failure models in the Middle East, the reasons behind it are regional. The Middle East has witnessed attempts to form different sub-regional cooperative orders for different regional reasons, some of them succeeded until now (like Gulf Cooperation Council), some of them are not active (like Arab Maghreb Union), some appeared and disappeared (like the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria, the United Arab States between Egypt,

²⁵ Ayoob, Mohammed. “From Regional System to Regional Society: Exploring Key Variables in the Construction of Regional Order”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 53:3, 1999. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00049919993845#.Ve7EqxGeDGc> .

Syria and Yemen and Arab Federation of Iraq and Jordan) and other cooperative arrangements between Arab countries and non-Arab countries who were perceived by Arab countries as anti-Arab politics during the cold war like Turkey.

Finally, Lake and Morgan argue that *the academic outcome of studying the regional politics is expected to be high*. Studying regions will drive scholars to develop theories that can incorporate regional relations. Theories, analogies and concepts based on the analysis of great power politics cannot be applied on the regional level without revision. Also, politics of regions are not necessarily unique, as argued by Thompson, “The study of regional subsystems presents an opportunity for the integration of the findings of area specialists and international relations scholars. Both groups presumably have something to offer each other. A mutual exchange could only benefit our current understanding of world political behaviour”²⁶. Therefore a new challenge and opportunity is open now for analysts and scholars to develop comparative study between regions, to develop new general theories for regional relations or to adjust the current ones used for global powers (alliances, balance of power, deterrence, etc.) to fit in different regional contexts and to work on developing conceptual frameworks that can address political developments on the regional level.

1.4 Regional Security Complex Theory, Securitization and De-Securitization:

One of the results of introducing the sub-field of security studies to the regional level of analysis is the theory of Regional Security Complex (RSC) presented by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver. The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) has appeared as a reaction of the Copenhagen School of International Relations to the overstress on the global level and the national level of security analysis during the cold war. Its objective is to ensure that the local and regional factors are given their proper weight in security analysis.

²⁶ Thompson, William R. “The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, 1973, P.91.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3013464> .

With its constructivist roots that are mostly driven from the ideas of Alexander Wendt²⁷, RSCT makes use of the Role Perception, Amity and Enmity among units of the regional system, Region's Construction, History, Culture, Actors and the Anarchy of the international system, in understanding Security interactions on the regional level. It does not question the main concepts presented by other traditional theories of International Relations (i.e: Realism and Liberalism). It applies some of the concepts of these theories on the regional level like: Balance of power, Polarity of the regional system, Alliances, Deterrence, Rivalry, etc. RSC is not a theory by the positivist understanding of theories presented by scholars of International Relations during the cold war, as Buzan argues; it is an approach that aims to analyse and explain the security problems within any region²⁸.

A regional security complex is 'a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another'²⁹. In this definition, Buzan highlighted the importance of having an *interaction* between the units of the system as a crucial basic in forming a security complex in a region. The presence of security relations and the existence of interdependence between regional states are necessary for the production of a regional security complex. In another position that emphasizes the role of *interaction*, Lake and Morgan defines Regional Security Complex as a set of states continually affected by one or more security externalities that emanate from a distinct geographic area. In such complex, the members are so interrelated in terms of their security, that actions by any member have a major impact on the others³⁰.

²⁷ Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2., Spring 1992, pp. 391-425, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents .

²⁸ Buzan, Barry. "New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-First Century", *International Affairs*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Vol. 67, No. 3, July 1991, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2621945> .

²⁹ Buzan, Barry. *People, States, And Fear: The National Security Problem In International Relations*, University of North Carolina Press, 1983, P. 106.

³⁰ Lake and Morgan, *Op.Cit.*, P.12.

RSCT identifies *recognition* as a criterion which is essential for the production of a regional security complex. This element is highly emphasized by all scholars working on the regional level of analysis, whether their focus was on security studies or political economy or else. There are two kinds of recognition in which their presence is crucial for the production of a regional security complex or a region; the *internal recognition* or *self-consciousness* and the *external recognition*. In the internal recognition, the member units in a regional system have the consciousness that they constitute a region and that they perceive themselves and others as being in a particular security complex³¹. Constructivist theories treat regions as socially created entities that take on meaning and importance because states perceive themselves as they co-habit a common area and share a common future³². Regions are what states make of it³³. Internal and external recognition appear to be the product of common sense. The political actors of a regional subsystem are bound to be aware of the sub-systemic distinctiveness of their region and its existence³⁴. Also the external actors recognize the subsystem as a distinctive theatre of operation.

Through that, countries that perceive themselves to be in a region under some conditions might cooperate more easily and under other conditions might conflict in areas of disagreements. The regional self-identification plays a role in raising political stakes between member units of the regional system in areas of disagreement³⁵.

³¹ Buzan, Barry. "A Framework for Regional Security Analysis", in Buzan, Barry and Gowher Rizvi (ed.), *South Asian Insecurity and the Great Power*, London, Macmillan, 1986.

³² Lake and Morgan, *Op.Cit.* P.12.

³³ Wendt, Alexander. *Op.Cit.*

³⁴ Thompson, William R. *The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory*, *Op.Cit.* P.97.

³⁵ Lake and Morgan, *Op.Cit.* P.48.

Later Buzan and Wæver worked on developing this definition to shed the state-centric focus from it and to deal with the new rising non-traditional security threats. They defined RSC as ‘a set of units whose major processes of securitization, de-securitisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another’³⁶. This new development on the definition of RSCT shed the light on the securitization vs de-securitization process and its importance in the production of a regional security complex.

Securitization and *De-securitisation* found its place in the definition of RSC in Buzan Book 1998 where he was trying to figure out the new non-traditional security threats rose after the end of the cold war. Securitization is the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat, which demands urgent and immediate attention, as well as the use of extraordinary measures to counter this threat³⁷. The main argument of the ST is that security is a (illocutionary) speech act and security being done by uttering something as a threat. The securitising actor claims that he has the right to take extraordinary measures to ensure the survival of the referent object. Therefore, the issue would be transferred from the normal politics sphere into the ‘emergency’ politics sphere. However, not everything can become a security issue, there are three steps for a having a successful securitization. The first is identification of existential threats; second, presence of an emergency action; and third, effects on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules³⁸. To present an issue as an existential threat is to say that: ‘If we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant (because we will not be here or will not be free to deal with it in our own way)’³⁹. The first step towards a successful securitization is called a

³⁶ Buzan, Barry, Wæver, Ole, Wilde, Jaap de. *Security: A New Framework of Analysis*, Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1998, P. 201.

³⁷ Ibid, pp.24-25. And see also: Wæver, Ole. “Securitization and Desecuritization”, in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security*, Columbia University Press, 1995. p. 51.

³⁸ Buzan, Barry, Wæver, Ole, Wilde, Jaap de., *Op.Cit*, P.6.

³⁹ Ibid, P.24.

securitizing move. Securitization is largely based on power and capability and therewith the means to socially and politically construct a threat⁴⁰.

The *geographical factor* comes to be a necessary element in the production of a regional security complex. The RSC should have a geographical location where the security relationships exist and that the member units participate profoundly in those relationships. In that geographical area, the member units see their security as much closely bound to actions and security practice of other units in this theatre⁴¹. The physical adjacency tends to produce more security interaction among neighbours than among countries in different complexes. The impact of geographical proximity on security interaction is strongest and most obvious in the military, political, societal, and environmental sectors⁴².

The presence of geography is a crucial factor in the production of a security complex but there is an internal debate on either to include global powers in the complexes that is geographically far from them or not. This issue looks important in discussing the involvement of the United States in the Middle East security complex. Lake and Morgan argued that great powers can be included in some regional security complexes, despite being not geographically included in the complex, when their interests are threaten directly. According to them, the United States is present in the many security theatres (Europe, Middle East, East Asia) because its interests are bound up with the security practice of either the member units of the regional system or other actors from outside the system. On the other hand, Buzan does not approve the including the United States in the European security complex or the Middle East security complex for many reasons⁴³. Firstly, it

⁴⁰ Taureck, Rita. "Securitization theory and securitization studies", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 2006, P.2, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800072> .

⁴¹ Ibid, P.31.

⁴² Buzan, Barry, and Waever, Ole. *Regions and Power: The Structure of International Security*, *Op.Cit.*

⁴³ Ibid.

destroys the concept of geographical proximity that is crucial and essential in constructing a region or a regional security complex. Secondly, introducing the super powers' policies to the regional security complex would destroy the distinction between the international level of analysis and the regional level of analysis. Thirdly, Buzan puts many limitations on including the global factors and global power roles in the regional analysis. As he affirms in different positions in his book that the regional and local factors have their considerable weight in security analysis versus the global ones. Buzan's objective from the RSCT is to prove the independency of the regional level from the global level and that the factors of on the regional level are quite enough to understand security relations between member units. Unlike the Morgan and Lake, in which their objective is to provide an approach of analysing security in the post-cold war times, not to emphasize the clear-cut independency of the regional level from the global level. On this point, the thesis emphasizes on the necessity of studying the regional interactions and the foreign policies of the regional states through a partial independent perspective from the superpower's grand strategy in any regional entity; as the regional countries develop their policies as a kind of interaction to other regional countries' actions not to the super powers' actions in the first degree, however the thesis cannot negate the influence of the super power policies on the Middle East and the US became a regional actor after 2003 Iraq invasion.

The internal debate on the issue of geography, within the RSCT, has found another ground in how to divide the map of the world into different regional security complexes. Buzan stresses on the necessity of dividing the world map into certain complexes based upon factors of culture, history, traditional conflicts, etc. Thus he came out with the world map divided into the Middle East Security complex, Middle Asia security complex, East Asia security complex, South Asia security complex and the Sub-Saharan Africa security complex. On the other side, Lake and Morgan are more tolerant to the geographical proximity issue, and they left a room for interaction between these different complexes, as they name it '*grey areas*'. They argue that Identified complexes will overlap or vary somewhat, with issues, events, and related perceptions of what actors and analysts deem to be relevant externalities. And that perceptions and self-consciousness can make for a security

complex. Therefore, Identification will always be problematic and these divisions are not guaranteed to match up.

This debate is related to the topic of the thesis in the issue of whether or not to locate Turkey in the Middle East Security Complex. Buzan argues that Turkey is not a member either in the Middle East security complex, or in the east European security complex, or the Middle Asian security complex. He gives it the concept of an '*Insulator State*' like Afghanistan and Burma, as it is not totally belonging culturally or politically dependent on any of these complexes. Specifically in the Middle East, Buzan sees Turkey's engagement in the Middle East as a new development but he stresses more on the westernistic preference of Turkey's politics and its traditional enmity with Iran, Syria and Iraq. In other words, its security interests are not deeply rooted in the region except the water issue (with Syria and Iraq) and the Kurdish issue. Therefore he argues that, Turkey seems likely to remain an insulator between the Middle East and European RSCs, but probably a considerably more engaged one than during the Cold War, with ambitions of playing a role as 'regional' great power within the loose European super complex and the Middle East. Buzan admits that Turkey is challenging the concept of *insulator state*, but he says that it is normal for insulator states to challenge their position through a more active foreign policy than the ones traditionally adopted by insulators. He puts one condition in which Turkey can be treated as a pole in any of the RSCs of the Balkans, Middle East or Middle Asia. If Turkey became powerful enough to break the borders of these complexes and to bring them together into a coherent strategic arena, trigger such a coalescence of its neighbours who are located in different complexes, then we can deal with Turkey as a pole in one of these complexes not just an insulator.

On the other hand, a strong wave of literature has appeared in late 2000s discussing more the role of Turkey in the Middle East Security Complex, as a rising pole. This literature argues that Turkey's political and economic interests are getting Turkey more interdependent on the other countries in the Middle East security complex. Beyond the water issue and the Kurdish issue, Turkey's less successful attempts to gain the European Union's membership has made Turkey more open politically and

economically to the Middle East. Turkey found in the markets of the Middle Eastern countries a good saviour from the bad effects of the global world crisis in 2007-2008. This literature has witnessed a new rise during the 2011 Arab uprisings, by arguing that Turkey's model of merging Islam and Democracy and its economic improvement can be a guiding model for the Arab countries in the post revolution times. And this openness gives her wide political and economic interests in the region. Such waves of literature are critical on defining Turkey as an insulator, and they sought revisiting the concept of insulating state on Turkey⁴⁴. Other literature argue that Turkey's engagement in the Middle East get worse by getting involved in sectarian conflicts during Arab uprisings time and over engagement in the domestic politics of key Arab states. But it still can play a role in the uncertain future of the region if it carried on its political and economic improvements⁴⁵.

The thesis considers with Turkey as an active actor in the Middle East Security Complex owing to the big threats that arise in the region to its national, economic and strategic interests, according to the Turkish decision makers. Besides that, the securitization of the new regional environment after the US invasion of Iraq and the Arab uprisings forced Turkey to adopt an active regional diplomatic, political and economic role under the rule of AKP governments in Turkey.

The thesis takes advantage of the Regional Security Complex in apprehending how Turkey and Saudi Arabia recognize each other as important actors in the region and how they interacted after the US invasion of Iraq 2003 and during the Arab uprisings in 2011. The thesis utilizes also the concepts of Securitization and De-Securitization in understanding how Turkey and Saudi Arabia securitized regional issues differently in a way that led to a difference in their regional behaviours

⁴⁴ Barrinha, Andre. "The Ambitious Insulator: Revisiting Turkey's Position in Regional Security Complex Theory", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 19, Issue 2, 2014, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13629395.2013.799353#.VKFPSV4AAA> .

⁴⁵ Onis, Ziya. "Turkey and the Arab Revolutions: Boundaries of Regional Power Influence in a Turbulent Middle East", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 19, Issue 2, 2014, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13629395.2013.868392?src=recsys#.VKFPsF4AAA> .

towards the developments in Iraq after 2003, Lebanon after 2006, Egypt after 2011 and Syria after 2011.

CHAPTER 2

THE REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX AFTER THE US INVASION OF IRAQ IN 2003 AND TURKISH-SAUDI RELATIONS

2.1 Introduction:

This chapter intends to figure out the main features of the new regional security complex created in Iraq after the US invasion in 2003 mainly the rise of the Iranian influence in Iraq, the rise of Sunni/Shi'a/Kurdish identities over the Iraqi national identity, the loss of balance of power by the Arab order and the increased fragility of the Arab Regional System, as a traditional regional system in the Middle East. These features have carried a body of threats for both Turkey and Saudi Arabia where they shared common threats and pushed their regional stances closer. However, owing to their different perceptions, their different agendas towards the RSC in Iraq, they did not follow the same policy line all the time.

In the second section, the chapter explains the spill over of the features of the new security complex in Iraq and its outcomes to other Middle East countries like Lebanon and how these features acted on the national and strategic interests of Turkey and Saudi Arabia. In this case, the stances and the behaviour of both countries were different but not conflicting as Turkey maintained its neutral stand towards all domestic and regional actors in Lebanon.

The third section presents how the developments in the region (mainly in Iraq and Lebanon) played a role in changing the perception of the Turkish regional role in Saudi Arabia and the perception of the Saudi regional role in Turkey in a way that contributed positively to the Turkish-Saudi bilateral relations on the political, economic and military levels. Despite the dissemblance between the Turkish and

Saudi regional policy lines in the region, the high positive perceptions of each country's regional role increased the political will of Turkey and Saudi Arabia to develop their relations since 2003 until 2011.

2.2 The Regional Security Complex after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003:

2.2.1 The major transformations in the regional landscape after the US invasion of Iraq:

The traditional Middle East regional system since the Second World War had been dominated by competition and rivalries mainly between multiple Arab powers (Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia), while non-Arab regional powers were present but not influential as Arab regional powers in the regional complexes. After the US invasion of Iraq, the fundamental regional balance of power started to shift from the side of the Arab regional powers to the side of non-Arab regional powers in a new regional environment. Iraq was acting as a buffer zone against Iran, which started to follow an expansionist policy in the Arab world and the Gulf since 1979⁴⁶. Iraq served as a bulwark to Iran and with its military and economic power it balanced Iran's largely naval and ideological sources of power⁴⁷. Iraq's defeat being the strongest Arab state that borders Iran and ruled by Saddam Hussein fought nearly eight years with it (1980-1988), had left a psychological effect in the Arab world that they are subjected to the expansionist ambitions of Iran. In defiance with Turkey, owing to the rise of AKP government to power and its openness toward the Arab countries, different forms of cooperative interaction between Turkey and the Arab countries on different regional issues like the Iraqi issue, Lebanese issue and Palestinian issue was high and noticeable.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 had acted on the Arab Regional System and its performance by expressing the fragility of its main actors, the insufficiency of the

⁴⁶ Frederic Wehrey, Dalia Dassa, Jessica Watkins, Jeffrey Martini, Robert Guffey, *The Iraq Effect: the Middle East after the Iraq War*, Rand Corporation, 2010, P. 17.

⁴⁷ Flynt Leverett, "How much does Iraq matter to Iran", <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/showdown/themes/influence.html>.

Arab states and the League of Arab States in facing foreign interventionist policies of great powers (like US) and regional powers (like Iran and Turkey) in the Arab internal affairs and the inability to take common actions within or outside the Arab League to deter these interventions. That is to say the US invasion of Iraq marked the shift towards a new Middle East based on US dominance⁴⁸. The responses of the Arab states to this event, in their separate national foreign policies, refer to their acceptance of the de-facto situation created in the region, their cohabitation with the situation and later echoed in their interaction with non-Arab countries like Turkey (most of Arab countries) or Iran (mainly Syria). While the League of Arab States failed to hold an urgent summit to discuss the US invasion dissimilar to the preceding events like 1967 war and Palestinian Intifada in 1988 and 2001 in compatible with the charter of the league which obliges Arab member states to convene meanwhile the Arab National Security comes under threat⁴⁹.

The regional landscape was influenced by the spill over of the new features that appeared in the Iraqi political scene like the rise of the Iranian influence and its spread to Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. Iran started to extend its influence and its presence in these countries in a way that serves its interests and works for its regional foreign policy. Tehran appeared as an important actor in Iraq after 2003, in Lebanon during the Israeli attack on Lebanon in 2006 and *Hizballah*'s invasion of Beirut in 2008 and in Palestine during the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2009.

The rise of sub-state identities (Shi'a, Sunni and Kurdish) over the national identities and the appearance of non-state actors who are representing these identities in the political scene in different countries as influential political actors are considered from the new themes of the regional landscape created after the US invasion of Iraq. In Iraq, the Shi'a, Sunni and Kurdish groups were politically and

⁴⁸ Salem, Paul. "The Middle East: Evolution of A Broken Regional Order", Carnegie Papers No. 9, June 2008, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2008/07/30/middle-east-evolution-of-broken-regional-order>.

⁴⁹ Youssef, Ahmed. "Arab Regional System", Cairo University, 2012, Lecture. For further explanation on the weak response of Arab states see also: Salem, Paul, Ibid.

militarily empowered in a way that enhanced their competition over the Iraqi political process. In Lebanon, the noticeable ascent of *Hizballah* in the Lebanese political scene symbolizes the spill over of the Iraqi effect and the rise of non-state actor representing the Shi'a identity of Lebanon. *Hizballah* appeared as an empowered non-state actor over the Lebanese state by kidnapping two Israeli soldiers in 2006, entering in a war against Israel without coordination with the Lebanese government, expanding the welfare system in the South Lebanon (highly inhabited by Shi'a Lebanese) and invading Beirut in 2008.

2.2.2 The rise of the Iranian influence in Iraq:

The shift of the regional balance of power toward Iran was the main striking feature of this new security complex created in Iraq for the Arab countries. Iran was the country that benefited from the American war in Iraq most. The demise of a stable Iraqi state and the rise of Shi'a dominated governments with strong ties to Iran gave an impression that Iraq had quitted the Arab line and its decisions had become under the hegemony of Iran⁵⁰.

Iran found its vital interest in what happened to Iraq since the US invasion in 2003 and utilized its capacity to exercise an influence on the situation on Iraq. Tehran's priority lies in preventing Iraq from becoming a military or political or ideological threat as the case in the days of Saddam Hussein. Iran's strategy in Iraq also sought for having a manageable kind of chaos there, which would neither push Iraq for a successful alternative democratic and religious model which would appeal to the citizens of Iran, nor would push Iraq for a complete failure that would create a fragmented Iraq where the state of Kurdistan could exist and fuel independence feelings within the Kurdish community in Iran. Therefore it supported establishing an electoral democracy in Iraq since it will carry Iran's followers (Shi'a political parties) to power owing to their big size in the Iraqi society, brokering coalitions during elections and funding them and their militias. Besides these political tools of interference, Iran enhanced its intelligence presence in Southern Iraq, Baghdad and

⁵⁰ Interview with a Saudi Journalist Khaled Tashkindi.

the Kurdish cities through a widespread network of paid informers, Iranian Revolutionary Guard elements, funded religious propaganda and social welfare campaigns⁵¹.

Iran started to play an important role in the Iraqi politics by exercising more influence over different Iraqi Shi'a actors and increasing its support to them. Taking into consideration the weakness of the Iraqi state after dissolving the Army and Police apparatus, the Shi'a militias enjoyed a competitive advantage over other Iraqi counterparts. Iran supported the establishment of the *Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq* (SCIRI), later changed its name to *Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq* (ISCI) formed by Al-Hakim family, and al-Dawa party under the rule of Saddam regime and they became the major Iraqi Shi'a political actors after the fall of Saddam. They were established in exile with (Badr Brigade) militia that was trained and armed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard during the Iraq-Iran war in 1980-1988. During the exile time, The Iraqi Shi'a political actors declared the Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Khamenei as their source of emulation. They returned back to Iraq after the fall of Saddam regime, as well as the commanders of Badr brigade with their weapons and became active in the political process in Iraq after Saddam Hussein⁵².

Iran also extended its influence and support to other Shi'a groups and families who did not defect to Iran during the Iran-Iraq war like Al-Sadr family. The Iranian revolutionary guard has trained the militia of Al-Sadr family known as (Al-Mahdy army) and supplied it with weapons since 2007. The Sadrists enjoy a recognisable popularity within the Shi'a community in Iraq, since they are presenting themselves as Arab and not under the dominance of Iran. They also have strong social base in Najaf and Karbala. Iran also extended its support and help for other small groups

⁵¹ Iran in Iraq: how much influence, International Crisis Group, March 2005, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/media-releases/2005/mena/iran-in-iraq-how-much-influence.aspx>.

⁵² Eisenstadt, Michael, Knights, Michael, and Ali, Ahmed. "Iran's influence in Iraq", Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus No. 11, April 2011, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus111.pdf> .

(military/education) in the Shi'a community like Asaib Ahl El-Haq group that split from Al-Mahdy army under the leader of Qays Khazali who was loyal to Moktada Al-Sadr (the religious leader for the Sadrists)⁵³.

2.2.3 The rise of (Shi'a-Sunni-Kurdish) sub-state identities in Iraq:

The intercommunal boundaries and communal narratives within the Sunni and Shi'a communities started to get solidified and have been bolstered at the expense of the Iraqi national identity after launching the political process in Iraq. The Iraqi governments formed after Saddam Hussein until the end of the period of this study did not follow a strategy to construct an Iraqi national narrative or build an Iraqi identity that could bring together the fragmented Iraqi state. Many Shi'a regarded Saddam Hussein rule as a Sunni rule and that all state institutions were headed by Sunnis, while after 2003, all Sunnis considered Iraq's post 2003 political process the rule of Shi'a and that the state became dominated by Shi'a. Sectarian terms played a role in defining the – self - and the – other - in the Iraqi political scene⁵⁴. While the Kurdish parties took their opportunity to secure more self-governance in the territories highly inhabited with Kurds fulfilling their desires for more political autonomy.

⁵³ Jonathan Spyer and Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "Iran and the Shi'a militia advance in Iraq", December 2014, <http://www.meforum.org/4927/how-iraq-became-a-proxy-of-the-islamic-republic>.

⁵⁴ Al-Qarawee, Harih Hasan. "Iraq's Sectarian Crisis", Carnegie Middle East Center, April 2014, P.15, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/iraq_sectarian_crisis.pdf.

The political equation in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq can be explained from the perspective of the interaction and the competition between the Iraqi (Shi'a, Sunnis and Kurds) over power as influence, natural resources and territories, as Iraqi political elites used all their tools in maximizing their shares in these fields.

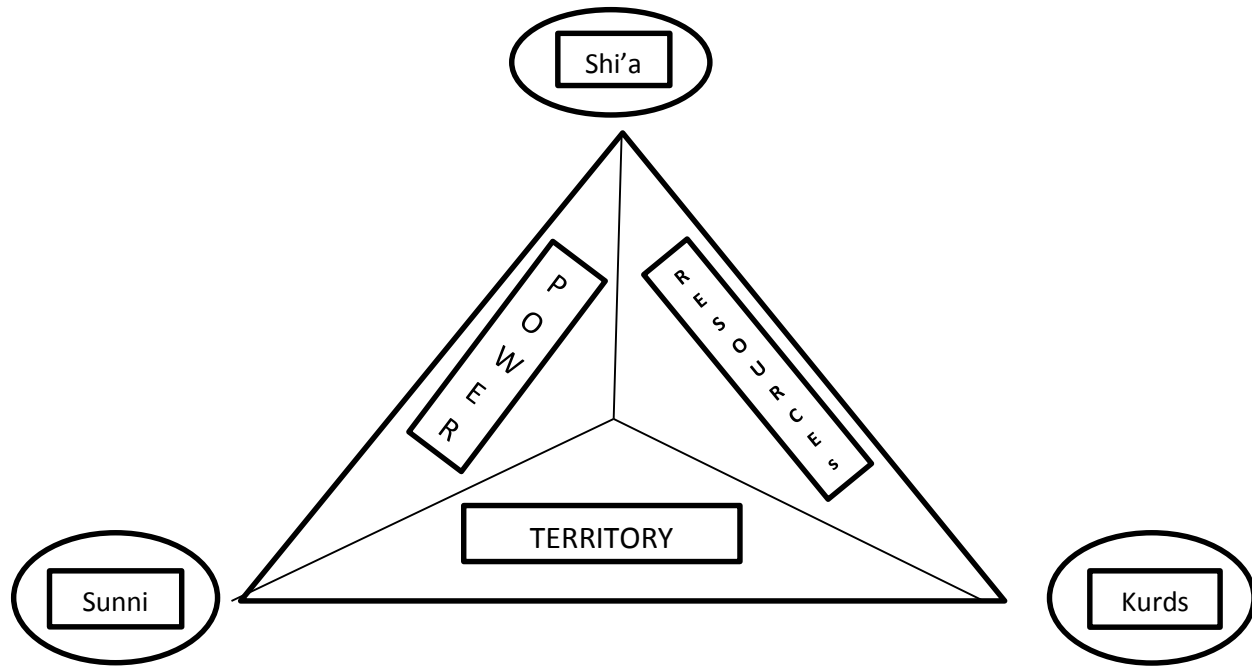


Figure 1 New Political Complex in Iraq after 2003

The Shi'a political groups (the (ISCI), Al-Sadrists, the Daw'a party) united under a coalition (the United Iraqi Alliance), brokered by Religious leader Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani and Iran, succeeded in securing 140 seats of the total 275 of the Constituent Assembly on January 2005 which would write the new Iraqi constitution. The United Iraqi Alliance and the Kurds went into a coalition where Ibrahim Al-Jafari of the Al-Dawa party became the Prime Minister and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan became the President in April 2005 and the process of writing the constitution started. The first constitutional parliamentary elections were held in December 2005 and Nouri Maliki of Al-Dawaa party was elected as a Prime

Minister in replace of Al-Jafari in April 2006 and won another term after 2010 elections until 2014⁵⁵.

The Shi'a political groups were pushing negotiations towards a federal system in Iraq during the sessions of the Constituent Assembly, in a way that would allow forming a regional government in South Iraq and some parts of Baghdad similar to the Kurdish Regional government. The Shi'a political actors, mainly ISCI, argue that Federalism will guarantee that the Shi'a community will never suffer again under the tyranny of a minority Sunni dictatorship. They started to find different justifications of this proposed project from the Islamic Political Theory and the writings of Imam Al-Khomeini or from the modern political systems in the United States and Switzerland⁵⁶. A federal region from Basra to Karbala' would encompass the richest vast oil fields of Iraq with the highest oil reserves in Iraq that would ensure a wealthy future for a Shi'a federal entity of Iraq but would leave the Sunni provinces in Al-Anbar, Ninawah, Salah Al-Din, and Diyala governorates without any substantial oil reserves⁵⁷.

Prime Minister Al-Maliki did not take steps towards reconciliation between the Sunni-Shi'a communities and the Shi'a domination over the Iraqi state was further consolidated under his rule⁵⁸. He filled the top vacant positions in the army and the administration with officials loyal to him personally from the Shi'a community without the integration of the Sunni officers and the Sunni fighters (The Awakenings) who fought Al-Qaeda in 2008. Al-Maliki augmented the power of his

⁵⁵ Gause III, F. Gregory. *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, Chapter 5, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁵⁶ Visser, Reidar. *Basra, the Failed Gulf State: Separatism and Nationalism in Southern Iraq*, NJ: Transaction Publisher, 2007, P.169.

⁵⁷ Ridolfo, Kathleen . "Iraq: Divisive Federalism Debate Continues", September 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1071323.html>.

⁵⁸ Behneer, lioneel. "Impediments to National Reconciliation in Iraq", January 2007, <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/impediments-national-reconciliation-iraq/p12347#p2>.

office and the network related to him to his person by using his exclusive authorities as a chief executive. He worked on subjugating the judiciary to lower any chance of a parliamentary check on him and his government and to target his Sunni rivalries through charging them with either being members of Al-Baath party (Saddam Hussein's party) or supporting and financing Sunni insurgency. In addition to that, the Prime Minister Maliki had infiltrated the Iraqi official media to follow his political stream since the Shi'a traits are highly noticed there and official Iraqi TV Channels are charged of failing to represent an Iraqi inclusive narrative⁵⁹.

The Kurds had achieved another progression for their benefit in the Power, Territory and Resources equation in the new Iraq. They held their elections in the governorates of Duhok, Erbil (Hawler) and Sulymaniya in 2005 and Masoud Barzani (Kurdistan Democratic Party) was elected as the head of the cabinet of the KRG in 2005 after forming an electoral coalition with his historic rivalry Jalal Talabani (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) and secured 104 seats out of the 111 seats. According to the new Iraqi constitution, the Kurdish Regional Government exercises authority over the Kurdish governorates which represents around 18% of the Iraqi territories and inhabited by more than 6 million and make up between 17%-20% of the total Iraqi population and Peshmerga forces (Kurdish official troops) are responsible for preserving the public order and security in these region⁶⁰.

However the Kurds, inspired by their ultimate desire for statehood, managed to seize more Iraqi cities during the political crisis in Baghdad while forming the government ahead of 2014 election and the presence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). They succeeded in taking the city of Kirkuk, which the Kurds historically claim it has a Kurdish identity and it is widely known for its vast oil reserves (13 billion barrels) and other cities in Diyala and Ninawa. Despite that there is no official recognition of the presence of Kurds in these areas; the Kurds

⁵⁹ Al-Qarawi, *Op. Cit*, P.17.

⁶⁰ "About the Kurdistan Regional Government", September 2008, http://cabinet.gov.krd/uploads/documents/About_Kurdistan_Regional_Government_2008_09_10_h13m52s30.pdf.

exercise a defacto authority over these cities until they reach an agreement with the central authority in Baghdad⁶¹.

The oil reserves in the northern Iraq under the authority of the Kurdish entities are estimated to be around 4 billion barrels, but after adding the reserves in Kirkuk, these reserves increased to be 13 billion barrels⁶². With a low cost of production (USD5 per barrel) and a lower price for selling the barrel (USD65 per barrel), Iraqi Kurdistan can secure annual revenues estimated at USD35 billion in additions to USD12 billion secured as an annual share from the overall national Iraqi oil revenues⁶³. These revenues can secure an independent budget for a state which is inhabited by only 6 million capita. Although there are problems concerning these oil reserves like the way of transporting the Kurdish oil production (either through Baghdad or through Turkey) or the quality of the crude produced oil compared to the Iraqi oil, the KRG diversified the international oil companies while signing contracts with them in 2005 to include American, Canadian, Turkish, Emirati, European, Chinese, Indian, Russian and Korean companies⁶⁴. In addition to that, the KRG markets its regional entity as a heaven for foreign direct investment and new city that needs huge infrastructure and construction investments. It succeeded in attracting USD5.5 billion as foreign direct investment with the UAE standing only for USD2.5 billion from these investments and hosting nearly 2,724 foreign

⁶¹ “Peshmerga launch major assault on ISIS in northern Diyala”, <http://rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/19112014>.

⁶² Walt, Vivienne. “Iraq’s big Kurdish Oil Deal”, <http://fortune.com/2014/12/03/iraqs-big-kurdish-oil-deal/>.

⁶³ Mills, Robbin M. “Northern Iraq’s Oil Chessboard: Energy, politics and Power”, Insight Turkey Vol. 15, No.1, 2013, P.52, http://file.insightturkey.com/Files/Pdf/20130107123353_insight_turkey_vol_15_no_1_comments_05_mills.pdf.

⁶⁴ Interview with an Iraqi Kurdish oil consultant Dr. Aziz Barzani

companies and 17,160 Kurdish companies, which provides the economy of the region with a USD7000 income per capita⁶⁵.

2.2.4 The Saudi Policy towards the region and Iraq:

Saudi Arabia perceives itself as an important actor not just in the regional system of the Middle East but in the international system shaped after the fall of the Soviet Union. The strategic location of Saudi Arabia between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, being close to the Suez Canal, Hormuz strait and Bab Al-Mandab strait puts Riyadh in an important position on the map of the international trade routes⁶⁶. In addition to that, the location of Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf, where the interests of great powers are impeded in and the stability of the global economy relies on its oil reserves, contributes to its importance and shows it as an international power that can play an active role in the Gulf region⁶⁷. An example on that was the crisis of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 which was a regional issue, and then became an international issue. Saudi Arabia was an active member in the international coalition for liberating Kuwait, appeared as an active member in the international community and continued to play a role in the post-1991 scene in the Gulf⁶⁸.

As a result of the new position of Saudi Arabia in the international system, the goals of Saudi foreign policy became more focused on enhancing the stability of the Gulf region and GCC regimes and ensuring its national security. Saudi Arabia became more sensitive towards any events or outcomes that would threaten the stability of

⁶⁵ “Foreign Investment in Kurdistan at USD 5.5 billion”, January 2014, <http://rudaw.net/english/business/22012014> .

⁶⁶ Al-Turki, Majed bin Aziz. *The Development of Saudi Foreign Policy*, Institute of Diplomatic Studies: Saudi Foreign Ministry, Riyadh, 2005, P.240.

⁶⁷ Obid.

⁶⁸ Al-Mankori, Hassan. “Saudi Arabia And The New International System: From A Geopolitical Perspective”, *Saudi Studies*, Vol. 6, Riyadh, 1992, P. 126.

the Gulf region and regional status quo like chaos, wars and regime changes⁶⁹. It recognizes itself in the main front lines against the Iranian expansion in the Gulf and the wider circles of the Middle East (mainly the Levant) which borders the Gulf region from the north and in the second front lines of the Arab-Israeli conflict after Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan⁷⁰.

The new regional landscape created after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 carried wide challenges to Saudi Arabia the Saudi foreign policy goals⁷¹. The rise of the influence of the non-Arab regional powers mainly (Iran and Turkey) in Iraq, the rise of sub-state identities (Shi'a, Sunni and Kurds) and non-state actors in different Middle Eastern countries were serious threats to the stability of the Levant circle of the Middle East and the Gulf region⁷². The political empowerment of the Shi'a community in Iraq and later in Lebanon (through *Hizballah*) would have a domino effect on the Shi'a communities in Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries that are politically and socio-economically marginalized under the ruling Sunni regimes⁷³. Moreover, the high presence of Iran in the political scene in Iraq, its meddling in the internal affairs of Lebanon through supporting *Hizballah* and in the internal affairs of Palestine threatened the influence that Saudi Arabia has in the Middle East as a regional power, exposed the stability of the Gulf region into the danger of Iran's expansionist policies and showed clearly the passiveness of the Arab Regional System (which Saudi Arabia is a member of)⁷⁴.

⁶⁹ Al-Mankori, Hassan. *Op.Cit.*

⁷⁰ Al-Turki, Majed bin Aziz. *Op.Cit.*, P.245.

⁷¹ Salem, Paul. *Op.Cit.*

⁷² Gause III, F. Gregory. "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question", *Strategic Insights*, Volume VI, Issue 2, March 2007.

⁷³ Jones, Toby. "The Iraq Effect in Saudi Arabia", *Middle East Report*, Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), Winter 2005, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30042471> .

Saudi Arabia started to play a more active role in the Levant circle of the Middle East in the sake of consolidating its place as an Arab leader, regional stabilizer and a bulwark against Iran⁷⁵. It enhanced its relations with other Arab countries that approach the Gulf stability and the rising Iran closely to the Saudi approach like Egypt and Jordan in a kind of Sunni-Arab regional alliance. It sought developing good relations with Turkey under the rule of the AKP in order to extend its regional influence and as a possible friend in the region⁷⁶. Saudi Arabia has extended its political and financial support to Sunni and Arab nationalist's parties in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine in order to empower them in face of the Shi'a groups supported by Iran⁷⁷. Finally Saudi Arabia has followed a strategy of enhancing its military capabilities and increased the military investments⁷⁸; it has the fourth largest military budget in the world by spending nearly USD 80.8 billion annually on its military budget⁷⁹, in order to secure its ruling regime and other GCC ruling regimes⁸⁰.

⁷⁴ Korany, Bahgat. *The Changing Middle East: A New Look at Regional Dynamics*, The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, 2010, P. 37.

⁷⁵ "Published Interview with Nawaf Obaid", May 2014, http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/24254/saudi_arabian_defense_doctrine.html .

⁷⁶ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "bitter frenemies the not-quite-alliance between Saudi Arabia and Turkey", *Op.Cit.*

⁷⁷ Beehner, Lionel. "Iran's Saudi Counterweight", Council on Foreign Relations, March 2007, <http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-saudi-counterweight/p12856>.

⁷⁸ Obaid, Nawaf. "A Saudi Arabian Defence Doctrine: Mapping the expanded force structure the Kingdom needs to lead the Arab world, stabilize the region, and meet its global responsibilities", Defence and Intelligence Projects, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, May 2014.

⁷⁹ "Trends in World Military Expenditure", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, April 2015, http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=496 .

⁸⁰ Obaid, Nawaf. "A Saudi Arabian Defence Doctrine: Mapping the expanded force structure the Kingdom needs to lead the Arab world, stabilize the region, and meet its global responsibilities", *Op.Cit.*

Saudi Arabia was hardly keen on the US military operations that started in Iraq and it cooperated militarily in a low profile way⁸¹; Saudi Arabia allowed the United States to use Prince Sultan airbase as a command and control center for U.S. aircraft. U.S. aerial re-fuelling tankers, reconnaissance planes and other noncombat aircraft were allowed to land and take off there, but denied requests to use its bases to attack Iraq, unlike its position on the Desert Storm operations led by the US in Iraq 1991-1992⁸². The Saudis were resisting the use of power against Iraq without an UNSC authorisation (which would be vetoed by Russia and abstained by France) and during the first days of the operations, Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saudi Al-Faisal recommended stopping the operations and reactivating talks and negotiations with the Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein.

The non-supporting stand of Saudi Arabia can be explained by the strong opposition of its domestic public opinion which was against an the occupation of an Arab-Muslim neighbouring (like Iraq) by a non-Muslim country (like the US) ⁸³. Despite that, by time the Saudi official stance shifted slowly towards accepting the US invasion and not working against it, not to complicate the US-Saudi relations which were strained after 11th September 2001 attacks on US and to ease the negative impression the American public opinion had on Saudi Arabia. At the same time, Saudi Arabia was keen on playing the role of the rising regional power in its periphery (the Gulf and the Middle East) and beyond (the wide Muslim world) and according to Saudi decision makers' opinion. Therefore, charting an independent and active course in Iraq would risk the American displeasure and America's non sponsoring of the rise of Riyadh. Out of the way Saudi Arabia followed to handle

⁸¹ Gause III, F. Gregory. "The International Politics of Gulf", in Fawcett, Louise Editor. *International Relations of the Middle East*, Oxford University Press, P.295.

⁸² "US to Move operations from Saudi Base", April 2003, <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/04/29/sprj.irq.saudi.us/>.

⁸³ Al-Rashid, Madawi. "Saudi Arabia: The Challenge of US Invasion of Iraq", in Hinnebusch, Raymond Ed. & Fawn, Rick. Ed. *The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences*, Lynee Rienner Publishers, P. 157.

the Iraqi issue, it succeeded in pulling out the US military bases from its territory in April 2003 without harming the US-Saudi Relations, which used to embarrass the Saudi royal family at home and at the public opinion of most Muslim countries⁸⁴.

The US invasion of Iraq and the rise of a Shi'a dominated government has left Saudi Arabia with little options in managing the crisis in a neighbouring country. While Iran was supporting the Shi'a groups in Iraq, Saudi Arabia faced a dilemma in supporting the Iraqi Sunnis who were adopting insurgency as a strategy against the US troops and the other Iraqi political actors in a way that would risk the Saudi alliance with the USA. Saudi's passive Iraq policy relied on the presence of the US troops and the idea that the American administration was not thinking about a quick withdrawal from the Iraqi territories and which would represent a check on the Iranian influence from growing extensively⁸⁵. However, after the Democrats' victory in the congressional elections in 2006, and the rise of the idea of a US withdrawal from Iraq in US think tanks' reports, Saudi Arabia thought that US would no longer be a bulwark against Iran in Iraq and it is the time to dump its passive policy and step in to confront the Iranian influence and defend the Sunnis in Iraq⁸⁶.

Saudi Arabia supported the Sunni and Arab Nationalist Iraqi by using the Wahhabi-Salafi religious rhetoric in supporting the Iraqi Sunnis against Shi'a and politically after their acceptance to enter in the Iraqi political life and dumping the insurgency strategies⁸⁷. Religious calls and fatwas from Wahhabi clerics who are connected to

⁸⁴ Al-Turki, Majed bin Aziz. *The Development of Saudi Foreign Policy*, Institute of Diplomatic Studies: Saudi Foreign Ministry, Riyadh, 2005, P. 270.

⁸⁵ Gause III, F. Gregory. "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question", *Strategic Insights*, Volume VI, Issue 2, March 2007.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Gause III, F. Gregory. "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question", *Op.Cit.*

Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia were issued to support the embattled Sunni minority in Iraq against the Shi'a, and referred to them as "*Al-Rafida*", defamatory label identifying them as "rejecters" of the true Islam and the Crusaders (the US), while some Salafi activists started issuing fatwas declaring Shi'a as infidels. The usage of the Wahhabi card in the Sunni-Shi'a issue in Iraq and other countries was aiming at mobilizing the domestic public opinion in Saudi Arabia (and in Egypt and Jordan as well) to support them in the confrontation against Iran, not mainly for sectarian reasons that would backfire at home and badly affect the social peace of the Arab societies. However it helped in mobilizing the Arab Sunnis in Iraq for taking all possible measures to secure their existence in their country⁸⁸. Saudi journalists wrote articles that Saudi Arabia will take all measures to defend Arab Sunnis and its interests in Iraq after a US withdrawal, despite that no reports talked about direct military or financial Saudi official support to the Iraqi Sunni and the small share of the Saudi citizens fighting besides the Sunni Iraqi insurgent⁸⁹.

The Saudi political support went to the Shi'a secular pro-Arab political leader Ayad Allawi who gathered other Sunni parties in his electoral coalition (the Iraqi National Movement or *I'tilaf al dawla al Iraqiya*). On February 21st 2010, Ayad Allawi has paid a visit to Riyadh where he had a meeting with King Abdullah and the head of the Saudi intelligence Prince Muqrin bin Abdel Aziz before holding the March 2010 elections: many Iraqi and foreigner political analysts described this visit (beside other Sunni leaders' visit to Egypt and Syria) as a kind of support given by Arab regional countries to him⁹⁰. After Ayad Allawi's getting the highest number of seats in the elections by 91 seats ahead of the list of Prime Minister Maliki which got 89 seats, Saudi Arabia invited Iraqi political leaders (Masoud Barzani, Jalal Talbani and Ammar al-Hakim) to discuss forming the new government in Iraq led by Ayad

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Obaid, Nawaf. "Stepping Into Iraq". Washington Post, November 29, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/28/AR2006112801277.html>.

⁹⁰ "Alawi defends his visit to Saudi Arabia", February 2010, <http://elaph.com/Web/news/2010/2/536935.htm>.

Allawi⁹¹. However the Saudi role failed and Prime Minister Maliki got his third term as a Prime Minister and Allawi was appointed as a head of an advisory council responsible for setting strategies that should be followed by the Iraqi state⁹².

Saudi Arabia's behaviour towards Iraq was not in favour of fuelling a wide open-ended sectarian regional war as it did not close its doors in front of the Iraqi Shi'a political actors. Saudi Arabia hosted a meeting between top Iraqi Sunni and Shi'a clerics on October 2006 in Mecca (the holiest Islamic city) that issued a statement condemning sectarian violence, the shedding of the blood of fellow Muslims and Iraqi blood, attacks on religious sites and forcing people to leave their homes. In his first regional appearance, the Shi'a religious leader Moktada al-Sadr appeared in 2006 in Saudi Arabia during the pilgrimage season and he was told by Saudi officials that he is a "guest of King Abdullah", a kind of hospitality provided to important political leaders⁹³. On April 3rd 2010, Saudi Arabia hosted the Iraqi religious cleric Ammar al-Hakim (the son of Abdel Aziz al-Hakim and the head of the ISCI after the death of his father in 2009) as a part of the Saudi brokering role for having an Iraqi government under Ayad Allawi's premiership after March 2010 parliamentary elections. However its relations with the central government in Baghdad remained in a low profile and it did not appoint an ambassador there until 2015.

2.2.5 The Turkish Policy towards the region and Iraq:

Turkey under the rule of AKP started to follow a new foreign policy based on integrating itself in the Middle East through following a regional activism and regional balancer's agenda which helps Turkey to emerge as an important

⁹¹ "Ammar al-Hakim visits Saudi Arabia", April 2010, http://www.almejlis.net/news_article_2796.html.

⁹² "After Months, Iraqi Lawmakers Approve a Government", December 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/22/world/middleeast/22iraq.html>.

⁹³ "Moktada al-Sadr in Mecca", January 2006, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2006/1/12>.

diplomatic regional actor⁹⁴. The AKP has developed this approach towards the region in a way that fulfils Turkey's national, economic and security interests in the region like the Kurdish issue, water issue with Syria and Iraq, enlarging economic and trade relations with Arab countries and Iran. According to Ahmet Davutoğlu (chief advisor of Prime Minister Erdoğan at that time), "it is essential to get free from the prejudices against the Middle East and to mount a campaign for economic and cultural cooperation with the region as an initial condition for appreciating the potential of being the successor of the Ottomans"⁹⁵. Turkey began to see itself as a regional super power that can play a very active diplomatic, political and economic role in the old geographical reach of the Ottoman and Byzantine empires where Turkey was the center, and it can adopt an activist policy with soft power tools in the former Ottoman territories where Turkey has strategic and national interests⁹⁶.

The economic motives started to play a strong factor in the Turkish foreign policy widely before the rule of AKP in order to obtain necessary loans, open up new markets for the Turkish goods and to strike deals with foreign governments and private companies⁹⁷. Under the rule of AKP, the economic dimension highly presented itself on Turkey's behaviour in the Middle East and became an important determinant of the Turkish foreign policy as Davutoğlu argues that economic interdependence is important for achieving a stable order in the Middle East⁹⁸.

⁹⁴ Larrabee, Stephan. "Turkey's new Middle East activism", In: F. Burwell (ed.) *The Evolution Of US-Turkish Relations In A Transatlantic Context*, Carlisle: SSI Publications, P.78, April 2009, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB861.pdf>.

⁹⁵ Davutoğlu, Ahmet. *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, Kure Yayınlar, Istanbul, 2001.

⁹⁶ Ömer Taşpınar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism", Carnegie Papers, Carnegie Endowment Center, September 2008, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec10_taspinar_final.pdf.

⁹⁷ Kirişçi, Kemal. "The Transformation Of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise Of The Trading State", *New Perspectives of Turkey*, No. 40, 2009, P.38, http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/news_id_412_5%20-%20Article%20Kemal%20Kirisci.pdf.

⁹⁸ Davutoglu, Ahmed. *Op.Cit.* P.85.

Kemal Kirişci looks at this behaviour through applying the trading state model on Turkey⁹⁹; and that the economic interdependence between Turkey and the Middle East provides markets for Turkish products and businesses. He argues that the rise of the interest business groups inside Turkey played a role in the transformation of Turkish policy¹⁰⁰. On the other hand, these economic motives can be understood domestically, as the Turkish economic openness on the Middle East benefits the so called conservative “Anatolian businessmen”, who represents the economic base of the ruling AKP¹⁰¹.

Turkey started to deal with the new regional security problems created after the US invasion of Iraq in a way that differs from the US approach concerning Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Iran¹⁰². Turkey activated the High Security Commission established in 1997 with Iran in order to discuss the PKK (Kurdistan Worker Party) and PJAK (The Party for Freedom in Kurdistan)¹⁰³ and developed strong economic and political relations with Syria and Iran to strengthen an anti-Kurdish alliance in the region, at the time Syria and Iran were regarded by the US from the axis of evil. Turkey adopted an activist policy to intervene and mediate in different conflicts in

⁹⁹ Kirişci, Kemal. *Op.Cit.* P.38.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, Business interest groups like the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (MÜSİAD), the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (TÜSİAD), and the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB), the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM), the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK), the International Transporters Association (UND), and the Turkish Contractors Association (TMD).

¹⁰¹ Altunisik, Meliha Benli, Themore, Martin. “Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP”, *Turkish Studies*, Volume 12, No. 4, 2011, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14683849.2011.622513?journalCode=ftur20>, See Also: Barkey, Henry. “Turkish Foreign Policy and the Middle East”, *Ceri Strategy Papers*, No. 10, SciencePo, June 2011, http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/n10_06062011.pdf

¹⁰² Oğuzlu, Tarik, “Middle Easternization of Turkey’s Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Dissociate from the West?”, *Turkish Studies*, Volume 9, Issue 1, February 2008, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14683840701813960?journalCode=ftur20#.VbTNVPmqqko> .

¹⁰³ Elik, Suleyman. *Iran-Turkey Relations, 1979-2011: Conceptualising the Dynamics of Politics, Religion and Security in Middle-Power States*, Routledge, March 2013, P. 87.

order to avoid any implications these conflicts may have on its national security and to secure its economic opportunities in the region. It offered mediation between the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2007, between Syria and Israel in 2007 and brokered a deal, in cooperation with Brazil, between the West and Iran on the Iranian nuclear program¹⁰⁴.

Ankara was ambivalent about participating in the US invasion of Iraq from the beginning, despite that the status quo in Iraq before the invasion was against Turkey's interests because of the economic sanctions on Baghdad and Kurdistan Workers Party's (PKK) presence in North Iraq as a defacto, Ankara's fear out of the US invasion was on the territorial integrity of Iraq. Beside the opposition of the Turkish public opinion to participate in a war led by the USA which reached 90% according to polls¹⁰⁵, the main concern of Turkey out was a rise of Kurdish nationalism in Iraq accompanied by a new wave of violence from the PKK and the political future of North Iraq. The Kurdish issue has become a dominant issue in both the domestic and foreign policy of Turkey during the 1990s and it shaped a big part of its diplomacy in the Middle East. The Kurdish rebellion continued to gain momentum in the Turkish political arena during the 1990s while the Turkish state and the Turkish military exerted efforts to eradicate its dangers. Moreover, other states in the region tried to use this rebellion movement against the Turkish state by supporting them¹⁰⁶. Another source of fear was the status of Mosul and Kirkuk in Iraq (owing to their diversified ethnical composition and their vast oil resources) after the invasion as the Kurds claim that they are Kurdish cities and the safety of the Iraqi Turkmen living in northern cities of Iraq during the invasion. The economic repercussions of the war on the Turkish economy also represented a

¹⁰⁴ Oğuzlu, Tarik, *Op.Cit.*

¹⁰⁵ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "Turkey's Iraq policy", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* Volume 14, No. 2, 183 –196, August 2006.

¹⁰⁶ J.Barkey, Henri. *Reluctant Neighbour: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, United States Institute of Peace, 1996, P.32.

source of concern for Ankara in addition to the probable wave of refugees who would move to Turkey during the military operations¹⁰⁷.

Turkey gave different and conflicting signals about its decision of taking part in the war besides the USA. On one hand it showed its suspicions from the outcomes of the war on the territorial integrity of Iraq, Kurdish rise and the future of ethnicities in its neighbouring countries. It supported the continuation of using diplomacy with Saddam Hussein and Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit sent a letter Saddam Hussein asking him to cooperate with the UN inspectors. Turkey also had launched the “Iraq’s Neighbouring Countries Platform” led by the Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül which included Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Jordan in order to concentrate diplomatic efforts and prevent the use of force against Iraq which resulted in forming a committee that would follow the proceedings in the United Nations concerning the Iraqi issue¹⁰⁸. On the other hand, Turkey started negotiations with the USA on its conditions for taking part in the military operations. It put sticking topics in the negotiations like increasing its military contingent in north Iraq to place the refugees in North Iraq not in Turkey and to counter any possible wave of violence from the PKK, being the mere foreign military power present in North Iraq, putting limitations on the political future of Kurds in Iraq and the status of Mosul and Kirkuk besides securing an economic aid package from the USA. This ambiguity reflected the division in the opinion of Ankara’s journalists between who oppose Turkey’s participation in the war and who supports it. Another issue related to Turkey’s reluctance was who will take the responsibility of the decision to take part in the War. The newly established AKP did not want to take the responsibility of a decision opposed by 90% of Turkish citizen, while the military was hesitant about the future outcomes of the war and considered this decision as a political decision not a military one¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁷ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. “Turkey’s Iraq Policy”, *Op.cit.*

¹⁰⁸ “Relations between Turkey and Iraq”, Turkish Foreign Ministry, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-iraq.en.mfa> .

¹⁰⁹ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. “Turkey’s Iraq policy”, *Op.Cit.*

The Turkish government eventually signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the USA in February 2003 that allowed the usage of Turkish air bases by the US troops and agreed on some conditions with the US on the economic aid package and military cooperation in Northern Iraq. However the Turkish Grand National Assembly refused to pass the memorandum on 1 March 2003 with some No votes also coming from the AKP. This development caught the US administration with surprise which not only perceived Turkey as an essential component in the successful conduct of an Iraq operation but also felt betrayed and deceived by an ally¹¹⁰.

However to ease the relations, the Turkish Grand National Assembly approved sending Turkish peacekeeping forces in October 2003 in the shadow of the UNSCR that broadened the role of the United Nations and other nations in Iraq¹¹¹ but the Iraqi Governing Council and Kurdish parties refused the presence of Turkish troops on the Iraqi soil, which left Ankara with no military, political and economic tools to influence the events in Iraq. Ankara threatened to use force again against the Kurdish PKK in Northern Iraq after a wave of attacks launched inside Turkey as PKK declared the renunciation of the declared ceasefire in 1999¹¹², witnessing the high profile cooperation between the USA and Kurds to keep stability in Iraq and fears from a possible Kurdish takeover on Kirkuk. The Turkish Grand National Assembly granted the Turkish military the right to interfere in Northern Iraq on October 17th 2007, however Turkey halted down its high tone of intervening in Iraq after getting promises for further strong intelligence cooperation between the US

¹¹⁰ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "The Middle East in Turkey–USA Relations: Managing the Alliance", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Volume 15, Issue 2, 2013, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19448953.2013.775036?journalCode=cjsb20#.VemGaxGeDGc>.

¹¹¹ "Turkish Parliament agrees to send peacekeepers to Iraq", October 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/07/international/middleeast/07CND-TURK.html>.

¹¹² Çağaptay, Soner and Parris, Mark. "Turkey after Iraq War", The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Conference Report, 2003, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/turkey-after-the-iraq-war-still-a-u.s.-ally>.

and Turkish intelligence during Erdoğan's visit to the USA in November 2007, and accepted other regional mediatory roles to posture its regional statue like mediating between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the Israeli President Shimon Peres. In addition to that the Turkish government succeeded in preventing the US congress from passing a law that recognizes the Armenian genocide by the Ottoman Turks¹¹³.

As a part of its regional foreign policy and its new approach to the Middle East, the Turkish government paid importance to economic dimension of its relations with all Iraqi groups including the Kurds. Turkey thought about using its economic leverage to gain political influence on the Kurds as its territories represent an access for the KRG's to the global market and a strong economic neighbouring power that can develop Arbil's infrastructure. On the other hand, Turkey established a diplomatic mechanism with the KRG while it was conducting operations against PKK and asked it to have a say in the issue of PKK who are operating from North Iraq¹¹⁴. Moreover, the development in relations with the Iraqi Kurds helped in mending the relations between the Turkish government and Kurds in Turkey and lowered down the wave of attacks from the PKK who did not want to spoil relations between Iraqi Kurds and Turkey, in a step which reflects the transformation of Turkey's security dominated policy into a pragmatic one¹¹⁵. Turkey dumped the idea of empowering the Iraqi Turkmen as a counter balance to the Kurds, as it found in pragmatism a way to deal with the Iraqi Kurds and discovered that the Iraqi Turkmen Front is not

¹¹³ Nouredin, Mohamed. "The kurdish Issue between the American Interests and the Turkish Desires", Swiss Info, November 2007, <http://www.swissinfo.ch>.

¹¹⁴ Iraqi official: PKK presence at Turkish border ending, Hurriyet Daily News, 2005, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/turkey/8956823.asp?gid=231&sz=23180> .

¹¹⁵ "Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperation", International Crisis Group, Middle East Report No. 81, November 2008, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-Gulf/iraq/081-turkey-and-iraqi-kurds-conflict-or-cooperation.aspx> .

popular within the Turkmen community¹¹⁶. It started to respond positively to the Kurdish calls for developing economic ties and making Arbil a base for Turkey's economic activities in the rest of Iraq, it opened a consulate in Arbil¹¹⁷, the Kurdish crude oil was trucked directly to Turkish refineries, with the refined product sent back into the KRG and the Turkish Genel Energy is exported around 20,000-30,000 barrel of oil per day from Kurdistan's TaqTaq field directly to Mersin in Turkey¹¹⁸. Turkish construction companies have a strong presence in Sulimanya and Erbil with projects estimated by USD200-USD300 million in addition to 1200 Turkish company and 50,000 Turkish citizen doing trade worth some USD7 billion a year¹¹⁹. Turkey comes the second after the UAE in the list of countries having major investments in Erbil.

Politically, Ankara engaged with the other Shi'a political actors in Iraq and adopted an open door policy with them. It appointed a special envoy to Iraq in autumn 2005 for developing relations with Iraq and opened a consulate in Mosul (populated by Sunnis) beside the Turkish embassy in Baghdad. It accepted the Iraqi Shi'a cleric Abdel Aziz al-Hakim on January 2004 where he declared that, "Turkey should have a say in Iraq"¹²⁰. Ankara hosted the son of Abdel Aziz al-Hakim: Ammar al-Hakim after getting the position of his father in the ISCI in November 2009 where he gave assurances to the Turkish politicians and Turkish public opinion about the importance of keeping the neutrality of Kirkuk. Also he showed his full respect to

¹¹⁶ Barkey, Henri J. "Turkey and Iraq: The Making of a Partnership", Turkish Studies, Volume 12, No 4, 2011.

¹¹⁷ "Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperation", International Crisis Group, *Op.Cit.*

¹¹⁸ OBIG Research Team. "Iraq – Kurdistan's Billion-Barrel Oil Investment", March 2013, <http://oilandgas-investments.com/2013/investing/iraq-kurdistan-oil-investment/>.

¹¹⁹ "Turkish Investment in KRG", <http://vvanwilgenburg.blogspot.com.tr/2009/02/turkish-investment-in-krq-region.html>.

¹²⁰ "Al-Hakim: Turkey Should Have a Say in Iraq", January 2004, http://www.todayszaman.com/international_shiite-leader-al-hakim-turkey-should-have-a-say-in-iraq_4952.html

the Iraqi Turkmen minority in addition to praising the Turkish foreign policy and Turkish model of democracy¹²¹. During the crisis between Baghdad and Ankara in 2012 upon Ankara's hosting of Tarek al Hashimi (Iraqi vice President who was charged of supporting terrorist attack by al-Maliki's government) and Ankara-Erbil high profile cooperation on oil, al-Hakim paid another visit to Ankara where he discussed the crisis between Iraq and Turkey¹²². Prime Minister Erdoğan has paid a visit to Iraq in 2011 and during his visit he went to Najaf's Shi'a mosques and declared that he comes here as a Muslim not as a Shi'a or Sunni. He visited the shrine of Imam Ali to be the first Sunni leader who visits the shrine and hold talks with Imam Ali al-Sistani¹²³.

Ankara played mediatory roles in the Iraqi political process in order to prevent the domestic rivalry between Sunni and Shi'a from any escalation that would lead to the division of Iraq and as a part of its regional mediation policy that boost Ankara's credit and provide it with political influence in different spots in the region. It proposed to mediate between Iraqi Shi'as and Sunnis by launching a National conference for reconciliation between the Sunni and Shi'a groups in order to solve al-Hashimi crisis, while Turkey would moderate the conference and the head of the Turkish religious directorate Mehmet Gormez would deliver Turkey's message¹²⁴. It tried to mediate between the KRG and central government in Baghdad on the issue of exporting the Kurdish oil directly from Arbil. Finally

¹²¹ Kanbolat, Hassan. "Al-Hakim's Visit to Turkey", Today's Zaman, 2009, http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/hasan-kanbolat/al-hakims-visit-to-turkey_193819.html .

¹²² "Iraqi Shiite leader visits Turkey amid high tension", January 2012, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/iraqi-shiite-leader-visits-turkey-amid-high-tension.aspx?pageID=238&nID=12334&NewsCatID=338> .

¹²³ "Turkish PM becomes first sunni leader to visit shrine of Imam Ali", March 2011, <http://www.worldbulletin.net/haber/71829/turkish-pm-becomes-first-sunni-leader-to-visit-shrine-of-imam-ali>

¹²⁴ "Turkey to bring Iraqi Shiite, Sunni groups together in Istanbul", February 2012, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_turkey-to-bring-iraqi-shiite-sunni-groups-together-in-istanbul_270177.html .

Turkey mediated between Baghdad and Damascus after a massive attack that took place in downtown Baghdad in 2009 as Baghdad charged Damascus with the incident.

Despite Turkey's neutral policy, it chose its favourable political party in the Iraqi elections in 2010. Further reports have spoken that Turkey would favour to see Ayad Allawi as a Prime Minister of Iraq ahead of March 2010 elections by convincing Kurds to accept his premiership¹²⁵ and receiving Allawi before the elections. Turkey's support for Iraqi Sunni does not come out of sectarian reasons; as sectarianism could harm Turkey's relations with the Shi'a counter parts, could lower its credentials for playing regional mediatory roles and harm Turkish economic interests in the Shi'a dominated regions in Iraq. It took such a step to counter balance the rising Iranian influence in Iraq which and to further secure more presence of Turkish investment companies in Iraq in the future and to protect the agreements it signed with the KRG. But the sectarian charge did not stay with Turkey for long due to Turkey's open door policy with other Shi'as; Prime Minister Erdoğan paid his second visit to Iraq on March 2011 where he visited Baghdad, Najaf and Erbil.

2.3 The Regional Security Complex in Lebanon

2.3.1 The spill over of the Iraqi effect to Lebanon:

The Implications of the US invasion of Iraq and the new outcomes in the Iraqi political scene exceeded the Iraqi borders to find a place in Lebanon. While located at the heart of the Middle East and being sensitive to any regional changes, the outcomes in Iraq has led to create a new security complex in Lebanon that became quite familiar to the Iraqi complex in issues related to the rise of the regional role of the US, the enhanced rivalry between non-state Sunni and Shi'a actors (14 March Alliance and *Hizballah*), and the rise of the Iranian influence.

¹²⁵ Taha, Nadya. "Arab Press Reaction to Ayad Allawi's Election Success", March 2010, <http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/31/arab-press-reaction-to-ayad-allawis-election-success/> .

Beside Iraq, Syria was included in the axis of evil presented by the neoconservative US policy makers who had seen Lebanon as a point of vulnerability for Syria. If Syria could be forced out of Lebanon¹²⁶, a pro-western Lebanese government could be brought to sign a peace treaty with Israel and the Syrian regime might collapse if it get isolated and suffered a major loss of prestige and economic benefits. The submission of the Syrian and the Iranian regime to the new Middle East created after the invasion of the Iraq was in the desire of Washington's neoconservatives' policy. In December 2003, the US House and Senate passed a bill with overwhelming majorities demanding Syria to stop undermining international peace and security, end its 'Occupation' of Lebanon, enable it to achieve full restoration of its 'sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity', deploy its army in the south and evict all 'terrorist and foreign forces', including 'Hizballah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards'¹²⁷. In September 2004, the United Nations Security Council has issued its resolution No.1558, under a US and European pressure (mainly France), that asks Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and for *Hizballah* to disarm itself¹²⁸.

The US administration tried to make connections between what happened in Iraq after toppling down Saddam Hussein and the Lebanese Intifada or the protests that broke out in Lebanon carrying slogans of - SYRIA OUT!! - after the assassination of Lebanon's strong Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, who was known for his close relations with the US, France, Egypt and Gulf monarchies as he carried Saudi nationality¹²⁹. The administration got into the act and named the protests as the Cedar revolution, thinking that this is the Iraq's domino effect in Lebanon and

¹²⁶ Hirst, David. *Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East*, Faber and Faber Publisher, 2010, P.297.

¹²⁷ Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, December 2003, http://www.clhrf.com/unresagreements/syria_accountability%20act.htm.

¹²⁸ UNSCR 1558, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/751%20SRES%201558.pdf>.

¹²⁹ Hirst, David. *Op.cit*, P. 308.

things will be fixed out on the way towards democracy through a “constructive chaos”¹³⁰. While addressing the Lebanese people, President George W. Bush said that “the American people and millions across the earth are on your side”. He added that “once democracy had taken root in your country, it would ring the doors of every Arab regime”¹³¹. Moreover, Israel waged a military operation on Lebanon in June 2006 that aimed at knocking down *Hizballah*’s rockets launching sites¹³² and breaking the honour of *Hizballah* in Lebanon to facilitate the job on the Lebanese government to dismantle the military and political power of the organization, which would facilitate the political empowerment of its political rivalry the 14 March alliance¹³³.

2.3.2 The rise of the Iranian influence in Lebanon:

The developments in Lebanon provided a new ground for Iran to actively get involved in the Lebanese political process in a way similar to its involvement in Iraq. The importance of Lebanon in the Iranian foreign policy stems from its having a Shi’a community that represents a recognizable share in the Lebanese society and which was oppressed under a political system that was dominated by the Christians in the 20th century. The significance of the Shi’a community in Lebanon to the Iranian foreign policy rises from the role of the Islamic ideas in the Iranian foreign policy. Tehran thinks that, as a leading country in the Muslim world, it has a mission for exporting its revolutionary model to the other Muslim communities who fall under the American and western influence. Moreover *Hizballah* who adopts the

¹³⁰ “Lebanon Not Isolated from Constructive Chaos Scheme”, July 2014, <http://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/30647/Khreiss-Lebanon-not-isolated-from-creative-chaos-scheme> .

¹³¹ “Bush sees Lebanon changes as move to free Middle East”, The Guardians, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/mar/09/syria.lebanon> .

¹³² Knickmeyer, Ellen. “2006 War Called a 'Failure' for Israel”, January 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/30/AR2008013000559.html> .

¹³³ Harel, Amos, and Issacharoff, Avi. *34 Days: Israel, Hizballah and War on Lebanon*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008. P.76.

concept of *Welayet al-Faqih* plays an important role in linking the Lebanese Shi'a community to the Iranian religious ideology¹³⁴. The second reason for Lebanon's being important to Iran is its involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict with a direct frontline with Israel and being the only state after Syria that did not reach a peace agreement yet with Israel. By supporting *Hizballah* in his confrontations with Israel, and *Hamas* and Al-Jihad organizations in Gaza, Iran could emphasize its vision of islamising the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition to that, through supplying *Hizballah* with weapons and advanced missiles that could reach every part of Israel, Iran has an indirect front line with Israel that would use it in case of any sudden Israeli or American attack on its nuclear facilities¹³⁵.

Iran's influence in Lebanon can be noticed in supplying *Hizballah* with weapons, money, military trainings and intelligence for its confrontation with Israel, financing social welfare programs and religious programs in the south of Lebanon and contributing in the reconstruction of south Lebanon after the end of the Israeli military operation in 2006. Iran has sent 2500 volunteers from the revolutionary guards to support *Hizballah* in his war against Israel in 1982, 1500 of them stayed in Lebanon and opened camps to develop *Hizballah*'s military capabilities and train its members. Iran also extended its aid to *Hizballah* through supplying it with complicated explosive devices, intelligence reports on Israeli premises in foreign countries that can be targeted by *Hizballah*. Moreover, Al-Quds forces – an elite brigade in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard – were present in Lebanon to train *Hizballah*'s members on how to use advanced and sophisticated weapons supplied to them by Iran¹³⁶. It has supported *Hizballah* in financing the educational and

¹³⁴ Abdul Hussein, Hussein. "Hezbollah: State within A State", Current Trends in Islamist Ideology, Volume 8, 2009, P.80. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?lang=en&id=101542>.

¹³⁵ Dikok, Atim Karnak. "The Arab Israeli Conflict and The Iran Goals in The Region", Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, August 2006, <http://archive.aawsat.com/leader.asp?article=377945&issueno=10121#.VemcHRGeDGc>.

¹³⁶ Zisser, Eyal. "Iranian Involvement in Lebanon", INSS, Military and Strategic Affairs, Volume 3, No 1, May 2011, [http://www.inss.org.il/uploadimages/Import/\(FILE\)1308129458.pdf](http://www.inss.org.il/uploadimages/Import/(FILE)1308129458.pdf).

social welfare programs launched for the Shi'a community in the south of Lebanon since 1980s. As it was reported tens of millions of dollars were directed annually to the organization in order to open more hospitals, schools, mosques, religious centers, charity organizations for the families of the Shi'a martyrs and financing basic infrastructure projects like building roads, water supplies to Shi'a villages, etc¹³⁷. After the end of the Israeli war on Lebanon 2006, Iran has directed around 1 billion dollar to the reconstruction of the bombed cities in the south of Lebanon¹³⁸.

2.3.3 The rise of Shi'a sub-state identity in Lebanon:

The Lebanese politics became more responsive to the sectarian outcomes came out of the Iraqi effect, since Lebanon has its own Shi'a community¹³⁹. The outbreak of the war in Iraq and the Shi'a activism there either in facing the American occupation or in facing the Sunni insurgency or through the consolidation of their political power in Iraq have made the Shi'a community in Lebanon more concerned with the fate of their fellows and their own fate. *Hizballah's* leader Hassan Nasrallah made different comments on what happens in Iraq based on his Shi'a sectarian affiliation and not on his national Lebanese affiliation. On the other hand, fears started to rise from the Salafi Jihadists returning from Iraq to north Lebanon start to radicalise the quite Sunni population as the *Ayn al-Helwa* refugee camp was a major way station for the recruitment and transfer of foreign Arab volunteers to Iraq¹⁴⁰. The empowerment of Shi'a political groups, beside the geopolitical reasons, contributed to *Hizballah's* strategy of consolidating its power in the south of Lebanon (highly inhabited with Shi'a community) and in the Lebanese political life

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ "Iranian Money Amplifies Influence in Lebanon", <http://www.voanews.com/content/iranian-money-amplifies-influence-in-lebanon-104962429/128044.html>.

¹³⁹ Wehrey, Frederic. Dassa, Dalia. Watkins, Jessica. Martini, Jeffrey. and Guffey, Robert. *Op. Cit*, P.88.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, P. 87.

in general. *Hizballah* worked on enhancing its popularity and legitimacy within the Shi'a community in Lebanon through establishing its own welfare system that includes hospitals, clinics, and schools in the south, beside the religious programs¹⁴¹. *Hizballah* has used intimidation and violence in a way to defend its political presence in the political scene; it threatened taking foreign investigators of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (held on the Murder of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005) as hostages as a the tribunal found the involvement of *Hizballah* in cooperation with the Syrian intelligence elements behind the murder¹⁴².

Another reflection of the sectarian politics was the intensification of the political division in Lebanon between the 14 March Alliance (mostly Sunni like *Tayyar el Mostakbal* led by Saad Hariri with some Christians and loyal to Saudi Arabia) and 8 March Alliance (mostly Shi'a of *Hizballah*, *Amal movement*, *Afwaj el-Mukkawma el-Lubnaniyya* and the free patriotic movement of the Christian politician Michel Aoun) which get developed into military clashes in May 2008 when the Lebanese government (formed by the 14 March Alliance) took a decision of dismantling the telecommunication system of *Hizballah* which was not under the control of the Lebanese authorities. Hassan Nasrallah declared these actions as 'A Declaration of War on *Hizballah*' and his supporters rash to the streets which led to *Hizballah*'s takeover of around half the city of Beirut, occupying the pro-government media outlets (Future Television, Future News, *Al Mustaqbal* Newspaper, and Radio Orient) and forcing them to close, series of street clashes in Beirut, in Mount Lebanon, in the North (Tripoli) and near the south in Mount Barook that separates the Druze heartland of Shouf from the mainly Shi'ite southern end of the Bekaa Valley. During the two weeks clashes (7 May-14 May 2008), it was reported that around 60 persons killed and more than 100 wounded including civilians. These escalations had threatened a break out of a civil war in Lebanon, as King Abdullah

¹⁴¹ Cammett, Melani. and M. MacLean, Lauren. *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare* , Cornell University Press, 2014, P.204.

¹⁴² "*Hizballah* Threatens an Explosion in Beirut Over Tribunal", November 2010, <https://www.stratfor.com/sample/analysis/hezbollah-threatens-explosion-beirut-over-tribunal>.

of Jordan warned, however *Hizballah* and 14 March Alliance signed the Doha agreement in May 2008 that ended the clashes¹⁴³.

2.3.4 The Saudi Policy towards Lebanon:

Saudi Arabia tried to fix the shift happened to the regional balance of power towards Iran in the region through rolling back its influence and supporting the Sunni or Arab nationalists who were at the top of the governments in these countries. In Lebanon, Saudi Arabia fully supported the Lebanese government led by Fuad al-Sinyora (14 March Alliance) on its stand on the issue of disarming *Hizballah*. Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal declared that the Saudi government believed that the only way to achieve stability in Lebanon is through full control by the Lebanese government over its territory and that this goal could not be achieved without disarming *Hizballah*¹⁴⁴. Saudi Foreign Minister also warned the Arab world against being “captive of regional and international powers that have their own agenda”¹⁴⁵. When *Hizballah* kidnapped two Israeli soldiers and killed eight others, an action that triggered the Israeli military to launch a military operation on Lebanon, the Saudi position was opposite to *Hizballah*’s actions and Saudi Arabia declared that there should be “differentiation between legitimate resistance and the uncalculated adventures of some elements within the states and overseas, who without resource to the legitimate authority in its , and without consultation or coordination with the Arab states, trigger an extremely serious situation which could subject all Arab nations and their achievements to destruction, without taking into consideration the opinion of these states”¹⁴⁶. The statement was

¹⁴³ Lebanon’s Political Conflict Turns Violent, May 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/05/07/us-lebanon-strike-idUSL0761005520080507>.

¹⁴⁴ Korany, Bahga. and A. Fattah, Moataz. *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, American University in Cairo Press, 2008, P.375.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ “Saudi Arabia: There is difference between legitimate resistance and uncalculated adventures”, June 2006, Al-Sharq Al-Awsaat, <http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=373172&issueno=10091#.VemjohGeDGc>.

issued few days before the start of the Israeli military operation and it marked that Saudi Arabia, along with Egypt and Jordan, had sided the US-Israeli plan of eliminate the source of threat and instability in the region¹⁴⁷. However the Saudi official position ended up smoother on it as the military operation failed on eliminating *Hizballah*, the death tool and destruction of Lebanon were grave and Saudi diplomacy's failed to practice more pressure on the US administration to stop the war which left the moderate Arab countries in an embarrassing position in front of the Arab public opinion.

The Saudi's take on *Hizballah* did not change after the 2006 war, during the internal clashes in May 2008 because of the government decision to take a Shi'a officer close to *Hizballah*, from his post in the security department of Rafik Hariri airport and cracking down on *Hizballah*'s telecommunication system, Saudi Arabia's supporting stand to the government was highly apparent and its critiques on *Hizballah* and Iran were harsh. Saudi Foreign Minister declared that "Saudi Arabia supports the Lebanese legitimacy represented in the Lebanese government on the issue of the airport security officer and *Hizballah*'s telecommunication system", he added that "*Hizballah*'s actions are perceived by the kingdom as a coup against the Lebanese legitimate government and that these actions were prepared by *Hizballah* from before". Saud Al-Faisal also hold Iran responsible for the violence in Lebanon and said that Iran's relations with the Arab and Muslim world would be strained after its support to what he named as a "coup" against legitimacy in Lebanon¹⁴⁸. However as the 14 March alliance seemed losing in front of the 8 March alliance forces and *Hizballah*, Saudi Arabia accepted the agreement brokered by Doha which solved the issue of Presidential elections and delayed the disarmament of *Hizballah*.

¹⁴⁷ Korany, Bahga. and A. Fattah, Moataz. *Op.Cit*, P.374.

¹⁴⁸ "Saud Al-Faisal: Iran's Support to Coup against Legitimacy in Lebanon Will Worsen Its Relations with Us", <http://www.alriyadh.com/342587>.

2.3.5 The Turkish Policy towards Lebanon:

In the Lebanese issue, Turkey has expressed unrest with the Israeli attack on Lebanon and Prime Minister Erdoğan issued a statement where he condemned the attacks and said “No reason can justify bombing civilians and laying waste to cities in a merciless manner”¹⁴⁹. The Lebanese Prime Minister has asked the Turkish Prime Minister to intervene for achieving a cease fire¹⁵⁰, while the efforts to reach a cease fire was complicated, Turkey succeeded in gaining the acceptance of Syria and Israel to position 1000 Turkish peacekeeper troops in the south of Lebanon between *Hizballah* and Israel. Despite that there were many objections from within Turkey on this issue¹⁵¹, Kemalist political opposition’s claiming that Turkish troops instead should be sent to fight PKK in northern Iraq, and from within some Lebanese communities mainly the Armenian one, the Turkish parliament approved sending the Turkish troops on September 19th 2006¹⁵². Turkey has supported humanitarian aid programs with 50 million dollars provided for the restructuring of Lebanon to be among the first 15 countries in terms of aid sent to Lebanon. Along with building around 41 schools all over the country which were established without regard for sectarian and regional differences¹⁵³.

During the internal clashes in Lebanon in the summer of 2008 between 8 March Alliance and 14 March Alliance which had raised the fear of a new Lebanese civil

¹⁴⁹ “Erdoğan: “İsrail'in derdi nedir?”, <http://www.cnnturk.com/2006/turkiye/07/15/erdogan.israilin.derdinendir/201873.0/index.html>.

¹⁵⁰ “Lebanon Asks Turkey to Mediate”, July 2006, <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Lebanon-asks-Turkey-to-help-mediate>.

¹⁵¹ “Sending Turkish troops to Lebanon”, September 2006, www.jamesinturkey.com.

¹⁵² “AKP Agrees in Principle to Send Troops to Lebanon”, September 2006, http://www.todayszaman.com/latest-news_akp-agrees-in-principle-to-send-troops-to-lebanon_36073.html.

¹⁵³ “Turkish-Lebanon Relations”, ORSAM, Report No 5, August 2009, http://www.orsam.org.tr/en/enUploads/Article/Files/2009820_rapor_05_eng_webIc.pdf

war that would destabilize the region and marks a big blow to the Turkish wide economic interests in Lebanon and in its neighbouring countries. The Turkish government was asked by the Lebanese government to interfere in the internal crisis and to mediate in the talks between the clashing groups. Unlike Saudi Arabia, Turkey did not have any prejudgement on Syria and Iran's role in Lebanon as long as its economic interests were safe and it saw that their inclusion in finding a solution for the Lebanese issue is necessary to move on an agreement. Turkey had used its good offices in Syria and Iran, and Prime Minister Erdoğan used his good relations with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Iranian President Ahmadinejad to practice more pressure on 8 March Alliance in the talks¹⁵⁴. Turkey mediated directly between the Lebanese government of 14 March Alliance and other regional supporters of 8 March Alliance in cooperation with Qatar to reach Doha agreement which ended the Presidential elections crisis and it was later invited to attend the ceremonial swearing of Lebanese President Michael Suleiman who later visited Turkey in 2008 to be the first Lebanese President visiting Turkey in 54 years¹⁵⁵.

2.4 Implications of RSCs in Iraq and Lebanon on Turkish Saudi Relations

2.4.1 Changes in Regional Role Perceptions of Turkey and Saudi Arabia:

The new outcomes of the regional security complexes created in Iraq and Lebanon which resulted in varied security externalities have affect both Turkey and Saudi Arabia. There was a convergence in the regional interests of both countries in Iraq since they were worried from the repercussions of the US invasion in 2003. They shared fears about the territorial integrity of Iraq and they found the rise of Iran's influence problematic for them. In Lebanon, their stands were not convergent but not divergent, as Saudi Arabia continued to support 14 March Alliance while

¹⁵⁴ "Turkey to press ahead with mediation", May 2008, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2008/Jan-04/50269-turkey-to-press-ahead-with-mediation.ashx> .

¹⁵⁵ "Turkish-Lebanon Relations", ORSAM, Report No 5, August 2009, http://www.orsam.org.tr/en/enUploads/Article/Files/2009820_rapor_05_eng_webIc.pdf.

Turkey preferred to play the mediatory role between 14 March Alliance and 8 March Alliance.

As a result of that, a change in the perception of the regional role of both countries has taken place and this contributed positively in developing the bilateral political, economic and military relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. A famous Saudi journalist, Khaled Tashkindi, has described Turkey's foreign policy shift as a sign of "Turkey's return to the embraces of the Muslim world". He said it was appearing that the government of AKP is going to stay more in power owing to its success in solving Turkey's economic crisis and achieving an economic take off, which would encourage Saudi Arabia to boost its relations with Turkey¹⁵⁶. In addition to him, many prominent Saudi public figures perceived that the rise of the Iranian influence in the region will push Turkey and Saudi Arabia to form a regional alliance to counterbalance Iran¹⁵⁷. The wide understanding in Saudi Arabia was that adopting Turkey, a US ally-member of NATO, an EU member candidate and with its rising economy, in a regional grand strategy against Iran would contribute to the Saudi regional policy. Another Saudi academician has added that the rise of a pro-Islamic party ruling a Sunni country like Turkey would contribute to a strategic relationship between Turkey and Saudi Arabia which considers the Islamic dimension in every policy it adopts and the Islamic Sunni background of Ankara and Riyadh will push them towards the containment of Iran in the region.

On the other hand, there was an increasing support from different Turkish political actors (secular liberals, Islamists and conservatives) to the new foreign policy of Turkey and its openness towards the Middle East. In order to be able to play an active role and mediate in different regional conflicts, developing good relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia is considered to be an essential step as Saudi Arabia has a wide influence and presence in different regional conflicts. The ideas

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Khaled Tashkindi, Editor in Chief of Okaz Newspaper in Saudi Arabia, May 2015.

¹⁵⁷ Field Research Trip to Saudi Arabia.

of regional stability and countering sectarianism, finding a solution to the regions long conflicts like the Arab-Israeli conflicts through a Turkish contribution were occupying a large area in the Turkish perception. The new political elite in Turkey has found that the GCC region generally and Saudi Arabia mainly could be a good market for the Turkish goods and businesses which could enhance regional economic interdependence and cooperative peaceful relations between Turkey and the countries of the region.

2.4.2 Turkish-Saudi Political Relations:

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has paid a 3 days visit to Ankara from August 6th until August 8th 2006 to be his fifth foreign destination proceeding to China, India, Pakistan and Malaysia after ascending the throne in 2005. The visit is considered to be the first official visit of a Saudi king since the establishment of the kingdom in 1932, away from Saudi King Faisal's visit to Istanbul in 1966 which was scheduled for attending an International meeting. The Saudi king was accompanied by a 300 members delegate came in 5 private jets, including businessmen like Sheikh Saleh Kamel (chairman of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry who later bought the biggest shares of Albaraka bank in Turkey) and Abdel Rahman al-Rashid (the chairman of the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry). The delegate was warmly welcomed with the Turkish and Saudi flags together and welcoming slogans to the king raised in the streets on their way from the airport¹⁵⁸. During the visit, Saudi King Abdullah has signed six bilateral treaties on duties, trade and transport besides a memorandum of understanding pertaining to the bilateral political consultations between the Foreign Ministries in both countries¹⁵⁹. During the visit, the Saudi -Turkish Joint Commission was formed as well as Saudi -Turkish Businessmen Council and the king has attended the

¹⁵⁸ "A Successful visit by King Abdullah". <http://www.alriyadh.com/179506> .

¹⁵⁹ "Saudi King Abdullah Starts Friday Visit to Turkey", <http://www.mofa.gov.sa/sites/mofaen/ServicesAndInformation/news/statements/Pages/NewsArticleID71336.aspx> .

ceremonial opening of the council along with Prime Minister Erdoğan¹⁶⁰. King Abdullah has declared during his visit to Ankara: "the ties that bind our sibling country Turkey to us are not the usual ones, but rather spiritual ones which are based on shared beliefs, which is why any calculations of various financial interests in each other are useless in terms of making our relations more valuable. Likewise, any financial damage we incur to each other cannot weaken our relations "¹⁶¹. Also the Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal declared during the visit that: "a new chapter between the two countries will be opened"¹⁶².

The media in both countries described the visit of the Saudi King Abdullah to Turkey as a very successful visit that opened a new chapter in the bilateral relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. In the Turkish press, İlnur Çevik wrote an article in the New Anatolia newspaper welcoming the visit of the Saudi king under the title "King Abdullah is a main person for stability in the Middle East" and said that Turkey is a stable oasis in the Muslim world and Saudi Arabia is a giant petroleum regional country who both can affect global politics. Mehmet Barlas wrote an article in Sabah newspaper under the title of "what we expect from the visit of King Abdullah"; he praised the Saudi visit to Turkey and the status of the Saudi king as a custodian of the holy mosque and he expected a push in the economic and trade relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Upon the visit of the Saudi king, Zaman newspaper has published an article for the Saudi ambassador in turkey Mohammed Al-Hussaini before the visit by one day where he stated the importance of the visit and its contribution to the Turkish Saudi relations.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ "Saudi King Abdullah: Our relations with Turkey are spiritual", <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/saudi-king-abdullah-our-relations-with-turkey-are-spiritual.aspx?pageID=438&n=saudi-king-abdullah-our-relations-with-turkey-are-spiritual-2006-08-09> .

¹⁶² "Saudi King Abdullah's Turkish Visit 'New Chapter' in Relations", http://www.todayszaman.com/latest-news_saudi-king-abdullahs-turkish-visit-new-chapter-in-relations_35450.html

The visit has received a wide positive reaction in the media especially al-Arabiya satellite channel and other Saudi and Arab newspapers like al-Sharq al-Awsat, al-Riyad, al-Youm, Okaz and al-Hayat. These newspapers published long reports covering all political and economic dimensions of the visit, stressing on the declarations of both King Abdullah and Prime Minister Erdoğan during the visit. The Saudi ambassador to Turkey gave interviews to the Arab newspapers like al-Youm and Arab News where “he described King Abdullah’s visit as a turning point for both Saudi Arabia and Turkey, not only because it comes from the Saudi side after such a long period, but also because it was timely due to the escalation of violence in the Middle East”. He added that “among the topics for discussion between King Abdullah and Turkish officials would be the situations in Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq, the Kingdom and Turkey had similar views on a wide range of issues that include the situation in occupied territories in Palestine, the situation in Iraq, the standoff between Iran and the West, as well as the stance against terrorism”¹⁶³. He commented on the Turkish active foreign policy by saying “Turkey can play a role of a mediator since it has good relations with the Israelis and the Palestinians, Turkey is also a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Turkish people were committed to their faith and a large number of Turks visit Saudi Arabia every year to perform Haj and Umrah”¹⁶⁴.

Another sign on the noticeable positive change in the political relations between the two countries, which was highly stressed by the Saudi public figures and journalists during interviews held with them, is the election of the Turkish professor Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu by the Foreign Ministers of the member states of the OIC as a new secretary general from December 31st 2004 until January 31st 2014. Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries supported his candidacy in 2004 and in 2008 to be the first Turkish diplomat to occupy this post. Saudi Arabia enjoys a wide influence over the OIC which is located in Jeddah and its building is donated by the Saudi

¹⁶³ “Saudi Envoy to Turkey speaks to Al-Riyadh newspaper: Turkish Saudi relations reflected positively on Turkish Arab Relations”, Riyadh Newspaper, <http://www.alriyadh.com/369067>.

¹⁶⁴ “King Abdullah to Make Historic Visit to Turkey”, <http://www.arabnews.com/node/282954>.

government to the organization, moreover Saudi Arabia fills the budget shortfalls of the organization and sponsors its activities¹⁶⁵.

Upon the election of the Abdullah Gül as a President of Turkey, the Saudi King Abdullah paid his second official visit to Ankara in November 2007 in order to congratulate him on his new post, signing new agreements between the two countries and discussing various regional issues. As a good will gesture from Turkey, the President Abdullah Gül awarded the Saudi King Abdullah the State Medal of Honour which is given to Turkish Presidents, general chiefs of staff and foreign statesman who build cooperation between their countries and Turkey. King Abdulla is the eighth foreign statesman to receive this medal¹⁶⁶.

The timing of the visit was a critical one as the crisis of choosing a Lebanese President started to rise, there were preparations for the launch of the Annapolis peace conference between the Palestinians and the Israelis, the security situation in Iraq was deteriorating owing to the rise of terrorism and Turkey's threatening to invade Northern Iraq region, in addition to the wide regional and international disagreement on the Iranian Nuclear program. The visit highlighted the common stances between Ankara and Riyadh on different regional issues. The two countries agreed on the peaceful solution as the only solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on land for peace principle, on condemning terrorism and unifying the efforts to counter terrorism, domestic reforms should come from within countries not from outside, on the need to preserve the territorial integrity of Iraq, stopping interfering in its internal affairs, the necessity of launching a comprehensive Iraqi national reconciliation between all Iraqi partners; and on the necessity of having a nuclear free zone in the Middle East. Prince Saud Al-Faisal declared during the visit that "No one can move with a neighbour owns a nuclear

¹⁶⁵ Kayaoglu, Turan. *The Organization of Islamic Cooperation: Politics, Problems and Potential*, Routledge, , 2015, Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁶ "Saudi King Abdullah to receive state medal in Ankara visit", http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_saudi-king-abdullah-to-receive-state-medal-in-ankara-visit_126676.html .

power”¹⁶⁷. The Saudi King was accompanied in his visit by the head of Saudi intelligence Prince Muqrin bin Abdel al-Aziz and the Saudi ambassador to the USA at that time Adel al-Jubeer.

The two visits paid by the Saudi king Abdullah in a year and half came besides the lower official meetings bilaterally or multi-laterally (on the regional level) to discuss regional issues and mainly the Iraqi issue which was the master regional issue in the take-off of the Turkish Saudi relations. Saudi Arabia attended the meetings of the Iraq Neighbouring Initiative launched by Turkey in late 2002 on the level of Foreign Ministers and attended other meetings of interiors ministers to discuss the same issue. Saudi Arabia and Turkey, besides Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan and Malaysia attended Pakistan regional conference for discussing the situation in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Iran on February 25th 2007¹⁶⁸.

Turkey and the GCC have signed a memorandum of understanding in order to launch a strategic dialogue for developing the relations between them on September 2nd 2008. The memorandum entails that an annual meeting to be held between the Foreign Minister of Turkey and the Foreign Ministers of the GCC states which chairs the annual round of the GCC¹⁶⁹. The agreement opens the door for higher level of cooperation and coordination between Turkey and GCC member states in the fields of politics, security, defence and development. However the secondary committees has reached actions plans on developing cooperation in the fields of trade, investments, energy, transportation, agriculture, food security, electricity, culture, media, health, education, tourism, environment while no action plans on the fields security and defence have been discussed yet. The strategic dialogue between

¹⁶⁷ “Saudi Envoy to Turkey speaks to Al-Riyadh newspaper: Turkish Saudi relations reflected positively on Turkish Arab Relations”, Riyadh Newspaper, <http://www.alriyadh.com/369067>.

¹⁶⁸ “Muslim states oppose use of force against Iran”, <http://acturca.info/2007/02/26/muslim-states-oppose-use-of-force-against-iran/> .

¹⁶⁹ “Strategic Dialogue with Turkey”, <https://www.gcc-sg.org/index001e.html?action=Sec-Show&ID=609> .

Turkey and the GCC was widely recognized in the Turkish and Arab media as a strategic dialogue over Iran, the Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan has declared that “Turkey pays high importance to the Gulf security and it will from the first countries affected from any deterioration of the security there”¹⁷⁰; Samir Salha, a Turkish journalist who speaks Arabic fluently, wrote an article in *al-Sharq al-Awsat* saying that the Turkish-Gulf treaty means Iran on the first level and it is a direct message to revise its regional policies in the Gulf, its insistence on the nuclear program and its aggression against the UAE¹⁷¹.

On January 4th 2009, Prime Minister Erdoğan paid his first visit to Saudi Arabia as a part of his visit to Egypt, Syria and Jordan upon the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2008-2009¹⁷². Turkey was trying to mediate to reach a cease fire through the USA and Arab countries and Prime Minister Erdoğan held meetings with the head of the political bureau of *Hamas* Khalid Mashal and the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. The discussion of the Palestinian issue was occupying the talks with the Saudi King Abdullah, as mentioned by the Saudi official Press Agency¹⁷³.

After one month of Erdoğan’s visit, President Abdullah Gül paid another visit to Saudi Arabia where he met with the Saudi king and Saudi crown prince Salman bin Abdel Aziz and Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal. The Turkish President gave a speech on Turkey, the Palestinian-Israeli Peace process and the Middle East in the Saudi Shura Council to be the first Turkish President addressing the council¹⁷⁴. He

¹⁷⁰ Salha, Samir. “Turkish-Gulf Partnership: How will Iran Act?”, September 2008, <http://archive.aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&article=486754&issueno=10882#.VenUrhGeDGc>.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² “Erdoğan’ın barış turu”, December 2008, <http://www.iha.com.tr/haber-erdoganin-baris-turu-49095/>.

¹⁷³ “Saudi King and Turkish PM”, January 2009, <http://www.spa.gov.sa/details.php?id=622335>.

¹⁷⁴ “President Gul arrives at Saudi Arabia”, February 2009, <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/turkish-president-abdullah-gul-arrives-at-saudi-arabias-news-photo/84620324>.

also paid a visit to the Jeddah chamber for commerce and industry where he led a meeting between Turkish and Saudi businessmen¹⁷⁵, King Abdel Aziz city for sciences and Technology¹⁷⁶, King Saud University¹⁷⁷ and visited some of the Saudi military factories¹⁷⁸.

On January 19th 2010, Prime Minister Erdoğan paid another visit to Saudi Arabia and he was accompanied by Turkish businessmen. During the visit he was awarded the International Prize of King Faisal for Serving Islam¹⁷⁹, a prize which the Arab media said that it was rewarded because of his stance in Davos Economic Forum against the Israeli President Shimon Peres and his harsh critic on the Israeli operation on Gaza (widely known as One minute crisis) and he received an honorary PhD from Um al-Qura university for his contributions to the Islamic issues where he delivered a speech on the Palestinian issue and praised the Saudi King's achievements and the Saudi foreign policy¹⁸⁰. In March 2011, Prime Minister Erdoğan visited Jeddah Economic Forum where he was one of the keynote speakers¹⁸¹.

¹⁷⁵ “Turkish President Meets Businessmen in Jeddah”, February 2009, <http://www.spa.gov.sa/details.php?id=632954> .

¹⁷⁶ “Turkish President Visits King Abdullah’s City for Science and Technology”, February 2009, <http://www.spa.gov.sa/details.php?id=632613>

¹⁷⁷ “Turkish President Visits King Saud University”, February 2009, <http://www.spa.gov.sa/details.php?id=632611>

¹⁷⁸ FNSS company in Saudi Arabia, <http://www.bayt.com/en/company/fnss-middle-east-llc-1511184/>

¹⁷⁹ “Turkish PM Visits Chamber of Commerce in Jeddah”, January 2010, <http://www.spa.gov.sa/>.

¹⁸⁰ “Um al-Qura university gives Erdogan honorary PhD”, March 2011, <http://www.spa.gov.sa/details.php?id=875423> .

¹⁸¹ “Turkish PM Visits Jeddah”, March 2011, <http://www.spa.gov.sa/details.php?id=875262> .

On the level of Foreign Ministers, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu visited Riyadh on January 2nd 2011 where he held talks with King Abdullah on the reconciliation between Fateh and *Hamas*, Peace process and the Israeli policy¹⁸² and Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal paid a visit to Ankara on January 12th 2011 through which he discussed the resignation of Fuad al-Sanyora government in Lebanon and threats of renewal of clashes within Lebanon¹⁸³.

2.4.3 Turkish-Saudi Economic Relations:

The revival of the political relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia in the shadow of Saudi King Abdualh's two visits to Ankara and the four visits of Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Abdullah Gül to Riyadh has provided an atmosphere of confidence and encouragement for developing the economic and trade relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. As argued by a Saudi academician, Saudi investors felt confident about their investments as they see the political relations between their country and Turkey is developing. In addition to that, the economic dimension of the developing relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia received a lot of attention in Turkey more than Saudi Arabia. In their declarations, Turkish officials (the President, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister) often refer to the size of bilateral trade volume in their press conferences during their visits to Riyadh or during receiving Saudi officials, unlike the Saudi side who pays more attention to the political side of the relations and the environment surrounding the economic relations with Turkey. All these have provided the Saudi investors with assurances that Turkey is a good place for investment.

¹⁸² "Davutoğlu visiting Saudi Arabia, will meet with King Abdullah", http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_davutoglu-visiting-saudi-arabia-will-meet-with-king-abdullah_197286.html .

¹⁸³ "Saudi Arabia, Turkey Urge Hezbollah to Rejoin Lebanon Government", January 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/saudi-arabia-turkey-urge-hezbollah-to-rejoin-lebanon-government-1.336661> .

The Turkish investors since old times are interested in the construction and infrastructure fields of investment in Saudi Arabia. While the Saudi investors, with regard to the wide prosperous fields of investments in Turkey, found wide investing opportunities in sectors of Energy, Tourism, Real state, Petrochemicals, Banking, Agriculture, Industry, etc. encouraged by the privatization programs proposed by the Turkish government and the supporting Turkish governmental institutions for the new foreign investors.

The Turkish exports to Saudi Arabia have increased more than three times since 2005 until 2013, figure 2. The trade volume between the two countries has been boosted in this period 7 times bigger than the volume in 2001 as shown in figure 3.

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
962,156	983,226	1,486,917	2,201,875	1,768,216	2,217,645	2,763,475	3,676,611	3,191,481

Figure 2 - TurkStat: Turkish Exports to Saudi Arabia in USD Thousand¹⁸⁴

2001	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
1.2	1.7	2.8	3.9	5.5	3.3	4.6	6.2	8.0	7.3

Figure 3 – TUIK: Trade Volume between Turkey and Saudi Arabia in USD Billion¹⁸⁵

The Saudi Ogur company owned by Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri is one of the first Saudi investors to enter the Turkish market after buying 55% of the shares of the Turkey's fixed-line operator Turk Telekom for USD 6.5 billion in

¹⁸⁴ Turkish Statistical Institute(TurkStat), www.turkstat.gov.tr .

¹⁸⁵ Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, www.tuik.gov.tr .

August 2005¹⁸⁶ and 81% of the shares of Avea, which is one of the three GSM operators in Turkey, the company now have a market value worth of USD 15.6 billion¹⁸⁷.

During the first visit of the Saudi King Abdullah, Saudi investors show their interest in investing in the GAP project (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi) which includes investments in sectors such as agriculture and irrigation, hydroelectric power production, urban and rural infrastructure, forestry, education and health to raise the living standards of the Turkish people living in South-eastern Anatolia (Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Mardin, and Şırnak)¹⁸⁸. Upon the food crisis that took place in Saudi Arabia in 2008, the government asked the businessmen to focus on the agriculture projects and land reclamation in the countries close to Saudi Arabia¹⁸⁹. Saudi-invested Planet Food World and Tabuk were among the Arab companies who focus on organic agriculture with wide investments in Kilis that cost a total of USD 20 billion¹⁹⁰. Besides Planet Food world and Tabuk, The International Agriculture and Food Investment Co (Agroinvest), a company formed by a group of Saudi Arabia's leading investors with USD 533 million worth of capital, declared their plans to invest in agriculture projects in Turkey¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁶ "Saudi Oger says keeping shares in Türk Telekom", January 2012, http://www.todayszaman.com/business_saudi-oger-says-keeping-shares-in-turk-telekom_270098.html .

¹⁸⁷ Saudi Oger, http://www.saudioger.com/business_telecommunication.html .

¹⁸⁸ Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi, www.gap.gov.tr.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Saudi Academician Dr. Khaled Baturfi in Saudi Arabia, May 2015.

¹⁹⁰ "Saudi to go to GAP in 2010", June 2009, <http://www.invest.gov.tr/en-US/infocenter/news/Pages/1206200917420.aspx>

¹⁹¹ "Saudi's Agroinvest to raise \$533m for farm investments", April 2010, <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/saudi-s-agroinvest-raise-533m-for-farm-investments-156322.html#.VengexGeDGc> .

In 2008, Banking Regulation and Supervision Board (BDDK) approved the sale of shares of Türkiye Finans to National Commercial Bank (NCB) based in Saudi Arabia which agreed to buy the shares of Boydak and Ulker groups (60% of the shares of the bank) for USD 1.08 billion¹⁹². Türkiye Finans, in addition to AKBANK which is managed by Citibank group where Prince al-Waleed bin Talal has shares in it and Albaraka Bank are the biggest financial institutions in Turkey where Saudis have more than 50% of their shares¹⁹³.

In 2009, Abdul Latif Jameel (ALJ) Group Saudi based, the largest independent distributor of Toyota vehicles in the world, has purchased 65 percent of shares in ToyotaSA (Toyota Sabancı Pazarlama) for USD 49 million from Sabancı Holding which distributes spare parts and vehicles for the market in Turkey and East Europe. This deal made by (AJL) to be added to the already owned Daihatsu distributorship in early 2000s¹⁹⁴. Moreover, (ALJ) declared a plan of investing a USD 1 billion in Turkey after inspections in the energy, tourism and real estate sectors. The company declared that ALJ's investments in Turkey have reached a quarter of a billion dollars and its existing operations provide ALJ with about USD 1 billion in annual turnover¹⁹⁵.

The Kingdom Holding Company (KHC) led by Chairman, Prince Al-Waleed Bin Talal, which manages and operate worldwide assets, has a strong presence in Turkey in different sectors. The (KHC) manages hotels like The Four Seasons at the Bosphorus, Sultanahmet, Bodrum, Çeşme, Swissotel in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir and

¹⁹² "Banking watchdog approves Türkiye Finans sale", March 2008, http://www.todayszaman.com/business_banking-watchdog-approves-turkiye-finans-sale_135294.html .

¹⁹³ "Saudi group to invest in Turkish agriculture sector", September 2009, <http://www.invest.gov.tr/en-US/infocenter/news/Pages/0909200920079.aspx> .

¹⁹⁴ "ALJ buys 65% of stake in Toyotasa", October 2009, <http://www.arabnews.com/node/328867> .

¹⁹⁵ "Saudi-based ALJ set to invest USD 1 billion in Turkey", October 2012, <http://www.invest.gov.tr/en-US/infocenter/news/Pages/031012-alj-group-investing-usd-1-billion-in-turkey.aspx> .

Bodrum, The Fairmont in Istanbul, Mövenpick Hotel Istanbul, Mövenpick Hotel Izmir and Mövenpick Hotel Bodrum. It also manages financial and media sectors in Turkey through Citigroup and Fox Turkey channel through News Corporation¹⁹⁶.

On the other hand, the Turkish construction companies found varied opportunities in the Saudi Market: Doğuş Construction company has signed a contract to build Riyadh Metro Project in 2014¹⁹⁷, Baytur Construction Company reached a deal to build four hotel towers in Jabal Omar Project¹⁹⁸ and TAV airports has entered in a joint with Alrajhi to maintain and manage various airports in Saudi Arabia through which TAV Airports for several build-operate-transfer (BOT) airport projects in Saudi Arabia¹⁹⁹.

2.4.4 Turkish-Saudi Military Relations:

The take-off in the political bilateral relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia had a positive impact on the military relations between the two countries. According to the statistics of The Machinery and Chemical Industry Institution (MKEK)²⁰⁰ which is responsible for producing most of equipment and tool requirement of the Turkish Armed Forces, and for satisfying also the essential needs of the civil industry. Saudi Arabia comes as the top foreign country bought weapons

¹⁹⁶ “President of Turkey meets Prince al-Waleed”, May 2015, <http://www.kingdom.com.sa/president-of-turkey-meets-prince-alwaleed> .

¹⁹⁷ Dogus Insaat Projects, <http://www.dogusinsaat.com.tr/DOGUSINSAAT/en/corporate/about-us.aspx> .

¹⁹⁸ “Saudi Arabia’s Big 25 Constructor”, http://www.almabani.co/News_highlights/2013/ConstructionWeek_Press_Release_April_2013.pdf .

¹⁹⁹ “Business TAV, Al-Rajhi partner in running Saudi Airports”, November 2009, http://www.todayszaman.com/business_tav-al-rajhi-partner-to-run-saudi-airports_192551.html .

²⁰⁰ “Makin eve Kimya Endusterisi Kurumu, <http://www.mkek.gov.tr/en/Corporate.aspx> .

product by MKEK estimated by 44.5 million TL after delivering SS30 rocket systems to Riyadh in 2011²⁰¹.

Saudi Arabia hosts a branch of the FNSS Middle East Company for Aerospace and Defence which is a Saudi/Turkish/British joint venture which specializes in the defense industry at land systems segment²⁰². The company has a business volume of USD 1 billion since 2004 and its vision is to be the biggest supplier of land systems in Saudi Arabia. In 2007, the company became in charge of the management of the Saudi military facilities in Al-Kharj city (the first military factory established by Saudi Arabia in 1953 for producing ammunition and light weaponry) as a part of a deal worth USD200 million; through which the company would upgrade 300 M113 armoured vehicles after upgrading 64 vehicles in 2004-2005²⁰³.

In 2011, Saudi Arabia has signed a deal with ASELSAN to buy SK2 4700 telecommunication systems and it was delivered in 2013²⁰⁴. Turkey offered a proposal to the Saudi National Guard under the commandship of Prince Metab ibn Abdullah ibn Abdel-Aziz for buying the Turkish ATAK Helicopters T-129 (an edited version of the Italian helicopters A-129) but no reports on finalizing such deal²⁰⁵.

²⁰¹ "MKEK, 5 kıtaya silah sattı kar rekoru kırdı", March 2012, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/20052936.asp> .

²⁰² FNSS Saudi Arabia, <http://www.bayt.com/en/company/fnss-middle-east-llc-1511184/> .

²⁰³ "Turkey's FNSS to upgrade Saudi M113 armored vehicles", August 2007, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_turkeys-fnss-to-upgrade-saudi-m113-armored-vehicles_120473.html .

²⁰⁴ "2011 Faaliyet raporu", http://www.aselsan.com.tr/tr-tr/yatirimci-iliskileri/Documents/Yillik%20Faaliyet%20Raporlari/Aselsan_Faaliyet_Raporu_2011.pdf .

²⁰⁵ "Saudi Arabian National Guard, TAI and T-129 ATAK helicopter", September 2011, http://www.tacticalreport.com/view_news/Saudi_Arabian_National_Guard_TAI_and_T-129_ATAK_helicopter/2170 .

Saudi Arabia took part in the Turkish military exercises “The Anatolian Eagle” hosted by the Turkish Air Forces and held in Konya, Turkey in June 2011, June 2012 and June 2013 along with air forces from UAE, NATO, US and Jordan. The Anatolian Eagle exercises are both national and international trainings that include USA, Germany, Belgium, UAE, Jordan, NATO, Pakistan, UK, Italy and Israel; however the participants differ each and Israel did not take part in these exercises since its last participation in September 2008²⁰⁶.

In 2010, Prince Khaled bin Sultan the deputy defence minister of Saudi Arabia has signed an agreement for training, scientific and technical cooperation in the military field with the Turkish Chief of General Staff İlker Başbuğ, which would facilitate inviting Saudi officers to receive military education and training in Turkey²⁰⁷.

2.5 Conclusion

The chapter paraphrased how the US invasion of Iraq created new political configurations in the Iraqi political process and the outcomes of the war on Iraq has spilled over to other Middle East countries like Lebanon. Turkey and Saudi Arabia has securitized these outcomes and perceived them as a source of threat on their national and regional interest. They found themselves on the same line in some issues like protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq, fearing of the rise of Iran’s influence, supporting Ayad Allawi in 2010 elections and sharing the need for restoring stability in Lebanon upon the Israeli war in June 2006 and internal clashes in May 2008. The regional approaches of Turkey and Saudi Arabia were positively perceived in the Media of both countries and helped in forming a good perception of each other. On the other hand, the degree of rapprochement created out of the new regional outcomes has helped both countries to discover their potential in pushing their bilateral relations on the political level, economic level and the

²⁰⁶ “History of Anatolian Eagle”, <http://www.anadolukartali.tsk.tr/default.asp?loc=en&p=tarihce> .

²⁰⁷ “Turkey Strikes Military Deal with Saudi Arabia”, May 2010, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=turkey-strikes-military-deal-with-saudi-arabia-2010-05-24> .

military level. Turkey has benefited politically and regionally from having good ties with Saudi Arabia, as well Saudi Arabia. Turkey started to attract Saudi capital in its market and Saudi Arabia made use of the Turkish construction companies in its infrastructure projects. Finally Saudi Arabia benefited from the Turkish military products and participated in the Anatolian eagle exercise which is held annually in Turkey.

CHAPTER 3

THE REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX AFTER THE ARAB UPRISINGS IN 2011 AND TURKISH-SAUDI RELATIONS

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter intends to examine the transformations occurred to the regional landscape upon the outbreak of the Arab uprisings in late 2010, the regional dimension of the Egyptian uprisings in 2011 and 2013 and the Syrian uprising in 2011 and How the Turkish foreign policy and Saudi foreign policy reacted towards the Arab uprisings. After 2011, the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood factor in Egypt and Syria represented a source of conflicting between Saudi Arabia and Turkey and left an impact on the perception of the other inside each country, wasted opportunities for mobilizing their efforts against Assad regime in Syria and worsened the political relations between them.

The chapter begins with exploring the major transformations in the geopolitical regional landscape that appeared after the Arab uprisings and explains it further through the Egyptian case, how the Turkish and Saudi policies were conflicting clearly and the Syrian case and how the Turkish and Saudi policies met and diverged on different stations. Finally the chapter ends with pointing out the effect of these regional interactions on the political, economic and military relations between Ankara and Riyadh.

3.2 The Regional Security Complex after the Arab Uprisings in 2011 and Egyptian Uprisings

3.2.1 The Major Transformations in the Regional Landscape after the Arab Spring

The Arab uprisings took place in December 2010 upon the broke out of the Tunisian protests and later spilled over to different Arab countries by leaving the Arab political geography with major transformations and dilemmas that lead to the continuity of uncertainty like: the reproduction of old problems in a new context within these countries, the empowerment of non-state actors vis a vis state actors, and questioning the existence of some regional structures mainly the Arab Regional System²⁰⁸.

These transformations created substantial dilemmas through which Arab states have to deal with; the first is related to addressing the political and economic problems that led people to revolt against their regimes in a new context where the power of the people in the streets occupies a place in the new political equation²⁰⁹. The Arab uprisings have marked the rise of a new paradigm through which the people, protesting against their regimes, became able to control the situation and organizing themselves through the usage of social media and internet²¹⁰. On the other hand, the old problems that were discussed in the pre-Arab Spring period like the proper economic and political reforms agendas are coming back on the agenda in the new context. The new ruling elites in the Arab spring countries seem to have no other choice rather than following economic liberalization and privatization agenda in order to receive more loans and attract foreign direct investment²¹¹ while these

²⁰⁸ Aras, Bulent. and Folk, Richard. "Authoritarian 'geopolitics' of survival in the Arab Spring", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No 2, 2015, <http://research.sabanciuniv.edu/26107/> .

²⁰⁹ Al-Akawi, Zaki Sami. "The Geostrategic Consequences of the Arab Spring", *Open Democracy*, November 2014, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/zaki-samy-elakawi/geostrategic-consequences-of-arab-spring> .

²¹⁰ Al-Akawi, Zaki Sami. *Op.Cit.*

agendas could not help the old regimes to survive and exacerbated social inequalities in Arab societies²¹². Also the question of political and economic reform appears in the countries that did not witness regime change (Jordan, Morocco, Gulf monarchies) where their people are mobilized and waiting for policies that would bring them more open free socio-political system. While these countries chose gradualism in applying reforms, the respond of the masses in these countries to this gradualism is not certain²¹³.

The second dilemma is the empowerment of non-state actors with their territorial or religious or political goals that are not abandoned by certain international rules or regulations in the Arab countries in a way that challenges the established nation-states²¹⁴. The Arab uprisings have remarked the rise of the non-state actors and social/religious movements (like Muslim Brotherhood, *Hizballah*, *Hamas*, Islamic State of Syria and Iraq ISIS, Salafi movements, etc.) with their own political, religious and territorial goals²¹⁵. This has raised a lot of questions about whether the non-state actors will be satisfied with forming political parties and adopting national agendas or will they choose to keep on their structures, whether their ideology and activeness will be abandoned by the national territories of the countries they rule or will they aspire for a wider regional structures like what a Muslim Brother leader called ‘a Muslim Brotherhood Mediterranean Chain’²¹⁶ or the territories claimed by

²¹¹ Rohac, Dalibor. “The Arab Spring Needs Economic Reform”, *National Review*, July 2013, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/354256/arab-spring-needs-economic-freedom-dalibor-rohac>.

²¹² Gause III, F. Gregory. “Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring”, *Foreign Policy*, July-August 2011 issue, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-africa/2011-07-01/why-middle-east-studies-missed-arab-spring> .

²¹³ Janardhan, N. “GCC response to Arab Spring: Continuity amidst change”, July 2011, Al-Arabiya, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/07/18/158083.html> .

²¹⁴ Elhusseini, Fadi. “The Arab Spring and the rise of non-state actors”, June 2015, *Today's Zaman*, <http://www.todayszaman.com/op-ed-the-arab-spring-and-the-rise-of-non-state-actors-386883.html> .

²¹⁵ Elhusseini, Fadi, *Op.Cit.*

²¹⁶ An interview in Alexandria with the head of foreign affairs committee in the Freedom and Justice Party (the political party of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt).

ISIS in Syria, Iraq and Libya after 2013. On the other hand, the Arab states that witnessed regime change are facing deep crises related to internal disputes over social justice, political participation, political rights which question the legitimacy of the ruling regime, make people in these countries turn back to their formal tribal and sectarian identity as trustworthy shelters²¹⁷ and make facing these non-state actors a more complicated issue in front of Arab nation-states²¹⁸.

The third dilemma comes from the uncertainty and ambiguity of the regional structure that will take place in the Middle East after the uprisings. The traditional Arab Regional System has lived strong setbacks since the beginning of the 21st century starting from the US invasion of Iraq to the NATO intervention in Libya where the Arab countries became more exposable to foreign intervention without opposition from the main actors in the Arab system like the League of Arab States. The weakness of the Arab Regional System can be expressed in the low performance of the traditional Arab regional powers: Egypt and Syria (who were together with Saudi Arabia representing the leaders of the Arab order in the post-Gulf war era 1991). Another feature of this weakness is the trials of ‘peripheral’ regional powers like Iran, Israel and Turkey to consolidate their involvement in the politics of the Arab regional geography, which started after the US invasion of Iraq, during the Arab uprisings like for example: Turkey’s support for Muslim Brotherhood, Iran’s direct support for Shi’a in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, and Israel’s attacks on Gaza 2012 and 2014²¹⁹. Finally the rise of non-Arab identities (like Kurds, Syriac, Yezidis, Turkmen, etc.) as a trustworthy shelter for different groups

²¹⁷ Bacik, Gokhan. “Who will lead the Middle East? The patterns of destructive competition”, *Today's Zaman*, October 2013, http://www.todayszaman.com/columnists_who-will-lead-the-middle-east-the-patterns-of-destructive-competition_329313.html .

²¹⁸ Dissouki, Ali Elldin Helal. “The Question of Existence: The Arab Regional System in Face of Division and Sectarianism”, *Al-Siyasa Al-Dawliya*, Vol. 198, October 2014, P.44.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

living in Arab countries represents a challenge to preserving the ‘Arab’ identity of the “Arab Regional System”²²⁰.

3.2.2 The Fall of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt:

The uprising in Egypt, the most populated Arab country and the traditional leader of the Arab world, can be stated as the strongest start point of the uprisings’ spill over to other countries. It was Egypt that took over the international as well as regional agendas and convinced the world that the protests marked something fundamentally new²²¹. The Egyptian regime, supported by the army was widely perceived as one of the strongest regimes not to easily fall in less than a month (from January 25th until February 17th 2011) and its downfall, despite the strong opposition of Gulf countries, remarked the launch of a strong wave of change that would probably sweep most of the Arab countries.

President Mubarak foreign policy’s doctrine has contributed to the erosion of his political base. A state of dissatisfaction with the orientation of the Egyptian foreign policy was appearing in the protests and demonstrations that took place against the regime even before 25th January 2011. Many Egyptians saw Egypt’s foreign policy as subservient to Washington and Tel Aviv, as the protests were calling for restoring dignity to the ordinary Egyptians; for Egypt national dignity also means a foreign policy that is made in Cairo²²². The popular trend was against Egypt’s growing reliance on the US, Egypt’s loss of its regional role and not being able to

²²⁰ Sayegh, Yazid. “The Arab Region is at a Transformation Point”, Al-Hayat Newspaper, August 2014, <http://alhayat.com/Opinion/Writers/4241169/> .

²²¹ Lynch, Marc. *The Arab Uprisings: The Unfinished Revolutions*, Public Affairs Publisher, January 2013, P.52.

²²² Shehata, Samir. “Egypt Declined during Mubarak’s Rule”, The New York Times, October 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/10/07/is-egypt-losing-its-regional-power/egypt-declined-during-mubaraks-rule> .

influence in its periphery, its taking part in the siege of Gaza strip and losing the prestigious position it gained under rule of President Nasser in African politics²²³.

The fall of President Mubarak and the rise of people's call for a change in the foreign policy opened the door for lots of uncertainties on the new path Egypt will follow in its foreign policy. Under the rule of the SCAF (Supreme Council of Armed Forces), the question of re-thinking Egypt's foreign policy was raised up by all Egyptian political parties. The SCAF chose the continuity of Mubarak's foreign policy without major transformations in the relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and the Gulf states but in a new way that would absorb the domestic calls of making a change in the foreign policy²²⁴. In the first month of SCAF rule (February 2011), Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi sent a letter to the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad saying that "Opening a new page in the Egyptian-Syrian relations is an essential issue and he is looking forward to meeting with him" but the relations did not witness a major breakthrough since mid-2011, as signs of another uprising waiting for Syria started to appear²²⁵. In February 2011, the SCAF allowed the passage of two Iranian warships through the Suez Canal for the first time and Israel described it as a provocative action²²⁶. On March 29th 2011, the Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil al-Arabi (the then Secretary General of the Arab League) has declared that Egypt is opening a new page in its relations with all countries, including Iran²²⁷. However, the relations did not developed more than that, as the al-

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Heydarian, Richard Javad. "Egypt's Evolving Foreign Policy", June 2011, http://fpif.org/egypts_evolving_foreign_policy/.

²²⁵ "Tantawi's message to Bashar Assad", March 2011, <http://arabic.people.com.cn/31662/7315469.html>.

²²⁶ "Egypt is ready to restore diplomatic relations with Iran", April 2011, http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/04/110404_ianegypt.shtml.

²²⁷ "Egyptian foreign minister declarations on Iran", March 2011, <http://twitmail.com/email/65998317/216/false>.

Arabi declared Egypt's support for the ruling family in Bahrain and its approval on the GCC intervention in Bahrain by describing it as a "practical application for the concept of Collective Security in the Arab Gulf region" and added that "stability and Arabism of Arab states in the Gulf is a red line for Egypt"²²⁸. In May 2011, al-Arabi said discussing the restoration of relations with Iran is premature issue²²⁹. In the Palestinian issue, Egypt declared opening the Rafah crossing to Gaza permanently on May 25th 2011²³⁰ unlike the days of Mubarak who was opening it just for delivering humanitarian aids in order to press on *Hamas* to sign a reconciliation deal with Fateh and to accept peace talks with Israel under the conditions of president Mahmoud Abbas. While on the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, Egypt did not take a major change towards it, not to risk any change in the American economic and military aids to Egypt. It declared its respect to the treaties it signed from before as long as the other side respects it and showed many times its desire in editing the agreement to allow more troops to enter Sinai in order to be able to curb the terrorist groups taking place in the mountains, but it did not get positive responses from Israel. As a sign of Egypt's upholding the peace treaty with Israel, Egypt did not suspend the peace treaty with Israel upon three Egyptian soldiers were killed by mistaken Israeli fires while following a group of terrorists attacked Eilat port in Israel²³¹ and escaped inside the Egyptian territories, an event

²²⁸ "Egypt supports GCC actions in Bahrain", April 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2011/4/6/>.

²²⁹ Nagi, Mohamed Abbas. "Relations between Egypt and Iran on a light fire", Al-Khaleej, June 2011, <http://www.alkhaleej.ae/supplements/page/20ab2b56-425e-41e5-9816-e09c6cb5d1f1>.

²³⁰ "Egypt opens Rafah crossing permanently", May 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2011/5/25/>.

²³¹ "The incident of the Israeli embassy in Cairo", September 2011, http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/09/110910_israel_security_egypt_details.shtml.

that sparked a wage outrage in the Egyptian street and raised the calls for hanging up peace treaty with Israel, mainly from the Muslim Brotherhood²³².

3.2.3 The Rise and Fall of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt:

Under the rule of President Mohamed Morsi who ascended to power in June 2012, Egyptian foreign policy has lived sorts of continuity in some aspects and major transformations on others in the Middle East, owing to the change took place in the foreign policy making process in Egypt. While the security agencies and foreign ministry were the main institutions involved in the decision making process under President Mubarak's rule and SCAF's rule, the Muslim Brotherhood guidance bureau and the foreign policy advisors of President Mohamed Morsi were the new actors in the process.

The new Egyptian government renewed its commitment to its strategic relations with the US and stressed that is still a US ally in the region²³³. It carried on upholding the peace treaty with Israel despite domestic calls to suspend the agreement upon the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2012, mediated a cease fire between *Hamas* and Israel, and the Egyptian security institutions continued to cooperate with its Israeli counter partners on fighting terrorism. On the other side, major changes happened in the relations between Egypt and Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Iran. The Egyptian government chose to walk along with Qatar and Turkey in some regional issues like managing the uprising in Syria and mediating a cease fire between *Hamas* and Israel.

Egyptian-Qatari relations witnessed a noticeable improvement during the rule of president Morsi; Doha has offered Egypt loans and investments totally estimated around USD 10 billion from the total Gulf USD 20 billion economic aids promised to Egypt. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa has paid a visit to Egypt in August 2012 as the

²³² "Egypt asks for investigation on its soldiers' accident", August 2011, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/08/18/162901.html> .

²³³ "Egyptian Foreign Policy orientation under the new president", July 2012, <http://arabic.people.com.cn/31662/7878339.html> .

first Arab leader to visit Egypt after Morsi took the rule and Doha lent USD 2 billion for the central bank of Egypt²³⁴. Qatar declared its plans for entering the Egyptian market to invest in the mega power projects, infrastructure, Tourism and the financial market with a capital estimated around USD 18 billion²³⁵. The Qatari National Bank (QNB) signed deals to buy more than 50% of the shares of two international banks (PNB Paribas bank and Societie Generale bank) who were quitting the Egyptian market, and the Qatari firm Qinvest²³⁶ (a leading financial services firm owned chaired by Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani) negotiated a deal to buy 60% of the Egyptian financial firm Hermes which Gamal Mubarak (son of president Mubarak) had shares in it²³⁷. Also as a sign on the close relations between Cairo and Doha in this period, Sheikh Hamad al-Thani of Qatar has paid a visit to Gaza strip through Rafah crossing in October 2012 accompanied by an Egyptian minister, through which he was boarded on an Egyptian military jet from al-Arish airport to Rafah crossing; to be the first Arab leader visiting Gaza under the Israeli siege since his last visit there in 1999²³⁸.

Another transformation was noticed in Egypt's relation with *Hamas*; owing to the ideological relations between the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Muslim Brotherhood branch in Gaza, *Hamas*²³⁹. The Egyptian government carried on its

²³⁴ Ibid .

²³⁵ "Open Horizons between Egypt and Qatar", September 2012, <http://www.raya.com/news/pages/5136368a-616d-4ff6-b8a1-bb78f49ffbbf> .

²³⁶ "Qinvest Profile", http://www.qinvest.com/QInvest_NewDesign/QInvest/English/Q_ARTICLE.ASP?SecID=58&PageID=8&SubSecTitle=QInvest%20Profile .

²³⁷ "Fears rise in Egypt from the Qatari investments", September 2012, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/09/02/235611.html> .

²³⁸ "Qatari Emir arrives Gaza in a Historical Visit", October 2012, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2012/10/23> .

²³⁹ Felsberger, Stefanie. "The Future of the Egyptian Foreign Policy", Austria Institut Fur Europa, Fokus 4/2014, <http://www.aies.at/download/2012/AIES-Fokus-2012-04.pdf> .

policy of easing the siege on Gaza and kept the Rafah crossing gates opened for the Palestinians to travel and enter Egypt. Upon the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2012, it took a harsh stand on Israel by withdrawing the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv, and keeping Rafah crossing gates opened for travel and humanitarian aids entering to Gaza. The Egyptian Prime Minister paid a visit to Gaza under that attack where he met with ex-Prime Minister Ismail Haniya and Cairo called for an urgent meeting for the Foreign Ministers of the Arab league²⁴⁰. Also Egypt supported the Qatari initiative for holding a small Arab summit to press Fateh and *Hamas* for reconciliation and resumed mediation efforts between them upon Khaled Mishal's visit to Cairo in March 2013²⁴¹.

Another transformation was on the relations with Iran. The ice of the Egyptian-Iranian relations seemed to be broken by the visit of President Morsi to Tehran in order to attend the annual summit of the Non-Alignment Movement in 2012, and the visit of the Iranian president Ahmadinejad to Cairo in February 2013 to be the first visit on the president's level since the last visit of the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat to Tehran in 1971. However, the Syrian uprising and Muslim Brotherhood pro-Sunni stand along with Qatar and Turkey were the main hindrance behind restoring the diplomatic relations with Iran. The ice breaking in relations with Iran was simultaneous with the deterioration in the Egyptian-Emirati relations, upon UAE's hosting of the ex-Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik who was the last Prime Minister of President Mubarak and the presidential candidate in front of president Morsi. The UAE interior minister Dahi Khalfan gave offensive declarations against Muslim Brotherhood by saying "The Muslim Brotherhood are one of the sources of threat to the security in Gulf, not less than Iran"²⁴². Also the Egyptian minister of finance declared that there will be no economic aids coming

²⁴⁰ "Gaza between Mubarak and Morsi", Aljazeera, November 2012, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2012/11/20/> .

²⁴¹ "Khaled Mishal Leaves Cairo", March 2013, <http://onaeg.com/?p=717151> .

²⁴² "Who Overthrows Who: Dahi Khalfan or Ikhwan", elaph Newspaper, November 2013, <http://elaph.com/Web/NewsPapers/2013/11/851005.html> .

from UAE to Egypt²⁴³. The UAE arrested a group of 60 persons (including Egyptians) from the Muslim Brotherhood's branch in UAE and charged them in early 2013 "with establishing an illegal organization, holding secret meetings and being in contact with the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Egypt to exchange sensitive information and receiving lectures from them on methods of regime change in Arab countries, in a way that threatens the national security of UAE"²⁴⁴.

Following a popular uprising against the ruling Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and president Morsi, the Egyptian army intervened to dismiss the president in July 3rd 2013, suspended the constitution and declared the head of the constitutional court as an interim president with a six month time table of having a new constitution and calling for a new parliamentary and presidential elections. The Egyptian foreign policy has witnessed another transformation in its orientation; from favouring the alliance with Turkey and Qatar into entering in a strong alliance with Saudi Arabia, UAE and Jordan (similar to the old axis of moderates in the days of Mubarak).

3.2.4. The Saudi Policy towards the Arab Spring and Egyptian

Uprisings:

The timing of the Arab uprisings was simultaneous with a steady loss of Riyadh's grip on the regional balance of power towards Iran and the heavy setbacks of its Arab nationalist/Sunni allies in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. In 2010, despite Ayad Allawi's receiving the highest votes in the parliamentary elections, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki succeeded in extending his premiership for a second term. In Lebanon, the failure of 2006 Israeli operation and the benefits *Hizballah* got out from Doha Agreement 2008 further strengthened its stance in front of 14 March alliance. *Hamas*, in Palestine, was continuing to postpone the reconciliation with Fateh and went further to enhance its control over Gaza strip which opens a new

²⁴³ "Egyptian minister of Finance: UAE Will Not support Us Financially", August 2012, <http://www.aa.com.tr/ar/news/74637> .

²⁴⁴ "A Brotherhood Cell Sent to Prison in UAE", January 2013, <http://arabic.cnn.com/middleeast/2014/01/19/egyptian-uae-trial> .

regional playground for Iran to extend its influence²⁴⁵. Saudi Arabia started to watch its regime allies in the other countries falling down one after one in the first half of 2011 like Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (with exception to Muammer Qaddafi of Libya). The protests in Bahrain against al-Khalifa royal family, if succeeded, would be a start of other uprisings in Saudi eastern Shi'a provinces and in other GCC countries. The uprising in Yemen, regarded as the backyard of Saudi Arabia, has forced Riyadh to play a role in smoothing a power transition from Ali Abdullah Saleh to his vice president Abd Rabou Mansour Hady (a Saudi ally)²⁴⁶.

Saudi Arabia adopted a new approach through which it will take the responsibility of protecting itself and its allies and it will not be protected by others anymore (especially the USA which abandoned its allies)²⁴⁷. In the wake of the uprisings, Riyadh found a new opportunity of reasserting its Arab regional leadership in the destabilized Middle East²⁴⁸, after halting down the protests that took place in its eastern provinces. It benefited from its military and financial capabilities in preserving the stability of the GCC regimes and activated its linkage to the Salafi groups in the countries that witnessed regime change in order to ensure its influence in front of the rise of Muslim Brothers²⁴⁹.

²⁴⁵ Gause III, F. Gregory. "Saudi Arabia in The New Middle East", Council on Foreign Relations", Special Report No. 63, September 2011, P.16, <http://www.cfr.org/saudi-arabia/saudi-arabia-new-middle-east/p26663> .

²⁴⁶ Rieger, Rene. "In Search For Stability: Saudi Arabia and Arab Spring", Gulf Research Center Cambridge, Gulf Research Meeting Papers, 2014.

²⁴⁷ Obaid, Nawaf. "Saudi Arabia gets forceful on foreign policy", October 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/saudi-arabia-gets-forceful-on-foreign-policy/2013/10/24/b037d03e-3c1a-11e3-b7ba-503fb5822c3e_story.html?hpid=z3 .

²⁴⁸ Kamrava, Mehran. "The Arab Spring and the Saudi-Led Counterrevolution", *Orbis*, Vol. 56, No., 2012, <http://www18.georgetown.edu/data/people/mk556/publication-61403.pdf>.

²⁴⁹ "How Saudi Arabia Controls the Salafi Stream in The Arab World", France 24, September 2009, <http://www.france24.com/ar/20120924> .

On March 14th 2011, it sent about 1,200 Saudi soldiers equipped with armored vehicles to Manama under the title of GCC Peninsula Shield Force in order to protect the governmental facilities and royal palaces²⁵⁰. On March 10th 2011, the GCC has offered financial loans to Bahrain and Oman estimated by USD 20 billion for infrastructure and housing projects on a period of 10 years. Riyadh has called for a political union between the kingdom and Bahrain, in a clear message for Iran that the Gulf is a sphere of influence for Saudi Arabia. The Saudi king Abdullah has asked the GCC member states to upgrade the GCC organization into a union since the stability of Gulf is under threat, as he said in the GCC summit held in Riyadh in December 2011²⁵¹. Also Saudi Arabia recommended including Morocco and Jordan to the GCC despite their geographical proximity, as a kind of solidarity with the governments of these countries in face of their economic problems²⁵².

In the Egyptian case, Saudi Arabia was opposing the protests against President Mubarak in Egypt since its beginning until his downfall. The Saudi government felt shocked that the US administration abandoned a loyal ally of decades like Mubarak after only days of popular protests and did its best to convince the US government to continue its political support for the Mubarak regime. As Prince Turki Al-Faisal puts it, “King Abdullah held the closest relations with President Mubarak for 30 years, abandoning him or any close ally during a revolutionary uprising was not and will never be a policy option for the Kingdom”²⁵³. Egypt was a strong ally in its regional policy which was formulated on the purpose of the containment of Iran’s influence in the region and rolling it back. President Mubarak shared the same view with Riyadh on the threat of the Iranian expansion in different Arab countries and

²⁵⁰ Bronner, Ethan and Slackman, Michael. “Saudi Troops Enter Bahrain to Help Put Down Unrest,”The New York Times, March 14, 2011.

²⁵¹ “Saudi King Calls for Unity”, Al-Arabiya, December 2011, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/12/19/183322.html> .

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Al-Faisal, Turki. “Saudi Arabia’s Foreign Policy”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 20, Issue 4, December 2013, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/mepo.12044/abstract> .

he was an important player in the axis of moderate Arab countries supporting 14 March alliance in Lebanon, Fatah in Palestine and Ayad Allawi and his Sunni allies in Iraq, through which his fall would leave Saudi Arabia alone with Jordan in the axis. However the developments on the ground and the Egyptian army's decision to ask Mubarak to leave power were stronger than the Saudi efforts. The concern increased highly out of any possible spill over of the Egyptian uprising towards other regimes in the GCC.

After the departure of Mubarak, Saudi Arabia worked on asserting its regional leadership and extending its leverage on Egypt through its financial capabilities and through its natural Salafi allies who were rising popularly in the street. Riyadh declared providing USD 4 billion to support the Egyptian economy in form of “soft loans, deposits and grants”²⁵⁴, at a time Egypt was suffering the departure of foreign investors and high shortage in foreign currency as tourists were deserting the country. On the other hand, wide media reports talked about Saudi financial support to the Salafi movements and parties in Egypt²⁵⁵. The Salafist movement, represented by *Al-Nour* party and who received 25% of the seats of 2011 parliament and had their candidate Sheikh Hazem Abu Ismail for the presidential elections, were the closest political actor to Saudi Arabia. They both share the same Wahhabi Salafi conservative ideology of Islam, different than the Muslim Brothers' interpretation. Egyptian Salafists found in Saudi Arabia their main regional ally as the rise of the Wahhabi preach under Mohamed Ibn Abdel Wahhab (the main intellectual leader of Salafi Wahhabism) started with the establishment of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the famous alliance between Mohamed Ibn Abdel Wahhab and Ibn Saud. While Saudi Arabia has found in the Salafist their proper allies in Egypt, as they are popular, can be frenemies to the Muslim Brothers and they oppose mending diplomatic relations between Egypt and Iran. The Salafists

²⁵⁴ “Saudi Arabia gives USD 4 billion aids to Egypt”, May 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2011-05-21/saudi-arabia-gives-4-billion-egyptian-economic-aid-spa-says> .

²⁵⁵ “The Saudi Finance to Egyptian Salafists”, August 2011, <http://www.alalam.ir/news/672974> .

used to raise the Saudi flags in their protests and call of the full application of the Islamic sharia law in Egypt, while some media reports spoke widely about a direct financial fund from Saudi Arabia to the Salafists; the Saudi ambassador in Egypt denied that²⁵⁶.

Upon the rise of Mohamed Morsi to power in Egypt, Saudi Arabia feared any shift in Egypt's regional stance towards Iran. Saudi Arabia was concerned that Egypt could aspire for different lines than the Saudi lines under rule of Brotherhood in alliance with Turkey. It tried to deal with Egypt under Morsi and to keep the channels open, unlike other GCC countries like UAE which looked at their rise to power in Egypt as a threat. Saudi Arabia signed a deal to provide Egypt with loans estimated by USD 500 million on June 24th 2013 and provided Egypt with USD 750 million as a credit line for oil imports²⁵⁷. Saudi Arabia was the first country visited by President Mohamed Morsi on July 12th 2012 in order to assure the kingdom that Egypt will not seek rapprochement with Iran on the expense of Egyptian-Saudi relations and to assure the kingdom of Egypt's opposing stance on Bashar al-Assad in Syria²⁵⁸. Yet Saudi Arabia did not respond positively to Morsi's initiative during Mecca summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in August 2012 about Syria and the Saudi envoy to Egypt attended two summits of this initiative²⁵⁹. When the Brotherhood in Egypt started to show more softness for approaching Iran in order to deter the UAE²⁶⁰, Saudi concerns about the Brotherhood intentions were enhanced. Also Saudi Arabia got frustrated after the visit paid by the Egyptian

²⁵⁶ "Saudi envoy denies supporting Salafists in Egypt", August 2011, <http://www.an7a.com/54114/>.

²⁵⁷ "Egypt borrows USD 500 million from Saudi Arabia", June 2013, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-borrow-us500-million-saudi-arabia>.

²⁵⁸ "Morsi's visit to Saudi Arabia", July 2013, <http://arabic.people.com.cn/31662/7874139.html>.

²⁵⁹ Farouk, Yasmine. "More than Money: Post-Mubarak Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf", Gulf Research Center, April 2014, https://www.academia.edu/6959702/More_Than_Money_Post_Mubarak_Egypt_Saudi_Arabia_and_the_Gulf.

²⁶⁰ Al-Labbad, Mustafa. "Egypt's Iran policy linked to Muslim Brotherhood", February 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2013/02/ahmadinejad-visit-egyptian-foreign-policy.html>.

Prime Minister Hisham Qandil to Iraq in February 2013 for boosting Egyptian-Iraqi economic relations²⁶¹.

Saudi Arabia showed a firm supportive stand after the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi from power by the Army. It was the first country to congratulate the president of the interim period Adly Mansour. Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal paid a visit to Paris in August 2013²⁶² where he met the French president Francois Hollande, the British Foreign Minister William Hague and the advisor of the German chancellor Cristopher Hisken to ask the EU to ease pressure on Egypt²⁶³. The Saudi government declared that it will substitute any cut in the American and western aids to Egypt in case it took place. When Washington decided to suspend military aid to Egypt, Saudi Arabia along with the UAE brokered a deal worth USD 2 billion of weapons from Russia to Egypt²⁶⁴. Upon the bloody crackdown of the army against the supporters of ex-president Morsi, Saudi King Abdullah said: “Let the entire world know that the people and government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stood and still stand today with our Brothers in Egypt against terrorism, extremism and sedition, and against whomever is trying to interfere in Egypt’s internal affairs”²⁶⁵. Financially, upon the ouster of Morsi Saudi Arabia along with UAE and Kuwait pledged USD 12 billion as total financial aids in loans and grants to the Egyptian economy which helped in supporting the Egyptian local currency and the Egyptian stock market.

²⁶¹ Farouk, Yasmine. *Op.Cit.*

²⁶² “Saudi Arabia call on EU to ease pressure on Egypt”, Al-Shaq Al-Awsaat, August 2013, <http://www.aawsat.net/2013/08/article55314043/saudi-arabia-calls-on-eu-to-ease-pressure-on-egypt> .

²⁶³ “al-Faisal meets with British FM and a German official”, August 2013, http://www.aleqt.com/2013/08/21/article_780084.html .

²⁶⁴ “KSA, UAE to finance Russian arms deal with Egypt”, February 2014, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/ksa-uae-finance-russian-arms-deal-egypt> .

²⁶⁵ Alhomayed, Tareq. “King Abdullah’s Egypt speech was like a surgeon’s scalpel”, August 2013, Al-Sharq Al-Awsaat, <http://www.aawsat.net/2013/08/article55314019> .

3.2.5. The Turkish Policy towards the Arab Spring and Egyptian Uprisings:

Turkey caught surprised by the quick developments to the regional status-quo and the spill over of anti-regime protests from Tunisia to Egypt to Libya to Yemen and then to Syria²⁶⁶. Ankara had invested in the regional pre-Arab uprisings status quo by developing strong political, economic and military relations with the Arab regimes disregarding their democratic nature²⁶⁷. Turkey reacted with the protests in each country on a case to case basis, according to the level of relations it had with each ruling regime²⁶⁸. In Tunisia, Turkey has welcomed the fall of the Tunisian revolution since it had few economic interest in Tunisia. In Libya where Turkey had large economic interests with Qaddafi (Turkish investments estimated by USD 20 billion), Turkey's reaction was not rapid compared to its reaction to Egypt and Tunisia. Turkey first favoured more managed transitions and to give time for diplomatic efforts to persuade Qaddafi for reform; however taken by the development of events in Libya and NATO's intervention supported by the Arab League and Assad's refusal to make reform, Turkey has supported the calls for regime change. While in Bahrain, the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu has described it as one of the "states not needing change" unlike the Arab awakening countries, Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen who were "states resisting change"²⁶⁹.

²⁶⁶ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "Turkey After The Arab Uprisings: Difficulties of Hanging on in There", ISPI, Analysis No. 223, December 2013, <http://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/turkey-after-arab-uprisings-difficulties-hanging-there-9591> .

²⁶⁷ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "Challenges to Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East", TESEV, June 2011, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/challenges-to-turkey-s-soft-power-in-the-middle-east/Content/162.html> .

²⁶⁸ Ozcan, Mesut. "Turkey's Policy towards the Middle East and North Africa after the Arab Spring", TEPAV, Turkish Policy Brief Series, Ninth Edition, 2013, http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1367496675-5.Turkeys_Policy_towards_the_Middle_East_and_North_Africa_after_the_Arab_Spring.pdf .

²⁶⁹ Fuller, Graham. *Turkey and the Arab Spring*, Bozorg Press, 2014, P. 253.

Turkey followed a ‘Democracy Promotion’ agenda after the Zero Problem with Neighbours policy that resulted in strong economic, political and military relations between Turkey and Arab countries. Different circles in the Foreign Policy decision making process talked about a 2.0 version of Zero Problem with Neighbours, as Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu argued that “Turkey developed ties with these regimes because at the time they were not at war with their own people. But when they preferred to suppress the demands of their citizens, we sided with the people and still remain committed to the same democratic vision for our region”²⁷⁰. In addition to that, circles in Turkish foreign policy started to raise other principles above the Zero Problem with Neighbours like the importance of achieving balance between security and freedom. Ahmet Davutoğlu said: “We advised the regimes to no longer ignore their people’s quest for democracy and asked them to establish the balance between freedom and security. If security is sacrificed for freedom, it will lead to chaos, while if freedom is sacrificed for security, it will result in dictatorial regimes”²⁷¹. Turkey’s vision for the region out of the so called ‘Balance between Freedom and Security’ was about establishing a stable regional order where the new regimes enjoys a harmony with their societies after abandoning the notion of stability built on autocratic regimes²⁷².

Turkey prioritized the use of soft power tools and public diplomacy in dealing with the new outcomes of the Arab spring. The Turkish foreign policy started to be more active in the region through the soft power capital it owns and by investing in the

²⁷⁰ Davutoglu, Ahmet. “Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring”, TEPAV, 2012, http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1336135395-4.Principles_of_Turkish_Foreign_Policy_and_Regional_Political_Structuring_by_Ahmet_Davutoglu.pdf.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Kardas, Saban. “From zero problems to leading the change: making sense of transformation in Turkey’s regional policy”, TESEV, 2012, P.6, http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1346423043-0.From_Zero_Problems_to_Leading_the_Change_Making_Sense_of_Transformation_in_Turkeys_Regional_Policy.pdf.

rising political actors who are positive respondents to Turkey like Muslim Brotherhood. Turkey owned an attractive image in the Arab public opinion as a result of its foreign policies stances which were seen as independent: starting from not allowing the USA to use Turkish military bases in attacking Iraq in 2003 until Turkey's stand on Israel during Lebanon war in 2006, Gaza war in 2008-2009 and the famous stand of Prime Minister Erdoğan against the Israeli President Shimon Peres in Davos 2009 which was called later by the 'One Minute' crisis²⁷³. Moreover, Turkey succeeded in portraying an image of success in managing economic and political transformation processes at home that has been viewed quite positively in the Arab countries. There were wide academic discussions in the Arab countries about the so called 'Turkish model' and wide arguments have been debated on the experience of AKP in issues of civil-military relations, economic performance and being a member in the G-20 economies and political Islam²⁷⁴. On the other side, the high probable positive respondents to applying this experience were the Muslim Brotherhood. The Tunisian El-Nahada and Egyptian Muslim Brothers not only found in the rhetoric of the 'conservative' AKP their way for achieving development as a public good to market this ruling model to the voters before the elections but also they found in having close ties with Turkey the opportunity to assure the western countries about their democratic credentials.

In the Egyptian case, Prime Minister Erdoğan was the first leader to call for Mubarak to step down. Turkey did not have strong economic ties further than economic plans of investments estimated by USD 2 billion. While Egyptian President Mubarak was looking at Turkey's high profile regional role as a competitor to Egypt's leadership regional mediator role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, in the Saudi-Syrian dispute, in the Lebanese issue and in reconciliation between Fateh and *Hamas* in Palestine. Egypt did not like the relationship between the ruling

²⁷³ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "Turkey: Arab Perspective", TESEV, Foreign Policy Analysis Series, No. 13, May 2010, http://www.tesev.org.tr/assets/publications/file/Turkey_ArabPerspectives_II.bas%C4%B1m.pdf .

²⁷⁴ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "Challenges to Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East", Op.Cit.

AKP in Turkey and Muslim Brothers in Egypt and other Arab countries, since it regarded them as the main rivalry to the Egyptian ruling regime, however it kept on the relations with Ankara as an important regional actor²⁷⁵.

After the fall down of Mubarak, the Turkish president Abdullah Gül was the first foreign leader to visit Egypt and to meet with the SCAF in March 2011. Turkey has promised to provide Egypt with a loan worth USD 2 billion. It also provided technical equipment (150 garbage trucks) to solve problems relating to municipal services. At that time, it seemed that political Islamists (the Muslim Brothers and Salafists), who were more politically organized in the street, will come to power after the elections²⁷⁶. Turkey utilized its soft power and public diplomacy to build strong relations with the Muslim Brotherhood. Since mid-2011, the relations between Turkey and Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) (Muslim Brotherhood's political party) started to develop in a noticeable way. The FJP admired the experience of the AKP in curbing the influence of the Turkish army in the political life and tried to do the same with the Egyptian military who is infiltrating the public institutions through appointed retired generals. On the other side of Turkey, having an ally like Muslim Brothers, would be a good score for the AKP to raise up its image, support its regional activism policy in the ex-Ottoman territories, open new markets for the Turkish products and allow Turkey to be more present in the different regional problems like peace talks between the Palestinians and Israelis and reconciliation between *Hamas* and Fateh in Palestine²⁷⁷.

In October 2011, before the parliamentary elections by one month, the AKP signed a twinning agreement only with the FJP in Egypt. A Turkish public affairs and

²⁷⁵ Ibid, P. 196.

²⁷⁶ "Turkey to send 150 Garbage Truck to Egypt", May 2013, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_turkey-to-send-150-garbage-trucks-to-egypt_316689.html.

²⁷⁷ Düzgüt, Senem Aydın. "The Seesaw Friendship Between Turkey's AKP and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood", Carnegie Endowment Center, July 2014, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/07/24/seesaw-friendship-between-turkey-s-akp-and-egypt-s-muslim-Brotherhood> .

media company (close to the AKP) visited Egypt to present political consultations and propaganda strategies for the FJP before the parliamentary elections in and before the presidential elections in 2012. Also different groups of the FJP youth paid many visits to Turkey and had meetings with the youth of AKP, non-governmental organizations close to the AKP and think-tanks²⁷⁸. The Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan has paid a visit to Egypt on September 2011 where he was welcomed by thousands of Muslim Brother's followers in the airport. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu stated that Egypt and Turkey could create a new axis of power by saying "It will be an axis of democracy of the two biggest nations in our region, from the north to the south, from the Black Sea down to the Nile Valley in Sudan"²⁷⁹.

After the election of Mohamed Morsi in mid-2012, the Turkish Foreign Minister was the first Foreign Minister to visit president Morsi to congratulate him after becoming a president. President Mohamed Morsi chose Turkey along with Saudi Arabia and Iran in an initiative to solve the Syrian crisis. Egypt was on the same line with Ankara on the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad by asking him to leave power. Moreover, Turkey was highly present in the cease fire talks between *Hamas* and Israel in Cairo upon the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2012 and the head of the Turkish intelligence (MIT) Hakan Fidan stayed in Cairo until a cease fire declared between Israel and *Hamas*. President Morsi also paid a visit to Turkey in September 30th 2012 and took part in the annual congress of the AKP and thanked the Turkish government for its stance on the Egyptian uprising in 2011²⁸⁰. Prime Minister Erdoğan paid another visit to Egypt in November 2012 accompanied by 12 cabinet ministers and 200 Turkish businessmen as Turkey gave the green light for a loan of

²⁷⁸ Ellabbad, Mustafa. "Turkey and Muslim Brotherhood: a bit with unsecured endings", Assafir, September 2012, <http://m.assafir.com/content/1348446668181353200/Opinion> .

²⁷⁹ "Turkey says seeking new axis of power with Egypt", September 2011, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_turkey-says-seeking-new-axis-of-power-with-egypt_257232.html .

²⁸⁰ "Egyptian President Visits Turkey on Sunday", September 2012, <http://www.albawaba.com/ar/> .

US\$1 billion for projects in Egypt's battered infrastructure and Turkish companies could win some of the expected deals with the Egyptian government²⁸¹. Finally in February 2013, President Abdullah Gül paid a new visit to Egypt for discussing the Syrian issue and President Morsi declared that Egypt and Turkey look at the regional issues from a similar perspective²⁸².

Upon the popular uprising that broke out against President Mohamed Morsi in June 30th 2013, Turkey declared its opposition to the ouster of President Morsi by saying “Turkey advocates the view that Egypt’s long term stability and development can be achieved only by respecting people’s democratic will in this country”²⁸³ and describing it as a coup d’état. The Turkish president Gul held a meeting with the Egyptian ambassador in Turkey on July 15th 2013 where they discussed the transitional roadmap in Egypt²⁸⁴ and the ambassador requested to hold a meeting with the Turkish Foreign Minister on July 19th 2013 to discuss political transition in Egypt²⁸⁵. On July 23rd 2013, Turkish president has sent a message to Egypt’s interim President Adly Mansour to congratulate Egypt on its national day²⁸⁶. On the other hand, Prime Minister Erdoğan followed a hard line and said that "Currently, my president in Egypt is Morsi because he was elected by the people; if we don't

²⁸¹ Seibert, Thomas. “Turkey Seeks New Alliance With Visit to Egypt”, November 2012, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/turkey-seeks-new-alliance-with-visit-to-egypt>

²⁸² “Morsi Hold Talks with Gull over Palestine and Syria”, February 2013, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/02/07/morsi-holds-talks-with-gul-over-palestine-syria/> .

²⁸³ “Relations between Turkey and Egypt”, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-egypt.en.mfa> .

²⁸⁴ “Egyptian ambassador discusses transition with Turkish president”, July 2013, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/76510/UI/Front/Login.aspx> .

²⁸⁵ “Turkish FM holds meeting with Egyptian Envoy to Ankara”, July 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-foreign-minister-holds-meeting-with-egyptian-envoy-to-ankara.aspx?pageID=238&nID=51081&NewsCatID=338> .

²⁸⁶ “President Gül congratulates Egyptian interim president on national day”, July 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/president-gul-congratulates-egyptian-interim-president-on-national-day.aspx?pageID=517&nID=51365&NewsCatID=338> .

judge the situation like that it is tantamount to ignoring the Egyptian people"²⁸⁷. The Turkish government called for the release of Morsi who has been held incommunicado at an undisclosed location and continued to harshly criticise the interim period rulers in Egypt with high sympathy to the Muslim Brothers.

In August 2013 and upon the bloody crackdown on the supporters of ex-President Mohamed Morsi in Rabiaa square, Prime Minister Erdoğan has asked the UNSC to meet for discussing the events in Egypt and both countries recalled their ambassadors. Turkey's ambassador returned to Cairo weeks later, but Egypt declined to return its envoy to Ankara, saying it would reconsider only when Turkey stops meddling in Egyptian affairs²⁸⁸. On 23 November 2013 Egypt decided to downgrade its diplomatic ties with Turkey to the level of charge d' affaires, expelling the Turkish ambassador in Cairo and declaring him persona non grata²⁸⁹ after Turkish Prime Minister comments on Morsi which he said "I applaud Morsi's conduct at the court. I respect him, but I have no respect for those who put him on trial"²⁹⁰, later Turkey declared the Egyptian envoy as a persona non grata in accordance with the principle of reciprocity.

The AKP ruling party has securitized the downfall of Muslim Brothers in Egypt as a kind of threat on their staying in power in Turkey. Istanbul has witnessed large protests in Istanbul in May 2013 upon governments plan to restructure the famous

²⁸⁷ "Erdoğan Says Morsi is my President in Egypt", July 2013, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/0/76462/Egypt/0/Turkeys-Erdogan-says-Morsi-my-president-in-Egypt.aspx> .

²⁸⁸ "Expelled envoy arrives home as Egyptian ambassador packs for Cairo", Today's Zaman, November 2013, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_expelled-envoy-arrives-home-as-egyptian-ambassador-packs-for-cairo_332636.html .

²⁸⁹ "Egypt asks Turkey's ambassador to leave", Aljazeera, November 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/egypt-asks-turkey-ambassador-leave-2013112310229476406.html> .

²⁹⁰ "Egypt downgrades Diplomatic Relations with Turkey", November 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/egypt-downgrades-diplomatic-relations-with-turkey-expels-ambassador.aspx?pageID=238&nID=58413&NewsCatID=359> .

Taksim square, which widely spread to whole Turkey known by Gezi park protest²⁹¹. Ahmet Davutoğlu who later became a Prime Minister in August 2014 said that “That they did not succeed in doing it in Turkey; they went to make it in Egypt and the brought General al-Sisi to power”²⁹². Moreover, different articles and op-ed pieces written in newspapers close to the AKP claimed that the GCC countries, mainly Saudi Arabia and UAE has financed the protests against the Turkish government by trying to create a youth movement similar to Tamaroud movement that led the protests against Morsi in Egypt²⁹³.

After the deterioration in the diplomatic relations, Turkey unofficially has provided shelter for different leaders and youth belonging to the Egyptian Muslim Brothers after being cracked down by the government and after declaring Muslim Brotherhood organization as a Terrorist organization in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain. Different meetings were held in Istanbul by the Brotherhood and they opened TV Channels broadcasting in Arabic from Istanbul like al-Sharq TV Channel and Rabiaa TV Channel where they condemn the actions and policies of the interim period in Egypt.

The Turkish momentum that started with the rise of Muslim Brothers in Egypt started to witness a shutdown. Turkey lost its diplomatic relations with Egypt and risked its warm relations with Riyadh who opposed countries did not recognize the political change happened in Egypt on 3 July 2013, to be left without good political relations with Syria, Iran, Israel (upon Mavi Marmara incident in 2010), Egypt and

²⁹¹ Akyol, Mustafa. “How Morsi Matters in Turkish Politics”, Al-Monitor, May 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/originals/2015/05/turkey-egypt-mohammed-morsi-sentence-erdogan.html> .

²⁹² “Türkiye’de olmayınca Mısır’da darbe yaptılar”, Sabah Newspaper, May 2015, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2015/05/17/turkiyede-olmayinca-misirda-darbe-yaptilar> .

²⁹³ Selvi, Abdul Kadir. “Morsi in Egypt, Erdogan in Turkey”, Yenisafak Newspaper, <http://english.yenisafak.com/columns/abdulkadirselvi/morsi-in-egypt-erdogan-in-turkey-2010866> .

Saudi Arabia in what the head of foreign policy advisors of the Prime Minister Erdoğan, Ibrahim Kalin named: the “precious loneliness”²⁹⁴.

3.3 The Regional Security Complex of the Syrian Uprising

3.3.1 The Survival of Assad’s Government:

The reasons of the popular uprising against Assad regime in Syria are similar to other uprisings in the Arab world; rural poor citizens suffering from government neglect, small businessmen crushed by corrupt and crony capitalists close to the center of power and high rates of unemployment, bad governance, unfair distribution of the country’s resources and besides corruption, arbitrary arrest and police brutality²⁹⁵. However, the course of the events in Syria took a different path unlike Egypt, Tunisia and other Arab countries.

Syria comprises different religious sects (Sunni, Alawite, Christians, Jews and Druze) and ethnic groups (Arabs, Kurds, and Syriac). The ruling regime in Syria enjoys the support of different minorities and from some Sunnis who started to fear about what is next after his fall. The minorities in Syria like Kurds, Druze, Christians and Jews feel that Assad (or the Alawite group) represents a strong secular tradition that could protect them from any fundamentalist Sunni views that might oppress them. Yet Sunnis under Assad were not deprived of power sharing, the position of premiership and most of major ministries were usually in Sunni hands with except to the sensitive security ministries that were controlled by Alawis (Mustafa Talas the minister of defence of Hafez Assad and his son Bashar at the beginning was a Sunni), in addition to the merchant class which is largely Sunni

²⁹⁴ “Başbakan'ın başdanışmanı 'değerli yalnızlık'ı açıkladı: Yalnız değiliz ama”, August 2013, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/basbakanin-basdanismani-degerli-yalnizliki-acikladi-yalniz-degiliz-ama,237875> .

²⁹⁵ Seale, Patrick. “Averting Civil War in Syria”, November 2011, <http://www.agenceglobal.com/index.php?show=article&Tid=2688> .

and benefited largely from their close relationship with the regime. Those Sunnis started to fear from the extremist forces that took part in the fight against Assad and their possible replace of the regime graved high concerns about the character of any successor to Assad²⁹⁶.

Another dimension of the Regime's policy towards the ethnic makeup of diverse religious minorities is the orientation of Syrian Arab nationalism adopted by the regime. In order for an Alawite community (13 percent of the population) to be able to rule over Sunnis (73 percent of the population), Christians (10 percent of the population), Druze (3 percent of the population) beside the ethnic divisions Kurds (7 percent of the population), Assyrian or Syriac (2 percent of the population) under the rule of Arabs (90 percent), the regime follows modern Arab nationalism through adopting an Arab nationalist rhetoric more than any other community and more Sunni than the Sunnis. Assad redefined the Alawites as ordinary like mainstream Muslims, they were brought under the same Sharia law rules as Sunnis and they were not allowed their own religious courts (like other Shiites)²⁹⁷. On the other side, the Syrian war started to take the sectarian dimension. For long time, the problems of religious segregations in towns were not tackled by the regime and it felt better able to control religious groups and the interactions between them²⁹⁸. Throughout the war in Syria, the religious differences which were long hidden by the regime started to appear during the clashes in a way that contributed to boosting the sectarian dimension of the conflict, and Assad regime has utilized this successfully for its own survival²⁹⁹.

²⁹⁶ Fuller, Graham. *Op.Cit*, P. 311.

²⁹⁷ Ibid, P.308.

²⁹⁸ Whitaker, Brien. "How the Assad Regime's Policies Nurtured Sectarianism in Syria", Muftah, December 2014, http://muftah.org/assad-regimes-policies-nurtured-sectarianism-syria/#.VcSD8_mqqko .

²⁹⁹ Diehl, Jackson. "Lines in the Sand: Assad Plays the Sectarian Card", *World Affairs Journal*, May/June 2012, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/lines-sand-assad-plays-sectarian-card> .

Another important aspect of the regional dimension of Assad's regime policy is the utilization of Arab Nationalist rhetoric in the regional behaviour of Damascus for the sake of gaining more popularity in the Arab public opinion, which helped the regime to be high on the US administration's target list for overthrow over years³⁰⁰. Assad behaved as Sunni more than other Sunni countries. He extended financial and military support to *Hamas* movement in Palestine and supported the Sunni insurgency against the US occupation in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein. He manipulated the Arab Nationalist rhetoric in facilitating the Iranian support to Shi'a *Hizballah* in Lebanon who stands against 14 March alliance supported by the USA and France. Upon the uprising and the squander of his Arab nationalist credentials as a result of his bloody reprisals against the civilians, Assad utilized this rhetoric to gain Arab public support against Turkey: by charging Turkey of seeking regional expansionist ambitions using the Muslim Brotherhood. Finally he successfully used that in the awake of Egypt's 30 June uprising which helped him in gaining sympathy of the groups who oppose Turkey's role in Egypt³⁰¹.

Assad regime has been adopting the alignment policy with others against its opponents in order to achieve maximum diplomatic flexibility for the sake of survival between the biggest regional powers that Syria is located in between like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel and Egypt. As a country that does not have big population (24 million), lacks huge oil reserves, without a modernized Army and not dependable on the western countries for aid or protection, the regime tried to maximise the different cards it owns by maintaining its influence in the other neighbouring countries which it calls the 'Greater Syria' and playing on different balances for powers between different actors in order to avoid a total submission³⁰².

³⁰⁰ Fuller, Graham. *Op.Cit.* P. 307.

³⁰¹ "Syrian FM: Brotherhood are cause of all problems in the region", <http://www.mubasher-misr.net/67472.htm/> and see also: "Assad: we ask Egypt to practice its historical role in the region", <http://www.albawabhnews.com/1464814> .

³⁰² Hinnebusch, Raymond. "Defying the Hegemon: Syria and the Iraq War", Paper given at the conference of European Consortium on Political Research Conference, September 2005,

For example, Syria avoided being invaded by the Bush administration in 2000s by accepting to halt down funding Sunni insurgency against the US occupation in Iraq. Syria has played on balances of power between the USA and the EU which was in sharp distinction to US isolation policy of Syria; Damascus was enthusiastic about opening a channel with the EU through Turkey, welcomed taking economic liberalizations and developed new economic and legal institutions in conformity with the EU.

During the uprising Assad regime did not abandon this strategy, it utilized the different cards it maximized previously well in a way to preserve its stay in power in Damascus and not to fully submit to its regional and global opponents. Assad succeeded in bringing Iran and *Hizballah* to his war in Syria against his opponents who are being supported by Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the western countries. Despite the severe loses he got in his military power and the heavy burdens he represents on Iran financially and militarily, Assad persuaded his regional supporters that this is not his war alone and it is part of their war with Saudi Arabia. Later on *Hizballah* took an offensive action against Turkey by kidnapping two Turkish pilots in Lebanon in 2012. Assad also sought reviving the old channels with the Syrian Kurds and the Turkish PKK (which was shut down by his father Hafez Assad) not to totally submit to Turkey³⁰³. In order to avoid a large scale military operation by the US after claims of using chemical weapons in Syria, Assad accepted to give up his arsenal of chemical weapons to the international community to avoid a US strike that would threaten his survival³⁰⁴. Finally, as the war escalated more and different Jihadists started to rush to Syria to take part in the war, Assad

https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/school-of-international-relations/mecacs/workingpapers/defying_the_hegemon.pdf .

³⁰³ Ginsburg, Mitch. “Assad lets Kurdish PKK rebels operate against Turkey from inside Syria”, Times of Israel, June 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/assad-lets-kurdish-pkk-rebels-operate-against-turkey-from-inside-syria/> .

³⁰⁴ “Obama to halt attack if Syria destroys chemical weapons”, Financial Times, September 2013, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/8cd56022-1936-11e3-83b9-00144feab7de.html#axzz3ktOmhEjj> .

utilized the west's concern from the radical Islam and different intelligence communication channels were opened between his regime and western intelligence services on this topic³⁰⁵.

3.3.2 Contrasts and Divisions within the Political and Military Opposition:

On the side of the anti-Assad political opposition groups, the contrasts of the political agendas, strategies, visions and their backgrounds contributed to weakening the stand of the opposition on the international level and domestically in front of Assad's regime³⁰⁶. the varied and wide political support received was not unified owing to the different political goals and determinants of the regional powers and global powers supporting them against Assad (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, Egypt, France and the USA), in a way to achieve success and they remained divided while the supporters of Assad (Russia, China, Iran and *Hizballah*) has channelled their support to one unified destination: the Assad regime.

Despite the establishment of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (known as Syrian Opposition Coalition) in November 2012 as a wider form to include all Syrian opposition groups, the conflicts preceded the establishment of the Syrian opposition coalition continued to exist later on. The main contrast fall between the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood who dominated the Syrian National Council (main figures were: Ghassan Hitho and Mustafa al-Sabbagh who are known for their close ties to Turkey and Qatar) and the other components of the Syrian opposition coalition mainly those who were living abroad and opposing Assad regime but not affiliated to the Brotherhood like Moaz al-

³⁰⁵ "Syrian regime from the conspiracy theory to fighting terrorism", Al-Wake' Al-Arabia (Aljazeera TV Program), August 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/arab-present-situation/2014/8/26/> .

³⁰⁶ Macfarquhar, Neil. "After a year, Deep Divisions Hobble Syria's Opposition", The New York Times, February 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/24/world/middleeast/syrian-opposition-is-hobbled-by-deep-divisions.html?_r=0

Khatib (the first chairman of the Syrian Opposition Coalition) and Ahmad al-Jurba (the second chairman of the coalition) who are affiliated to Saudi Arabia and the UAE³⁰⁷. Moaz al-Khatib resigned from his post as he proposed making a transitional government between opposition members and members from Assad regime in order to prevent any chaos during the transitional period but the Brotherhood refused that offer and asked for a provisional government replacing the current government and excluding all Baath regime members³⁰⁸. When Ahmed al-Jurba declared in the UN he would participate in an international conference in Geneva aimed at finding a political solution the conflict in Syria, opposition voices rise highly against him inside the coalition and mainly from the Muslim Brotherhood voices³⁰⁹. Besides this main contrast, other contrasts started to appear between the other components like the National Coordination Committee for Democratic Change, mainly supported by Egypt, under the chairman of Hassan Abdul Azim and Haitham Manna who accused the Syrian opposition coalition of being beholden to Turkey and Gulf Arab states that provide shelter, financial support and weapons to rebel groups and refusing the Muslim Brotherhood's domination over the opposition. While The Kurdish Supreme Committee formed in July 2012 as an alliance of 13 Kurdish parties including the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the Kurdish National Council (KNC) stands for autonomous regional governance for the Kurds in Syria³¹⁰.

The Syrian uprising has suffered the lack of coordination in the military efforts against Assad regime, although the Syrian opposition coalition was supposed to act

³⁰⁷ Hassan, Hassan. "How The Muslim Brother's Hijacked Syria's Revolution", *Foreign Policy*, March 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/13/how-the-muslim-Brotherhood-hijacked-syrias-revolution/> .

³⁰⁸ "Guide to Syrian Opposition", BBC News, October 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-15798218> .

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

as a main channel for financing the fighting groups and it could not have leverage on the them. Instead of that, these groups sought securing finance and support directly from national governments, wealthy individuals, non-governmental organizations and the financial channels of global terrorism. The Syrian Military Council (the highest military commandship of the opposition fighting groups) has no structural hierarchy and its legitimacy is bottom-up voluntarily given by the commanders that comprise it and with little coercive power to control its subunits. The council includes representatives from the Free Syrian Army, the Syrian Liberation Front, the Syrian Islamic Front, independent brigades, regional military councils, and defectors from the Syrian army. The opposition fighting groups and their subunits have a range of tactics, constituencies, and visions of what a post-Assad Syria should look like despite that the unifying goal is ousting Assad³¹¹.

In addition to that, the different political agendas of the regional supporters of the opposition played a role in the dispersal of aids and military support. For example, the USA trained rebel groups not affiliated to the Syrian Military Council on the Jordanian borders with Syria and supplied them with weapons. Qatar has provided direct financial and military aids to many independent groups like Ahfad al-Rasoul brigade which has 15000 fighters on the ground and not affiliated to the Syrian Military council. Saudi Arabia has provided aids to the subunits of the Syrian Liberation Front (an alliance of 20 brigades and battalions across Syria with 37000 fighters) directly and not through the council as they are very critical on the military council. Also wealthy individuals from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait supported financially the Syrian Islamic Front (15000 fighters of Syrian Nationalist with Salafi background but they don't seek Islamic caliphate or affiliated to al-Qaeda)³¹². Turkey, owing to its long borders with Syria and governments intention to facilitate the flow of weapons to all fighters against Assad, opened channels with all

³¹¹ Sofer, Ken. and Shafroth, Juliana. "The Structure and Organization of the Syrian Opposition", The American Progress, May 2013, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/report/2013/05/14/63221/the-structure-and-organization-of-the-syrian-opposition/> .

³¹² Ibid.

opposition fighters and supported them with different degrees; directly to the Free Syrian Army whose commandership is in Gaziantep or indirectly to other fighting groups³¹³.

3.3.3 The Saudi Policy towards the Syrian Uprising:

Saudi Arabia prioritized diplomacy for the sake of preserving regional stability and preventing any spill over of chaos that originally came out of the Egyptian uprising towards its ally regimes and GCC countries. However, the situation was escalating on the ground in Syria; Saudi Arabia dumbered this passive policy and condemned Assad's actions in the holy month of Ramadan 2011³¹⁴. Saudi government requested its ambassador in Damascus for consultations in August 2011 and Saudi King Abdullah asked the Syrian government to stop its killing machine against its people by "Syria's future stands between two choices: wisdom and Chaos, and Saudi Arabia will stand its historical responsibilities towards its siblings"³¹⁵. Also Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal met a delegation from the SNC in January 2012 and a representative from the council declared that Saudi Arabia and GCC will recognize the council as a representative of the Syrian people³¹⁶.

Saudi Arabia took place in the Friends of Syria group initiative called by France in order to convene on the Syrian topic and it was chosen in the "Mini Friends of Syria" group along with Egypt, Qatar, UAE, Jordan, Turkey, UK, the USA, France,

³¹³ "Turkey Sets up Secret Base to Bring Aid to Syria Rebels", Haaretz, July 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/turkey-sets-up-secret-base-to-bring-aid-to-syria-rebels-sources-say-1.454107>.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Historical Speech by King Abdullah", Al-Arabiya TV, August 2011, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/08/08/161279.html>.

³¹⁶ "Saudi to recognize, fund SNC; Russia rejects Syria resolution", January 2011, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/saudi-recognize-fund-snc-russia-rejects-syria-resolution>

Germany and Italy³¹⁷. It also participated in the Geneva conference on Syria held on June 30th 2012 where the Syrian opposition and the Syrian government convened³¹⁸.

Syria with a 73% of Sunni population being in a state of war with its Alawite regime represents an important case for Saudi Arabia which claims its regional leadership in the Sunni world. Saudi government pledged donations for the Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan³¹⁹, and sent food aids, medicines, relief materials, fasting programs, winter aid supplies, heating fuel and winter clothes to displaced refugees³²⁰. Riyadh asked the international community to arm the opposition, and supported different Islamist Salafi fighting groups in Syria financially and militarily like groups under the Syrian Liberation Front (moderate Islamists) and the Syrian Islamic Front (Salafist but neither affiliated to al-Qaeda nor seek Islamic caliphate).

The uprising against Assad also represents an opportunity for Saudi Arabia to regain back the regional balances of power that it lost upon the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 to Iran and the negative developments in Lebanon upon the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri in 2005³²¹. Moreover any political change in Syria would enable Riyadh to bring Syria back into its Arab, and Sunni sphere of its influence after long

³¹⁷ “France, partners planning Syria crisis group: Sarkozy”, February 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/04/us-syria-france-idUSTRE8130QV20120204> .

³¹⁸ “What is the Geneva II conference on Syria?”, January 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24628442> .

³¹⁹ “Saudi Aids for Syrians”, November 2012, <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/saudi-aid-syrians-arrives-mafraq>, see also Saudi aids to Syrians in Turkey: https://www.saudiembassy.net/latest_news/news01211504.aspx and https://www.saudiembassy.net/latest_news/news01221501.aspx .

³²⁰ “Saudi Arabia sends tons of aid to Syrian refugees”, March 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/03/31/Saudi-Arabia-sends-tons-of-aids-to-Syrian-refugees-.html>

³²¹ Gause III, F. Gregory. “Is Saudi Arabia really counter-revolutionary?”, *Foreign Policy*, August 2011, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/08/09/is-saudi-arabia-really-counter-revolutionary/> .

time being Iran's main gate to the Arab world. Finally, the space that would be left by the downfall of the Assad regime could remove the cover over *Hizballah* in Lebanon who uses Syrian territories in getting financial and military support from Iran and 14 March alliance would practice more pressure for dismantling the weapons of *Hizballah*.

Saudi Arabia managed to practice influence over the Syrian opposition groups rather than the Muslim Brothers who are supported by Turkey and Qatar. Saudi Arabia pressed on enlarging the Syrian opposition to be under full control of the Muslim Brothers and the first two chairmen of the enlarged Syrian Opposition Coalition, Sheikh Moaz Al-Khatib and Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jurba (who hold close ties to King Abdullah), were widely supported by Riyadh inside the coalition against the Muslim Brothers figures.

3.3.4 The Turkish Policy towards the Syrian Uprising:

Upon the break out of the Syrian uprising, Turkey sought about giving a chance for diplomacy and talks in order to persuade Assad to take steps for making reforms. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu paid a visit to Damascus in August 2011 and sent a letter from Prime Minister Erdoğan to Assad asking him to take urgent steps towards reform³²². Ankara risked the deterioration of the friendly Turkish-Syrian relations that developed under the AKP government and settled down the main problems that formed the Syrian-Turkish security complex like the Kurdish issue, and the water issue. However the uprising against Assad was expanding into many parts in Syria, clashes became intensive between the opposition and the regime forces and the Syrian government could not take steps that fulfil the opposition demands.

Turkey assumed that the regime in Syria would be toppled in a short time either by the people of Syria (like in Tunisia and Egypt) or through external intervention (like

³²² "Davutoğlu to deliver harsh message to Damascus", Today's Zaman, August 2011, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_davutoglu-to-deliver-harsh-message-to-damascus_253150.html .

in Libya), and thus wanted to take a clear, strong stance from the beginning to be able to play an active role in the process later as well³²³. On November 2011, Prime Minister Erdoğan said that "Turkey had lost confidence in the leadership of Bashar al-Assad" and that "the Syrian leader will pay the price sooner or later"³²⁴. The Syrian opposition supported by Turkey organized itself under the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) (highly influenced by the Muslim Brothers) and opened its first office in Istanbul in December 2011³²⁵. Turkey and Qatar backed the Muslim Brotherhood figures in the larger Syrian Opposition Coalition through supporting Ghassan Hitho and Mustafa al-Sabbagh against the election of Ahmed Al-Jurba for the presidency of the opposition coalition. Turkey also hosted and supported the officers detached from the Syrian army under the umbrella of the Free Syrian Army which based its commandership in Gaziantep in southern Turkey³²⁶. Later Turkey extended its support to the Syrian Military Council (the umbrella of the military opposition which is based in Turkey) and other militant opposition groups in coordination with Qatar like Ahfad al-Rasul Brigade, Fajr al-Islam Battalion and the Al-Haqq Brigade.

Turkey took part in the "Group of Syria Friends" and hosted the second meeting of the group in April 2012 where the Saudi Foreign Minister was present and they sharply criticized the violations of human rights by Assad regime, called for suspension of diplomatic ties with Assad regime and decided to set up a Sanctions

³²³ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "Turkey After The Arab Uprisings: Difficulties of Hanging on in There", *Op. Cit.*

³²⁴ "Turkish PM: Lost Confidence in Syrian Leadership", November 2011, <http://www.voanews.com/content/diplomatic-tensions-escalate-as-turkey-meets-with-syrian-opposition-133921103/148222.html> .

³²⁵ "SNC opens its first Office in Istanbul", Hurriyet Daily News, December 2011, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/snc-opens-its-first-office-in-istanbul.aspx?pageID=238&nID=9214&NewsCatID=338> .

³²⁶ Stack, Liam. "In Slap at Syria, Turkey Shelters Anti-Assad Fighters", The New York Times, October 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/28/world/europe/turkey-is-sheltering-antigovernment-syrian-militia.html> .

Working Group, in order to achieve greater effectiveness in order to enforce the restrictive measures put in force by states or international organizations against Assad³²⁷. Turkey strongly opposed the reported usage of chemical weapons by Assad regime in April, March and August 2013, condemned this action and asked the US to take action in Syria as Prime Minister Erdoğan said “We want the United States to assume more responsibilities and take further steps”³²⁸. On the refugee issue, Turkey adopted an open door policy for the refugees whose numbers are estimated by 2 million, and as reported it spent up to USD 5 billion until 2014, built 20 camps, and provided them hospital accesses and identifications for residence in Turkey³²⁹.

The Turkish involvement in the Syrian crisis carried wide challenges to the Turkish government since Assad stayed in power and did not fall quickly as it was expected and Assad started to represent a serious threat on Turkey’s national security through the PKK issue which remains as a main security problem in the Turkish-Syrian security complex³³⁰. The Syrian Kurdish groups organized themselves and declared a semi-autonomous region in Northern Syria where the PKK became the most prominent force among the Syrian Kurds. Assad’s government allowed the opening of PKK camps in Hasakah, did not enter in a clash with them and let them to control cities like Derik, Afrin, Kobani and Kamışlı on Turkish borders³³¹, in a way that

³²⁷ “Chairman’s Conclusions Second Conference Of The Group Of Friends Of The Syrian People, 1 April 2012, Istanbul”, MFA, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/chairman_s-conclusions-second-conference-of-the-group-of-friends-of-the-syrian-people_-1-april-2012_-istanbul.en.mfa .

³²⁸ Exclusive: Turkish PM Erdogan: Syria has crossed red line, used chemical weapons", World NBS News, May 2013, http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/05/09/18148044-exclusive-turkish-pm-erdogan-syria-has-crossed-red-line-used-chemical-weapons?lite .

³²⁹ “Başbakan Yardımcısı Kurtulmuş: Mültecilere 5 milyar dolar harcandı”, Radikal, January 2015, http://www.radikal.com.tr/hayat/basbakan_yardimcisi_kurtulmus_multecilere_5_milyar_dolar_harcandi-1274507 .

³³⁰ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. “Turkey After The Arab Uprisings: Difficulties of Hanging on in There”, *Op.Cit.*

remarked a rise of an inner ‘Kurdish Spring’ within the Arab Spring³³². Turkey launched a peace process with the Kurds in March 2013 in order to solve its Kurdish problem, however the process failed and the clashes were renewed again in July 2015³³³.

Another challenge for the Turkish government is the waves of refugees coming from the war in Syria. Turkey hosted around 2.5 million Syrian refugees with only 250 thousands of the refugees in the camps in southern provinces while the others are spreading all over the Turkish cities causing heavy disturbance on the social and political balances in some provinces, raising crime rates in some areas and making Turkish inhabitants in southern provinces fearing any possible terrorist attacks³³⁴.

Turkey risked being involved in an open war with Assad regime in a way that exposes Turkey’s domestic stability and security into danger owing to its long borders with Syria (910 KM) and the support it provides to the Syrian opposition. On June 2012, a Turkish F-4 Phantom II military jet shot down near the Turkish-Syria borders³³⁵, On October 2012 an artillery field shell fired from Syria fall in the border town Akçakale in Şanlıurfa province succeeded by conducting saturation

³³¹ “Collaboration between Assad regime and the PKK terrorist organization”, Today’s Zaman, December 2012, http://www.todayszaman.com/todays-think-tanks_collaboration-between-assad-regime-and-the-pkk-terrorist-organization_300228.html .

³³² Bacik, Gokhan, “Turkey and the new Middle East”, *European Policy Center Commentary*, 27 July 2012, http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_2850_turkey_and_the_new_middle_east.pdf .

³³³ “PKK Group Says Turkish Cease Fire Over”, July 2015, <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/120720151> .

³³⁴ “Effects of the Syrian refugees on Turkey”, Report prepared by ORSAM and TESEV, January 2015, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/assets/publications/file/09012015103629.pdf> .

³³⁵ “Ankara'ya göre 'Pilotlar öldürüldü' iddiası: El Yalan!”, Radikal, October 2012, http://www.radikal.com.tr/dunya/ankaraya_gore_pilotlar_oldu_ruldu_iddias_i_el_yalan-1102333 .

shelling by the Turkish armed forces on Syrian military posts³³⁶. In addition to the car bombing incident that took place in Hatay province in May 2013 which left 52 Turkish citizens death casualties and the attackers arrested were linked to Syrian intelligence³³⁷. Turkey's being in a semi-state of war with Syria appeared clearly when Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan said in a popular gathering in March 2014 during celebrating his party's electoral victory in the local elections: "We are in a state of war with Syria"³³⁸.

Finally Ankara has suffered economically from the Syrian crisis as many trade routes to Iraq and the Gulf were closed because of the war and harmed badly the Turkish economy³³⁹.

3.4 Implications of RSCs in the Egyptian and Syrian Uprisings on Turkish Saudi Relations:

3.4.1. Changes in Regional Role Perceptions of Turkey and Saudi Arabia:

The course of events during the Arab uprisings caused a change in the Saudi perception of the Turkish regional role and Turkey's regional agenda. The created image of Turkey in the Saudi media in the late 2000s as a probable ally of the kingdom against Iran and a country that seeks achieving regional stability shifted after the political change in Egypt in 2013. The Saudi media changed its coverage on Turkey by focusing on the anti-AKP ruling government Gezi protests in May

³³⁶ "Turkey-Syria border tension - Thursday 4 October 2012", The Guardians, October 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/04/turkey-syria-threat-security-live> .

³³⁷ "Reyhanlı saldırısı Esad'ın işi!", Takvim, March 2015, <http://www.takvim.com.tr/dunya/2015/05/05/reghanli-saldirisi-esadin-isi> .

³³⁸ "Erdoğan: Suriye bizimle savaş halinde", Hurriyet, March 2015, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/26120654.asp> .

³³⁹ Altunisik, Meliha Benli. "Turkey After The Arab Uprisings: Difficulties of Hanging on in There", Op.Cit.

2013, raising questions about the democratic credentials of the Turkish Islamists³⁴⁰, and after the popular uprising against Morsi of Egypt, the Saudi media highlighted the Turkish reactions against Egypt and described it as interference in domestic affairs of Arab countries. As mentioned by a Saudi Journalist: “we did not know what Turkey is doing, Turkey was interfering in the Egyptian internal affairs and it worked on extending its regional influence. Saudi Arabia felt suspicious about Turkey’s support to Muslim Brothers in general and its role in Egypt in particular”³⁴¹. Moreover, wide media outlets used words like ‘Ottomanist regional ambitions’³⁴², ‘Turkish regional hegemon’, practicing ‘Pasha’ism and Khedive’ism on Egypt’³⁴³ while covering the Turkish reaction towards Egypt after July 2013.

On the other side, the image created on Saudi Arabia in Turkey as a leading Muslim country was deformed, mainly by the media outlets close to the ruling AKP government. Different Op-ed writers started to talk about a Saudi-Israeli plan to topple down the Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi; that Israel planned the coup and Saudi Arabia financed it³⁴⁴. Other media outlets criticized Saudi king Abdullah in person for his open support to Egypt and described his policies incompatible with Islam³⁴⁵. Besides the calls from Turkish officials for the secretary general of the OIC Ekmelledin Ihsanoglu to resign from his post as the organization did not

³⁴⁰ Al-Rasheed, Abdel Rahman. “Which Erdogan we see”, Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 2013, <http://archive.aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&issueno=12608&article=731220#.VcherPmqkko> .

³⁴¹ Interview with Khaled Tashkandi, Editor in Chief of Okaz Newspaper.

³⁴² Widely used concept by Arabic News channels like Al-Arabiya TV.

³⁴³ Nouredin, Mohamed. “The Turkish Role towards the Arab Environment”, Center for Arab Union Studies, *Arab papers*, 14, Political affairs, 5, January 2012.

³⁴⁴ Karagul, Ibrahim. “Darbecileri paraya boğan şer ittifakı”, Yeni Safak, July 2013, <http://www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/ibrahimkaragul/darbecileri-paraya-bogan-ser-ittifaki-38533> .

³⁴⁵ Sirma, Ihsan. “Suudi Arabistan Kralı'na açık mektup”, Yeni Safak, August 2013, <http://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/suudi-arabistan-kralina-acik-mektup-556059>

criticise the ouster of President Morsi in Egypt³⁴⁶. Moreover, other media outlets in Turkey started to approach the Saudi stand on Syria in a different way under the effect of the Egyptian crisis. They charged Saudi Arabia with seeking mere control over the Syrian opposition coalition by enlarging the opposition coalition in order to minimize the role of Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. Also many Op-eds and TV commenters charged Saudi Arabia and UAE with financing anti-Islamists protests and claimed a Saudi effort to weaken the El-Nahda movement in Tunisia and its leader Rached Gannoushi through supporting leftists, communists and Salafists financially³⁴⁷. Finally, some media figures in Turkey claimed a relationship between what happened in Egypt after 3 July 2013 and Gezi protests in Turkey in May 2013. In November 2014, the head of the Foreign Relations committee of the AKP, Yasin Aktay, charged the Gulf countries of supporting the Gezi protests in Turkey as they supported the anti-Morsi protests and that they tried to give a hand to anti-Muslim Brotherhood opposition in Tunisia and Yemen³⁴⁸.

3.4.2. Turkish-Saudi Political Relations:

The high level visits between Turkey and Saudi Arabia continued to take place upon the outbreak of the Arab uprisings. The Syrian issue and the developments in Egypt played a role in the rise and fall of the political ties between the two countries. The outbreak of the Egyptian uprising had left a negative impact on the political ties between the two countries; as mentioned by a Saudi ex-diplomat: “Saudi Arabia did not assign a new ambassador to Turkey for seven months, after the ex-Saudi ambassador Mohamed al-Husseini ended his mission following the

³⁴⁶ “Bekir Bozdağ ve Hüseyin Çelik'ten istifa çağrısı”, Rota Haber, August 2013, <http://www.rotahaber.com/gundem/bekir-bozdag-ve-huseyin-celikten-istifa-cagrisi-h392085.html>

³⁴⁷ “Hakan Albayrak: Suud'un solcuları”, Time Turkey, October 2013, <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2013/10/12/hakan-albayrak-suud-un-solculari.html>

³⁴⁸ “AK Parti: Gezi'yi Körfez ülkeleri destekledi”, Star Gazete, November 2014, <http://haber.star.com.tr/politika/ak-parti-geziyi-korfez-ulkeleri-destekledi/haber-968351> .

Egyptian uprising in January 2011³⁴⁹. However the Syrian uprising prevented the political relations from a total collapse. President Abdullah Gül paid a visit to Saudi Arabia in August 2011³⁵⁰ and Prime Minister Erdoğan paid a visit to discuss the Syrian issue with King Abdullah in April 2012 before holding Geneva conference in June 2012. Also Crown Prince Salman bin Abdel Aziz (who later became the king in 2015) paid a visit to Ankara on May 2013 where he discussed the Syrian issue and signed an agreement with Turkey for cooperation on training military personnel³⁵¹. On the level of Foreign Ministers, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal led the delegation of the GCC Foreign Ministers in Istanbul for attending the fourth annual ministerial meeting between Turkey and GCC on January 28th 2012³⁵². Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutolgu also paid a visit to Saudi Arabia on January 2013 again for discussing the Syrian issue.

The developments in Egypt after 3 July 2013 has left a heavy impact on the political ties between the two countries and threatened its total collapse. Prime Minister Erdoğan criticised harshly the Saudi stand on Egypt in July 2013 by saying “How could a country claiming to uphold Islam and Sharia support the overthrow of an elected Islamist president who came to power after fair elections?”³⁵³ While Saudi Arabia did not comment on Turkey’s stand, it did not invite the Foreign Minister of Turkey to the ministerial meeting of the mini Friends of Syria group held in Jeddah

³⁴⁹ Interview with ex-Saudi diplomat Dr. Abdullah Al-Shammari.

³⁵⁰ “Regional Developments on the Turkish-Saudi summit”, Okaz Newspaper, <http://www.okaz.com.sa/new/Issues/20110815/Con20110815439839.htm>. (Arabic Resource)

³⁵¹ “Syria top priority as Saudi crown prince visits Turkey”, Al-Arabiya, May 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/05/20/Syria-top-priority-as-Saudi-crown-prince-visits-Turkey.html>

³⁵² “Historical visit by the crown prince to Turkey”, Al-Youm, May 2015, <http://www.alyaum.com/article/3082717> .

³⁵³ Al-Rasheed, Madawi. “Saudi Arabia and Turkey Falter Over Egypt”, Al-Monitor, August 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/originals/2013/08/saudi-arabia-turkey-strained-relations.html#ixzz3iK6KrWsg>

in August 2014³⁵⁴. Saudi Arabia along with Egypt opposed the Turkish campaign for gaining a non-permanent membership in the UNSC (2015-2016) and pressed on different African countries not to vote for Turkey which led to the victory of Spain with 132 votes and Turkey received only 60 votes. It was reported also that Saudi Arabia and Egypt pressed to shut down the Arab League representativeness in Turkey and to suspend the Arab-Turkish cooperation forum organized by the Arab league but no steps taken in this regard³⁵⁵. Another incident was that Saudi Arabia along with Egypt and UAE refused invitations sent by the African Union to Turkey and Qatar in the crisis group meeting held on Libya in January 2015 and declared their intention not to participate in the meeting if Turkey attended, which led to the withdrawal of the invitations of Qatar and Turkey³⁵⁶.

3.4.3. Turkish-Saudi Economic Relations:

The economic ties between Turkey and Saudi Arabia did not witness a crack despite of the tension in political ties upon their different stances on Egypt. According to figure 4 and 5, the trade volume between the two countries increased from USD 6.2 billion in 2011 to USD 7.3 billion in 2013 and the Turkish exports increased from USD 2.76 billion into USD 3.1 billion.

2011	2012	2013
6.2	8.0	7.3

Figure 4 – TUIK: Trade Volume between Turkey and Saudi Arabia in USD Billion

³⁵⁴ “Saudi Arabia to host Friends of Syria ministerial meeting”, Middle East Monitor, August 2014, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/13687-saudi-arabia-to-host-friends-of-syria-ministerial-meeting> .

³⁵⁵ “Egypt and Saudi Arabia, deprives Turkey from being elected in the Security Council”, October 2013, <http://www.youm7.com/story/2014/10/17/> .

³⁵⁶ “Egyptian FM: our stand from the attendance of Turkey and Qatar to Libya’s meeting was a must”, Al-Shorouk, January 2015, <http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=29012015&id=e28ae991-cca4-4045-ad8a-a836c5fb7efe> .

2011	2012	2013
2,763,475	3,676,611	3,191,481

Figure 5 - TurkStat: Turkish Exports to Saudi Arabia in USD Thousand

However as mentioned by a Saudi academician: “the Saudi businessmen can guess the nature of the relationship between Saudi Arabia and other countries in order to have new investments in Turkey”³⁵⁷. Also the vice chairman of the Jeddah chamber of commerce Ziad al-Bassam said that upon the crisis we decided to wait and study carefully any plans for having new investments in Turkey but the ongoing Saudi investments were kept without suspension³⁵⁸.

3.4.4 Turkish-Saudi Military Relations:

In 2011, Saudi Arabia has signed a deal with ASELSAN to buy SK2-4700 telecommunication systems and it was delivered in 2013. Turkey offered a proposal to the Saudi National Guard under the commandship of Prince Metab ibn Abdullah ibn Abdel-Aziz during his visit to Turkey in 13 June 2013 for selling the Turkish ATAK Helicopters T-129 (an edited version of the Italian helicopters A-129) to Saudi Arabia but no reports on finalizing such deal³⁵⁹. In 2013, Turkey and Saudi Arabia reached a deal of selling unmanned aerial vehicles developed by Turkish Aerospace Industries (ANKA) to Saudi Arabia³⁶⁰.

Saudi Arabia took part in the Turkish military exercises “The Anatolian Eagle” hosted by the Turkish Air Forces and held in Konya, Turkey in June 2011, June

³⁵⁷ Interview with Dr. Khaled Baturfi in Jeddah, May 2015.

³⁵⁸ Interview with Ziad al-Bassam, Jeddah chamber of commerce, May 2015.

³⁵⁹ “Prince Metab Bin Abdullah Visit Turkey”, <http://www.alsharq.net.sa/2013/06/14/867179> , June 2013.

³⁶⁰ “Turkiye, Suudi Arabistan’a ANKA Satti”, <http://www.technologic.com.tr/turkiyesuudiArabistanaankasatti/> , May 2013.

2012 and June 2013 along with air forces from UAE, NATO, US and Jordan. However it did not take part in the 2014 military exercises held in Turkey.

3.5 Conclusion:

The chapter has showed how the popular uprisings in the Arab countries have created complicated consequences in the Middle East and that the approaches of Turkey and Saudi Arabia to this event witnessed points of divergences and convergences. Both countries used different tools in dealing with the outcomes of the uprising and followed different agendas in seek of their regional interests and ambitions. The Egyptian uprising was a good example in examining the differences between the Turkish and Saudi policies and how their interests were overlapping and how they securitized the course of events during the Egyptian uprising as a threat on their interests. While in the Syrian Uprising, the Turkish and the Saudi stances witnessed stations that ranged from convergence and cooperation on the official stands opposing Assad regime into divergence and contrast on the backgrounds of the military and political opposition groups each country supports against Assad regime.

The media in both countries have reflected the different regional approaches of Turkey and Saudi Arabia in a way that affected negatively the positive perception created on the Turkish-Saudi relations after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. The divergence between the reaction of Turkey and Saudi Arabia to the uprisings had led to the deterioration of the political relations; however the economic and military relations were not impacted similar to the political relations.

4. CONCLUSION

The thesis concludes that the regional complexes created after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the Arab uprisings in 2011 brought the regional interests of Turkey and Saudi Arabia in an interlinked way. After 2003, there were different points of intersection between their regional policy lines as it appeared clearly in supporting the Sunni Iraqi political groups and also there were points of detachment between their regional policy lines in Egypt after 2011 and 2013. The thesis expects that the regional interaction between Ankara and Riyadh will become frequent in the near future as a result of the new regional power configurations in the region and the rising role of the non-Arab regional powers in the region. The thesis also expects that the literature on the Turkish-Saudi relations might witness an increase in order to analyse the interaction between both countries and how this interaction contributes to the politics of the Middle East.

The regional contexts existed in the light of the US Invasion of Iraq and Arab uprisings have left an increasing vacuum of power as a result of the weakness of the Arab Regional System and traditional Arab regional powers like Iraq, Syria and to a certain degree Egypt. Saudi Arabia follows a foreign policy that substitutes the weakness of the Arab Regional System and ensures its regional leadership through extending its support and influence on Arab Nationalists or Sunni parties in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon against Iran and supported the political change in Egypt in July 2013 against the rising Muslim Brotherhood and Turkey. While Turkey has followed an active foreign policy that sought increasing its presence in the ex-Ottoman territories as a regional power through mediation, soft power, and developing economic relations with different countries. It sought extending its influence in the Arab geography after the popular uprisings in 2011 through supporting opposition groups in Syria and Muslim Brothers in Egypt.

Meanwhile this distinctness exacerbated domestically by the differences of the political systems in both Ankara and Riyadh, ideologies of the Saudi royal family and the AKP governments in Turkey and how the governments in Ankara and Riyadh conduct their foreign policies. However, as the thesis adopts the regional level of analysis, it found that the divergence of their interests comes as both Turkey and Saudi Arabia are two regional powers in the Middle East with two different regional ambitions and regional interests seeking to fill this vacuum of power created in the region and extending their influences over different countries and non-state actors in the Middle East. After the US invasion of Iraq and the Arab uprisings, Saudi Arabia appeared as a an important Arab regional power whose interests and involvement are extended through the whole Middle East and its leadership in the Arab world has been enhanced as the roles of the traditional Arab regional powers declined. On the other hand, Turkey showed itself clearly as a regional power with a power project and a vision for leading the region. Its agendas varied from mediation after 2003 into democracy promotion after 2011 as it supported the uprisings in some Arab countries which was bringing Muslim Brotherhood to power.

Throughout the time frame of the study, there were stations of crossing and detachment between the Turkish and the Saudi regional policy lines and their regional interests found common grounds as shown in the Iraqi case, Lebanese case and in the Syrian case. Despite that these common grounds create opportunities for regional cooperation between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and both countries are US allies and Sunni regional powers, their different regional agendas, regional ambitions and their distinct policy tools there are limitations on enacting this cooperation. Therefore the thesis predicts that Turkey and Saudi Arabia will neither enter in a permanent regional alliance nor in an open-ended regional conflict.

In Iraq, the stands of Saudi Arabia and Turkey with regard to the US invasion of Iraq were parallel to each other's. Saudi Arabia was reluctant to take part in the operation and asked the US administration not to consider using its bases in any operation against Iraq, on the Turkish side; the Turkish Grand National Assembly had turned down a Memorandum of Understanding between Turkey and the USA

that granted the US troops access to Iraq from Turkey. Moreover their political stands were the same on this topic and by time, not to gamble with their strategic relations with the unipolar superpower (the USA), both countries contributed militarily in a narrow way to the operation. Ankara and Riyadh shared the same threats and nearly the same repercussions in the aftermath Iraq. However, their causes, their behaviours and their agendas were different. They shared the fear of the fragmentation of Iraq: Saudi Arabia feared of the rise of Shi'a sub-state identity in Iraq which would agitate the Shi'a community in Saudi Arabia to call for a change and leave the Iraqi Sunni Arabs out of any economic resources: a blow up to the Saudi leadership role in the Arab Regional Context and the Muslim world. Ankara feared of the rise of Shi'a sub-state and more so the Kurdish autonomous region in Iraq that would facilitate the rise of a regional wave of Kurdish independence, and consequently threaten the territorial integrity of Turkey. Both countries worked on countering this issue through coordination and regular consultation during their high official bilateral visits, but they did not follow the same policy line on this issue. While Saudi Arabia regarded Iran as the source of regional instability supported by Syria, Turkey approached Iran and Syria to form an anti-Kurdish coalition (since these countries share the same fear of the regional spill over of the Iraqi-Kurdish autonomy) and it activated the High Security Commission between the Ankara and Tehran to discuss the Kurdish insurgent activities in their countries who founded their training camps in the Kandil mountains in the independent Kurdish Northern Iraq³⁶¹.

Also the rise of the Iranian influence in Iraq had problematic implications on both countries and this topic was present in their official talks. Saudi Arabia's regional and global role and leadership and the Saudi's royal family rule were the main target of the Iranian policy of increasing influence in Iraq. On the other hand, Turkey's economic interests, the economic opportunities of the Turkish economy in

³⁶¹ Oğuzlu, Tarik, "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Dissociate from the West?", *Turkish Studies*, Volume 9, Issue 1, February 2008, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14683840701813960?journalCode=ftur20#.VbTNVPmqqko>.

this country and Ankara's soft power new ottoman diplomacy which regards Iraq as an ex-Ottoman territory where Turkey can play a more active political, diplomatic and economic role, fall under the threat of Iran's rising influence. Like Saudi Arabia, Turkey was interested in the Iraqi Sunnis. Ankara and Riyadh supported Prime Minister Ayad Allawi in 2010 parliamentary elections against the Iranian supported Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki³⁶². Ankara's favouring of Sunnis was not because they are Sunnis or Arabs, but because the Iraqi Sunnis could represent a bulwark against the Iranian influence in the Iraq. Therefore, Ankara did not have a reason to close its doors in front of the Iraqi Shi'as and it managed to have three diplomatic missions in Iraq (in Erbil, Baghdad and Mosul) and a special Turkish envoy for Iraq since autumn 2003 until March 2008³⁶³, unlike Saudi Arabia which did not appoint an ambassador in Baghdad until 2015. Ankara also managed to keep open channels with different Iraqi Shi'a leaders like Muqtada al-Sadr and Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and diplomatically to mediate between Iraqi Sunni and Shi'a from time to time serving to its regional activism diplomacy³⁶⁴.

In Lebanon, the negative developments in Lebanon during the Israeli attack in 2006 and the domestic clashes in 2008 had both direct negative impacts on Turkey and Saudi Arabia. They shared the interest of keeping Lebanon stable and curbing the crisis not to be escalated regionally. However, the sources of the threat came out of the Lebanese crises on Turkish national interests and Saudi national interests were not the same. Saudi Arabia, as a leader in the Arab Regional System and in the main

³⁶² "Alawi defends his visit to Saudi Arabia", February 2010, <http://elaph.com/Web/news/2010/2/536935.htm>

³⁶³ "Turkey's envoy to Iraq becomes ambassador", Today's Zaman, May 2009, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_turkeys-special-envoy-to-iraq-becomes-ambassador_176344.html .

³⁶⁴ Kanbolat, Hassan. "Al-Hakim's Visit to Turkey", Today's Zaman, 2009, http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/hasan-kanbolat/al-hakims-visit-to-turkey_193819.html , See also "Iraqi Shiite leader visits Turkey amid high tension", January 2012, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/iraqi-shiite-leader-visits-turkey-amid-high-tension.aspx?pageID=238&nID=12334&NewsCatID=338> , and "Turkey to bring Iraqi Shiite, Sunni groups together in Istanbul", February 2012, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_turkey-to-bring-iraqi-shiite-sunni-groups-together-in-istanbul_270177.html .

front line against Iran adopted a policy that supports the 14 March Alliance to roll back Iran's influence and it accused *Hizballah* of adventurism and exposing the Arab interest into danger and charged Iran with supporting *Hizballah* to wage a coup against the Lebanese state. On the side of Turkey, Ankara regarded territorial integrity and mutual trust as essential elements for stability in the Middle East and regarded Lebanon as an important area for regional stability: Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said "stability in Lebanon affects the whole Middle East"³⁶⁵. Despite that these elements were threatened by the rise of *Hizballah*'s sub-state within the Lebanese state and rise of political/sectarian divisions in Lebanon, it did not use such harsh rhetoric against Syria, Iran and *Hizballah* and chose to include them in finding a solution to end the Lebanese crises. The Saudi line and the Turkish line on Lebanon were different in the way of dealing with the developments in Lebanon, but they were not opposite to each other's as long as Ankara followed its neutral policy towards all actors.

In the case of Egypt after the uprising in 2011, the Turkish and Saudi stances were in opposite direction along the time line of the major events in Cairo since January 28th 2011, the election of President Mohamed Morsi in June 2012 until the military intervention that took place on July 3rd 2013. Both Turkey and Saudi Arabia tried to be assured that the orientations of Post-Mubarak Egypt and the Egyptian regional role will not be against their foreign policy orientations. Moreover they worked on the adaptation of Egypt in a way that serves the goals and the grand vision for their foreign policies. Turkey has sought developing relations with the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, as Egypt would be a good gate for more regional activist roles played by Turkey through having a direct access to the Palestinian - Israeli peace talks and the reconciliation process between Fateh and *Hamas*. In addition to that, Turkey's alliance with Egypt under the rule of Muslim Brothers can provide Turkey more space to maneuver with its regional competitors like Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

³⁶⁵ Arı, Tayyar. And Pirinç, Ferhat. "Turkey's New Foreign Policy Towards The Middle East And The Perceptions In Syria And Lebanon, Akademik Bakış, Volume 4, No 7, Winter 2010, <http://ataum.gazi.edu.tr/posts/view/title/turkey%E2%80%99s-new-foreign-policy-towards-the-middle-east-and-the-perceptions-in-syria-and-lebanon-47377>.

For Saudi Arabia, Egypt under Mubarak represented a cornerstone in the Saudi regional policy towards the Arab and regional affairs mainly with respect to Iran. Saudi Arabia found in the *Salafis* its ally who can counter balance the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and oppose them if they sought closer relations with Iran. After the Egyptian army intervened in July 2013, Saudi Arabia acted as the strongest foreign supporter to the new administration in Egypt. The importance of Egypt within the Saudi foreign policy vision has increased, as a new power check on the Muslim Brothers in the region and as a fang for the Turkish unlimited regional ambitions. While Turkey has securitized the fall of Muslim Brothers in Egypt, opposed the new political change and refused to recognize the new administration in Egypt.

In the case of the Syrian uprising, the Turkish and the Saudi stances witnessed stations that ranged from cooperation on the official stand towards the uprising and opposing Assad regime into divergence and contrast on the backgrounds of the military and political groups each country supports against Assad regime, unlike Egypt where their stances were conflicting all the time. Turkey and Saudi Arabia shared the stands on opposing President Assad on the international level and they are members in the group of “Friends of Syria”. Turkey and Saudi Arabia had the same line for dealing with the Syrian refugees escaping from the brutality of war. Both countries had opposed the Assad usage of chemical weapons in Syria in August 2013 and practiced pressure on the US administration to wage an attack on Syrian regime. However Turkey chose to politically support the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood opposition figures while Saudi Arabia allied with the Syrian opposition who were living in the exile rather than the Muslim Brothers. Also Saudi Arabia provided military and financial support to Salafi fighting groups and moderate Islamists while Turkey supported other different groups through coordination with Qatar like the Free Syrian Army, *Ahfad al-Rasul* Brigade, *Fajr al-Islam* Battalion and the *Al-Haqq* Brigade.

The role of the non-state actors increased in the Middle East and their presence in the regional political scene has been noticeable and influential in compared to the previous times. This rise of non-state actors had its own influence on the regional

power configurations in the Middle East and they are considered to be a new important factor in the region. On the other hand, the rise of non-state actors had its influence on the Turkish-Saudi relations in the time period of the study as both countries sought approaching them, exercising influence over them and employing them in their regional strategy. This argument appears clearly in the relations between Turkey and Muslim Brotherhood or the relations between Saudi Arabia and Salafi movements and the relations between different fighting groups against Assad regime in Syria.

The rise of the non-state actors in the Middle East politics emphasizes the necessity of developing the definition of the Regional Security Complex in order to include not only states but also to include non-state actors as members in the Middle East regional security complex and to shed the state-centric focus of the theory. The inclusion of the non-state actors will help in understanding how the non-state actors are new non-traditional security threats, how do they securitize and de-securitize their security problems, how the regional powers perceive them and finally what kind of challenges that these non-state actors are representing on the traditional state actors in the Middle East.

The thesis concludes that the Turkish foreign policy and the Saudi foreign policy pay attention to the regional dynamics in formulating their foreign policy and in fulfilling their interests, in a way that makes the regional determinants important in understanding the behaviours of the Turkish government and the Saudi government in the Middle East. Turkey worked on integrating itself economically, culturally and politically with the Arab countries and played different mediatory roles for the sake of pursuing its interests like preventing the Kurds from declaring their independence, avoiding the disintegration of Iraq and boosting its image as a regional power. Saudi Arabia supported the Arab nationalist and Sunni political actors in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine in a way that ensures Saudi's stand as an Arab regional power and as a part of its legitimacy at home and in the world as a Sunni leader country.

The thesis also concludes that the regional balance of power plays an important role in the making of the Turkish foreign policy and the Saudi foreign policy and how

each country regards its position in the regional equation importantly. Turkey found an interest in supporting the Iraqi Sunnis in the 2010 Iraqi parliamentary elections and later on during the Arab uprising, from one side as Turkey, perceives itself as the inheritor of the Ottoman empire and has a responsibility towards the ex-Ottoman territories, and from another side the Sunnis would check the rising Iranian influence on the Iraqi Shi'a which limits Turkey's economic and political mediatory presence there. During the Arab uprisings, Turkey invested politically in the rising Muslim Brotherhood and military and politically in the Syrian anti-Assad opposition as it saw more integration in the post-Assad future of Syria as it boosts its regional power status against the other regional power, Iran and Saudi Arabia. On the side of Saudi Arabia, the perspective of regional balance of power was dominant on its behaviour in the region after 2003. It sought enhancing its alliance with Egypt and Jordan, developed relations with Turkey and supported the Sunni Arab actors in order to counter balance Iran. During the Arab uprisings, Saudi Arabia renewed its contacts with the Salafi groups in order to counter the rise of Muslim Brothers, supported the Jordanian regime to face the domestic protests in Amman and supported the political change in Egypt in 2013 as a counter balance of the rising influence of Turkey and supported the uprising in Syria as a counter balance to the regional influence of Iran.

The Regional Security Complex Theory that was adopted in the study explained how Turkey and Saudi Arabia recognize each other as important actors in the region and how they interacted after the US invasion of Iraq 2003 and during the Arab uprisings in 2011. The regional interaction between Turkey and Saudi Arabia started since the war on Iraq in 2003 and continued during the Arab uprisings as they have interests in the regional issues of Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

The concepts of securitization and de-securitization were found important in understanding how Turkey and Saudi Arabia securitized regional issues, how their regional behaviours differed towards these issues and how their regional ambitions and foreign policy agendas are different during the events after the war on Iraq and during the Arab uprisings. Both Ankara and Riyadh deals with these securitized

issues in a different way as a result of their different regional ambitions and the rivalry between them, in a way that refutes the arguments that call for forming a political alliance between Turkey and Saudi Arabia against Iran and keeps limitations on their regional relations. However sharing common interests in the region from time to time might allow them to enter in limited ad-hoc short term alliances (like supporting Allawi in Iraq in 2010 and opposing Assad regime in Syria) while their different agendas and perspectives will stay appearing.

The regional interaction between Turkey and Saudi Arabia continues to play an important role in the bilateral relations between Ankara and Riyadh. The regional environment created after the war on Iraq in 2003 and the positive interaction took place between Turkey and Saudi Arabia have created a suitable ground for boosting the political, economic and military relations between Ankara and Riyadh. The political relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia witnessed remarkable events like the visit of King Abdullah to Turkey in 2006 (the first visit by a Saudi king to Turkey since 1974) and another visit in 2007. Turkey signed an agreement of strategic dialogue with the GCC in September 2008. Saudi Arabia supported the candidacy of the Turkish professor Ekmelledin Ihsanoğlu as a secretary general of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Also Turkish Prime Minister and Turkish president paid many visits to Saudi Arabia in order to discuss regional issues and explore new opportunities for developing economic relations between both countries. The economic relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia witnessed a rise as well; the trade volume between the two countries has increased from USD 1.2 billion in 2001 to USD 5.5 billion in 2008. Important Saudi investors started entering the Turkish market for investment in sectors of Energy, Tourism, Real state, Petrochemicals, Banking, Agriculture, and Industry like the Kingdom Holding Group, *Abdul Latif Al-Jamil* Group, Ogur Company, and National Commercial Bank. The Turkish companies also had found opportunities in the infrastructure projects in Saudi Arabia like the metro line in Riyadh and managing Saudi Airports in coordination with *Al-Rajih* group. Conversely, the negative regional interaction between Turkey and Saudi Arabia has left a negative impact on the political relations between Ankara and Riyadh represented in the absence of the Saudi Ambassador in Turkey for Saudi Arabia did not assign a new ambassador to Turkey

for seven months, after the ex-Saudi ambassador Mohamed al-Husseini has ended his mission following the Egyptian uprising in January 2011, Saudi Arabia lobbied with Egypt not to let Turkey win a non-permanent seat in the UNSC in 2014 and received 60 votes only after getting 151 votes in 2008 UNSC elections, Riyadh did not invite the Foreign Minister of Turkey to the ministerial meeting of the mini Friends of Syria group held in Jeddah in August 2014. On the economic level, there were no news on any new Saudi investments coming to Turkey or plans by Saudi big investors in the Turkish market, however the current Saudi investments in Turkey stayed without any impact and the trade volume between the two countries increased slightly from USD 6.2 billion in 2011 into USD 7.3 in 2013.

The thesis contributes to the discussion about geographical proximity as a condition for having a regional security complex. The study has proved that, although Saudi Arabia and Turkey does not share direct borders in between, a status of interdependence between the regional and national interests of Turkey and Saudi Arabia existed owing to the spill over of Iraq effect, the externalities of the rise of Sunni-Shi'a confrontation in Iraq, the developments of the Arab uprisings (mainly in Egypt) and other regional issues. Therefore, it is important to mention that the geographical proximity in some cases cannot be an essential factor for having a security complex between states and that the interests of some states can be affected with disregard to their geographical location as long as they are under the impact of the same externalities.

The thesis also contributes to the debate on the role of Turkey in the Middle East security complex; whether it is a player in the complex or it is an insulator between different regional complexes (Middle East, East Europe and Middle Asia). The thesis founded that Turkey, under the rule of the AKP, had become politically and economically integrated in the Middle East to a high degree after the US invasion of Iraq and during the Arab uprisings. After the war on Iraq, Turkey adopted a regional mediator agenda and sought mediating different conflicts in the region as it enjoys good political and economic relations with many Arab countries and Iran. It exerted efforts between the Palestinians and Israel, Syria and Israel, Syria and Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iraq, between different fractions in Lebanon through coordination Qatar,

between Iran and the West through coordination with Brazil. Turkey's economic relations with the Arab countries has expanded through the free trade agreements between Turkey and different Arab countries, high strategic councils protocols signed between Turkey and different Arab countries, in addition to that, the Turkish exports to the Middle East represents more than 20% of the total Turkish exports. However Turkey has lived many setbacks starting since 2013 and the downfall of its Muslim Brotherhood ally in different Arab countries mainly in Egypt. Turkey became not capable of playing the role of the honest mediator as it lost its neutrality with many stakeholders in the region and after taking the side of Muslim Brothers during the course of events of the Arab uprisings. Turkey's involvement in the war between Assad regime and Syrian opposition has exposed its security into danger represented in the expansion of the PKK fighters in the Syrian territories, being in an open regional confrontation with Iran and different Shi'a groups in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria and losing the land trade routes used through the Syrian and Iraqi territories for transporting Turkish products to the GCC countries. Turkey's high regional profile during the uprisings has led to the loss of confidence with Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel, which would limit Turkey's moves within the regional security complex in the short term. Turkey also suffers a deterioration in its image in the Arab world as a result of its lower democratic credits which were a strong credit for its image starting from the protests took place in Gezi park in May 2013 and the strife between the ruling AKP and domestic opponent Gülen movement. Finally the Turkish economy started to get into a recession since mid-2014 represented in a low growth rate under 2%, a decrease in the value of the Turkish Lira in front of the US Dollar, an increase in the unemployment rate to exceed the 10% level and a decrease in the exports which contributes to lowering the admiration of Turkey in the Arab world.

The Media analysis has been beneficial in understanding the discourse of Media outlets of newspapers close to the government in Saudi Arabia and close to the ruling AKP in Turkey towards each other. It reflects how policy makers in Turkey and Saudi Arabia perceive each other and the degree of divergence and rapprochement between the stances of Ankara and Riyadh concerning different regional issues, in a way that makes the media discourse analysis a tool for

examining the relations between them and for categorizing the pattern of the political and regional ties between Turkey and Saudi Arabia in different periods of time. After the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and King Abdullah's first visit to Turkey, the media outlets in Saudi Arabia reflected positive gestures on the Turkish political elite and the ruling AKP as a party that comes from an Islamic background and seeks new partnerships with the Arab and Muslim world. The Turkish media outlets were focusing on the mutual economic and political benefits of developing strong relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, the opportunities for Turkish construction companies in Saudi Arabia and the news of the Saudi possible investments in Turkey. Conversely, the media reflected the negative regional interaction and the deteriorated political relations between Ankara and Riyadh after the political change took place in Egypt in 2013. Saudi media outlet published many articles and broadcasted different TV reports focusing on the Gezi protests in May 2013 and the Turkish support to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and other Arab countries. On the Turkish side, Turkish media outlets close to the ruling AKP published articles and reports condemning the Saudi support to the new administration in Egypt, accusing Saudi Arabia of allying with Israel against the Muslim Brothers in Egypt to restore the old regional status quo.

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Appendix A: Turkish Summary

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin 1923, Suudi Arabistan Krallığı'nın 1932 yılında kurulmasından bu yana, iki ülke arasındaki ilişkiler Ortadoğu'daki bölgesel meselelerden etkilenmektedir, her bir ülkenin bu meselelere olumlu veya olumsuz yaklaşımlarını etkilemektedir. Bu ikili ilişkiler, Ortadoğu siyasetinde meydana gelen ve her bir ülkeyi etkileyip ülkelerin bu olayları ele alırken kullandığı (pozitif/negatif) yaklaşımları yönlendiren bazı önemli olaylardan da etkilenmektedir. Bu tezde, Ortadoğu'da meydana gelen bölgesel olaylar ve her bir ülkenin bu olaylara yaklaşımlarının Türkiye-Suudi Arabistan ilişkileri üzerindeki yansımaları tartışılmaktadır. ABD'nin Irak işgaline sahne olan 2003 yılında, Ortadoğu'ya yönelik yeni bir yaklaşım geliştiren Siyasal İslam yanlısı Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP)'nin yükselişiyle birlikte Türkiye-Suudi Arabistan ilişkileri yeni bir ivme kazanmıştır. 2003 yılında Irak'ta meydana gelen savaşın etkisi hem Irak'ta hem de diğer Ortadoğu ülkelerinde Ankara ve Riyad'ın bölgesel ve ulusal çıkarlarını bir araya getirmiş ve bu sayede her iki ülkenin kendi güçlerini farketmesini ve bu gücü ikili ilişkilerin düzeyinin artırılması ve ortak çıkar amacıyla kullanmasını sağlamıştır. 2003 yılının ardından, iki ülke arasındaki ilişki grafiği üst düzey ziyaret, ikili anlaşmalar, ticaret dengesi, yatırım hacmi, silah satışı gibi konularda ve daha da önemlisi Suudi Arabistan'da Türkiye, Türkiye'de Suudi Arabistan imajının geliştirilmesi ve güçlendirilmesi açısından başarılı olmuştur.

Diğer taraftan, Arap ülkelerinde meydana gelen ayaklanmalar, iki ülkenin bunlara karşı sergiledikleri farklı yaklaşımlar ve aralarında bu konuya ilişkin var olan bölgesel çıkar çatışmaları nedeniyle Türk-Suudi ilişkileri üzerinde olumsuz bir etki yaratmıştır. Gerçekleşen ayaklanmalar Türkiye'de, Arap toplumu ve bu toplumun yeni yöneticileri arasında uyumlu bir ilişki ve en nihayetinde elde edilecek bölgesel barış ve güvenlik için atılacak önemli bir adım olarak görülürken, Suudi Arabistan bu ayaklanmaları uzun sürecek bir kaos ve bölgesel istikrarsızlık olarak

değerlendirmiştir. İki ülkenin bu konuya yaklaşımları ve bölgesel amaçları arasındaki fark hem 2011 yılında Mısır'da gerçekleşen Mübarek karşıtı gösterilerde hem de 2013 yılının Temmuz ayında gerçekleşen siyasi değişim esnasında açıkça görülmüyordu. Türk-Suudi ilişkileri ABD'nin Irak işgalinden sonra kazanmış olduğu ivmeyi kaybetmiş, üst düzey resmi ziyaretler yerini alt düzey ziyaretlere bırakmış ve ticaret dengesi 2003-2011 yılları arasında kaydedilen yüksek rakamlara ulaşamamıştır.

Suudi Arabistan'ın 2014 yılında Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi seçimlerinde Türkiye karşıtı lobi faaliyetlerinde bulunmasıyla, siyasi ilişkiler de eski canlılığını yitirmiştir.

Bu çalışma, 2003 yılında Irak'ta meydana gelen savaşın ve 2011 yılında patlak veren Arap Baharı'nın Türkiye ile Suudi Arabistan arasındaki siyasi, ekonomik ve askeri ilişkiler üzerindeki etkisini karşılaştırmalı olarak irdeleyerek, bölgesel olayların sonuçları ve her iki ülkenin bu sonuçlara verdiği tepkilerin ikili ilişkilerde nasıl bir rol oynadığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Araştırmanın verilerinin elde edilmesinde, Türk ve Suudi devletlerinin resmi kurumlarının ve her bir ülkenin yöneticilerinin, Dışişleri Bakanlarının veya diğer resmi kurumların resmi açıklamalarının, Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan'daki ticaret birlikleri ve çeşitli şirketlerin hazırladığı raporların derlenmesi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. İki ülke arasındaki ilişkiler ve Türk-Suudi ilişkilerinin her bir ülkenin Ortadoğu'daki bölgesel yönelimlerine ilişkin gidişatının incelenmesinde Türk ve Suudi medyası oldukça yararlı bir kaynak oluşturmaktadır. Son olarak, yazar 2015 yılının Mayıs ayında Suudi Arabistan'a gerçekleştirdiği ziyarette, araştırma konusuyla ilgilenen Suudi gazeteciler, eski diplomatlar, akademisyenler ve işadamları ile yaptığı görüşmelerden oluşan bir saha araştırması gerçekleştirmiştir.

Bu çalışma Türkiye-Suudi Arabistan ilişkilerinin 2000'li yıllardaki gelişimini anlamak amacıyla bölgesel düzeyde bir analiz sunmaktadır. Çalışmada, Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan arasındaki bölgesel etkileşimin ve ülkelerin, bu çalışmanın devam ettiği süreçte birbiriyle örtüşen bölgesel ve ulusal çıkarlarının incelenmesinde Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Teorisi'nin yanı sıra, bu teorinin Suudi Arabistan ve

Türkiye'nin 2003 yılındaki Irak Savaşı ve 2011 yılındaki Arap Baharı'nın bölgesel neticelerini nasıl güvenlikleştirdiğini çözümlenmede etkinliği kanıtlanmış olan 'Güvenikleştirme' ve 'Güvenlik dışılaştırma' gibi kavramlar da kullanılmaktadır.

İlk bölüm Türk-Suudi ilişkileri üzerine genel bir literatür taraması ve bu ilişkilerin tarihi arkaplanına dair kısa bir bakış sunmaktadır. İlk bölümde ayrıca, Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Teorisi, Güvenikleştirme ve Güvenlik dışılaştırma gibi teori ve kavramlar kullanılarak bölgesel düzeyde bir analize yer verilmiştir.

İkinci bölüm, Irak'ta oluşan yeni bölgesel güvenlik kompleksinin, ABD'nin 2003 yılındaki Irak işgalinin ardından Irak'ta yükselen İran nüfuzu, Irak ulusal kimliğinde artan Sunni/Şii/Kürt kimlikleri, bölgesel güç dengelerinin yeniden yapılanması gibi temel özelliklerini konu almaktadır. Bunlar, ortak tehdit unsurlarıyla karşılaşıldığında ve Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan'ın bölgesel yaklaşımlarının yakınlaştığı durumlarda her iki ülke için de bazı tehlikeler taşımaktaydı. Bununla birlikte, iki ülkenin Irak'taki bölgesel güvenliğine karşı farklı şekilde yaklaşımları ve farklı tepkiler vermeleri nedeniyle, her zaman aynı siyasi çizgide ilerlemedikleri söylenebilir. Suudi Arabistan ve Türkiye'nin Irak'taki ortak çıkarı, bölgenin toprak bütünlüğünü korumak, ortak korkusu ise Irak'ta yükselen İran nüfuzuydu. İki ülke bu konulara ilişkin üst düzey ikili görüşmeler esnasında kurulan düzenli müzakereler aracılığıyla işbirliğinde bulduysa da, farklı bölgesel siyaset gündemleri nedeniyle tek bir siyasi çizgiyi takip edememiştir. Her iki ülke de 2010 seçimlerinde Sünni Iraklıları desteklemiştir. Türkiye kendisini eski Osmanlı topraklarında bölgesel bir güç olarak gördüğünden, Sünni kesimi de Irak'taki ekonomik çıkarları için bir siper olarak değerlendirmekteydi. Suudi Arabistan ise İran'ın Irak üzerindeki nüfuzunu dengelemek amacıyla, Sünni Arap bölgesel gücü olarak Sünni halkın üzerindeki etkisini ve bu kesime verdiği desteği güçlendirmiştir.

İkinci bölümde, Irak'taki yeni güvenlik kompleksinin özelliklerinin yayılma etkisi ve Lübnan gibi diğer Ortadoğu ülkeleri üzerindeki sonuçlarının yanı sıra, bu özelliklerin Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan'ın ulusal ve stratejik çıkarlarına nasıl temas ettiği de incelenmektedir. Bu konuda her iki ülkenin tutum ve duruşları, birbirinden farklı olsa dahi, Türkiye Lübnan'ın tüm ulusal ve bölgesel aktörlerine karşı tarafsız

bir duruş sergilediği için birbiriyle çatışmamaktadır. Türkiye ile Suudi Arabistan, Lübnan'ın istikrarının devam ettirilmesi ve 2006 yılında gerçekleşen İsrail saldırılarının ve 2008 yılında bölgesel olarak tırmanan yurtiçi çatışmaların yarattığı krizlerin azaltılması gibi ortak amaçları paylaşmaktaydı. Bununla birlikte, Lübnan'daki bu gelişmelerle ilgilenirken sürdürdükleri siyasi çizgi açısından iki ülke birbirinden ayrılmaktaydı. Suudi Arabistan İran'ın bölgedeki nüfuzunun azaltılması amacıyla 14 Mart İttifakı'nı destekledi ve Hizbullah'ı 2006 yılındaki maceraperestliği nedeniyle ve İran'ı da 2008 yılında Hizbullah'ı darbe konusunda desteklemekle suçlamıştır. Türkiye Lübnan'ı bölgesel istikrarın temini için önemli bir bölge olarak değerlendirmiş ve Suudi Arabistan'ın Suriye, İran ve Hizbullah karşıtı sert söylemi yerine Lübnan krizinin sona erdirilmesi amacıyla yürütülen arabuluculuk faaliyetlerine bu unsurları dahil etmeyi tercih etmiştir.

Bölgedeki gelişmeler (özellikle Irak ve Lübnan) Suudi Arabistan'da Türkiye'nin, Türkiye'de ise Suudi Arabistan'ın bölgesel rolünün algılanışına yönelik bazı pozitif değişimler yaratan önemli bir rol oynamıştır ve bu sayede Türk-Suudi ikili ilişkilerine siyasi, askeri ve ekonomik olarak önemli katkılarda bulunmuştur. Her bir ülkenin birbirinin bölgesel rolü hakkında edindiği pozitif görüşler, iki ülkenin de siyasi isteğini 2003-2011 yılları arasındaki dönemde temasları güçlendirmek yönünde arttırmış, böylece siyasi, ekonomik ve askeri düzeyde ikili ilişkiler yoğunlaşmıştır.

Üçüncü bölümde 2010 yılının sonlarında patlak veren Arap Baharı'nın ardından bölgede meydana gelen değişimler, 2011 ve 2013 yıllarında gerçekleşen Mısır ayaklanmaları ve 2011 yılındaki Suriye ayaklanmalarının bölgesel boyutu incelenmektedir. Bu bölümde ayrıca, Türk ve Suudi dış politikasının Arap Baharı'na verdiği tepkiler irdelenmektedir. Mısır ve Suriye'de 2011 yılından sonra yükselen Müslüman Kardeşlerin Suudi Arabistan ve Türkiye arasında bir anlaşmazlık kaynağının habercisi olmasının yanı sıra, her bir ülkede diğerinin imajı üzerinde de etkili olmuş ve Suriye'deki Esad rejimi karşıtı girişimlerin harekete geçirilmesinde yararlanılabilecek fırsatların kaybedilmesi ve iki ülke arasındaki siyasi ilişkilerin gerilemesine yol açmıştır.

Mısır'da 2011 yılında başlayan ayaklanmaları takiben sırasıyla 2011 yılında 28 Ocak'ta Kahire'de patlak veren ayaklanmalar, Muhammed Mursi'nin Haziran 2012 seçimlerinde cumhurbaşkanı seçilmesi ve 3 Temmuz 2013'te yapılan askeri müdahaleye kadar devam eden Mursi başkanlığı gibi noktalarda Türk ve Suudi tarafları birbirine zıt yaklaşımlar sergilemişlerdir. Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan Mısır'ın adaptasyonunda kendi bölgesel politikalarının amaçlarına ve vizyonuna hizmet edecek biçimde çalışmalar yürütmüştür. Türkiye, Mısır'daki Müslüman Kardeşlerle ilişkilerini geliştirmeyi ve bölgede daha aktif roller üstlenmeyi hedeflerken, Suudi Arabistan, Mısır'da 3 Temmuz'dan sonra kurulan yeni hükümeti Müslüman Kardeşler üzerindeki yeni bir güç kontrolü ve İran'ın bölgesel yayılımına karşı yeni bir müttefik olarak ele alarak bu gelişmeleri olumlu karşılamıştır.

Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan'ın Suriye devrimi konusundaki tutumları hem bazı ortaklıklar hem de farklılıklar göstermiştir. İki ülkenin yaklaşımları Suriye'deki devrimi ve mültecileri destekleme açısından ve yükselen muhalif Esad rejimine karşı uluslararası arenada işbirliği yapma düzeyinde ortak bir paydada birleşirken, destekledikleri muhalif gruplar açısından birbirinden farklılaşmıştır.

Suudi Arabistan ve Türkiye'nin Arap Baharı'na yaklaşımları arasındaki uyumsuzluk, iki ülke arasındaki siyasi ilişkileri de etkilemiştir. 2011 ve 2013 yıllarında meydana gelen Mısır ayaklanmaları ikili ilişkileri aşağı çekerken, Suriye krizi ilişkilerin topyekün çöküşüne engel olmuştur. Türkiye eski büyükelçisinin Ocak 2011'de görevini sonlandırmasının ardından Suudi Arabistan yeni bir elçi görevlendirmemiştir. İki ülke arasında daha sonra Suriye meselesi hakkında üst düzey ziyaretler gerçekleşmiştir. Fakat, 2013 yılında meydana gelen Mısır ayaklanmasının ardından Türk-Suudi siyasi ilişkileri, Riyad'ın, 2014 yılında yapılan Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi seçimlerinde Türkiye'nin geçici üyelik adaylığına karşı yürüttüğü lobi faaliyetleri nedeniyle sekteye uğramıştır. Suudi hükümeti Türkiye'yi Suriye'ye ilişkin olarak Riyad'da düzenlenen konferansa davet etmediği gibi, Türkiye'nin Afrika Birliği'nin Ocak 2015'te Libya hakkında gerçekleştirdiği görüşmeye davet edilmesine de karşı çıkmıştır. Diğer yandan, ekonomik ve askeri ilişkiler her ne kadar ivmesini kaybederek Arap Baharı

öncesindeki yüksek seviyelere ulaşmasa da siyasi ilişkilerdeki gibi ciddi bir gerilemeye sahne olmamıştır.

Sonuç:

Bu çalışma, ABD'nin 2003 yılındaki Irak işgalinin ve 2011 yılındaki Arap Baharı'nın ardından oluşan yeni bölgesel komplekslerin, Ankara ve Riyad arasındaki bölgesel etkileşimi arttırarak, Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan'ın bölgesel çıkarlarını birleştirdiğini savunmaktadır. Bu çalışmayla, sözü geçen etkileşimin gelecekte de devam edeceği ve Türk-Suudi ilişkilerinin literatürde iki ülke arasındaki böyle bir etkileşimin analiz edilmesi amacıyla daha sık inceleneceği de öngörülmektedir.

Bu iki önemli olay (ABD'nin Irak işgali ve Arap Baharı) ışığında oluşan bölgesel bağlamlar, Arap Bölgesel Sisteminin ve Irak, Suriye ve kısmen Mısır gibi geleneksel Arap güçlerinin zayıflığına bağlı olarak bir güç vakumu yarattı. Diğer yandan, Ankara ve Riyad bölgede liderlik arayışı ve nüfuzunu farklı ülke ve grupları etkileyecek biçimde genişletme gibi amaçlarla birbirine rakip olan iki bölgesel güç olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Suudi Arabistan, Arap Bölgesel Sisteminin zayıflığını giderecek bir dış politika izlemiş ve desteğini ve nüfuzunu Irak, Suriye ve Lübnan'da İran'a karşı Arap Milliyetçileri ya da Sünni partileri etkileyecek biçimde genişletmeye çalışmanın yanı sıra, Müslüman Kardeşler ve Türkiye'ye karşı Mısır'da Temmuz 2013'te meydana gelen siyasi değişimi de desteklemiştir.

Eski Osmanlı topraklarında bölgesel bir güç olarak aktif rolünü ve varlığını arttırmayı hedefleyen Türkiye ise arabuluculuk, yumuşak güç ve farklı ülkelerle ekonomik ilişkiler geliştirme gibi amaç ve araçlar yoluyla aktif bir dış politika izlemiştir. Türkiye, Suriye'deki muhalif grupları ve Mısır'daki Müslüman Kardeşleri destekleyerek bölgedeki nüfuzunu arttırmayı amaçlamıştır.

Çalışmanın yapıldığı zaman çerçevesi Türk ve Suudi siyasi çizgileri ve bölgesel çıkarları arasında tezde işaret edilen bazı (pozitif etkileşimi sağlayan) yakınlaşmalar ve (negatif etkileşime neden olan) uyuşmazlıklara sahne olmuştur. Bu nedenle, bu

çalıřmada Trkiye ve Suudi Arabistan'ın ne daimi bir blgesel ittifak (her iki lke ABD mttefiđi ve Snni lkeler olmasına rađmen) ne de (farklı yaklařım ve blgesel siyasi gndemlerine rađmen) aık ulu blgesel bir atıřma iinde bulunmayacađı ngrlmektedir.

Bu tezde ayrıca Ankara ve Riyad arasındaki blgesel etkileřimin iki lke arasındaki iliřkileri etkilemesinin yanı sıra, her bir lkenin diđerinin blgesel rol hakkında sahip olduđu algıyı da etkilemiřtir. alıřmada blgesel etkileřimin zellikle de siyasi dzeydeki ikili iliřkileri etkilemeye devam edeceđi tahmin edilmektedir.

Appendix B: Sample Tez Fotokopisi İzin Formu

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı : ELLITHY

Adı : AMR MOHAMED HASSAN

Bölümü : ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Turkish-Saudi Relations: From A Regional Perspective

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: