

6-11-2022

Kuwait's Leadership In Mediation Of The Gave State Diplomatic Conflict 2017-2019

Agung Qosym Yus
Universitas Indonesia, agungqosym@gmail.com

Mulawarman Hannase
Universitas Indonesia, mulawarmanhannase@ui.ac.id

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/meis>



Part of the [International Relations Commons](#), and the [Near and Middle Eastern Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Yus, Agung Qosym and Hannase, Mulawarman (2022) "Kuwait's Leadership In Mediation Of The Gave State Diplomatic Conflict 2017-2019," *Jurnal Middle East and Islamic Studies*: Vol. 9: No. 1, Article 5.
DOI: 10.7454/meis.v9i1.145
Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/meis/vol9/iss1/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Strategic and Global Studies at UI Scholars Hub. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Jurnal Middle East and Islamic Studies* by an authorized editor of UI Scholars Hub.

KUWAIT'S LEADERSHIP IN MEDIATION OF THE GAVE STATE DIPLOMIC CONFLICT 2017-2019

Agung Qosym Yus¹, Mulawarman Hannase²

^{1,2}School of Strategic and Global studies Universitas Indonesia

Email: agung.qosym@ui.ac.id, mulawarmanhannase@ui.ac.id

Abstract

The Gulf region in 2017 experienced a diplomatic crisis that was quite complicated so that it could be said as a regional conflict which was manifested in the form of a blockade and the closure of diplomatic relations between them. This crisis mainly involves Saudi and its allies to blockade Qatar in various ways. This conflict made Kuwait emerge as a mediator trying to restore the diplomatic situation in the Gulf region back to normal. By using literature studies and qualitative research methods in analyzing the data, it can be seen that Kuwait succeeded in neutralizing and slowly returning to the situation in the Gulf region to open the blockade and re-establish diplomatic relations with Qatar. So it can be concluded that Kuwait formed a narrative of “solidarity” and “stability” to reconcile the conflict situation.

Keyword : Conflict, Diplmacy, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia

INTRODUCTION

Qatar was born as a small country with enormous ambitions. The political and social changes that took place in Middle Eastern and North African countries during the Arab spring, revealed how small countries with big ambitions could be more active, targeting a front seat on the international stage and trying to play a leading role in the globalised world. Some countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), disagree with Qatar's path of ideological ties and political ambitions. This path is considered by other GCC members, especially Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, as a security threat. At the same time, as Qatar

expanded its influence as a regional superpower and mediator, Saudi Arabia suspiciously observed the happenings, and waited for momentum, as the Saudis used to lead and play this role exclusively before Qatar took the stage. Saudi Arabia embarked on a diplomatic and political campaign to let Qatar down and steer its foreign policy in accordance with GCC objectives. The conflict escalated further on 5 June 2017, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Yemen, Libya, and Maldives severed diplomatic relations with Qatar and announced the withdrawal of their ambassadors from Doha. Qatar is in political, diplomatic and economic regional isolation.

The termination of diplomatic relations was motivated by the assessment that Qatar is a supporter behind the operations of terrorist networks in the Middle East region, including the Muslim Brotherhood, which these countries categorise as a terror group. Saudi Arabia and its allies have submitted to Qatar the preconditions for normalising diplomatic relations in the form of 13 conditions, including lowering the level of relations with Iran; stopping the construction of Turkish military bases being built on Qatari territory; ending terrorism, sectarianism and ideology; and stopping the operation of the al-Jazeera news agency (www.aljazeera.com, 2017). Qatar rejected these demands, which then prompted fears that this diplomatic crisis would be referred to as the Gulf Crisis which led to open conflict (Ibrahim Fraihat, 2020). The outbreak of the crisis immediately triggered third-party intervention from a number of countries. Oman, Pakistan and a number of European countries tried to mediate and help defuse the crisis. However, Kuwait approached third-party intervention in a more structured and nuanced way. Kuwait played a very significant and positive role in stopping the defragmentation and conflict in the GCC countries (Ibid). Kuwait's role in mediating

the disputing countries along with the efforts towards this crisis has been considered as a peaceful means of resolving international disputes. In this case, the mediator takes on the role of an entity that resolves disputes by using negotiation and discussion methods at one table (Mutairi and Ali 2022). Kuwait's primary interest is to keep the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) united and strong, which is central to its national security strategy to respond to external threats.

Conflict is something that is closely related to human life. In international relations, conflict is even one of the shapers of interaction patterns between actors in the international system. Herz (1950) and Waltz (1959, 1979) say that countries are trapped in a conflictual international system. This is because to survive in the system, states will tend to improve their capabilities as a form of preparation and self-prevention from possible attacks. As a consequence, other countries will see this as a threat and will do the same. As a result, countries will continue to be in a condition called the *security dilemma*.

Resolved disputes play a role in stabilisation in the region. Qatar, a country

with ambitions that uses every possible means to get to the front seat on the international scene, needed a mediator to find a way out of regional isolation. Kuwait as a mediator has the primary interest of keeping the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) united and strong, which is central to its national security strategy to respond to external threats. Mediation efforts are considered an important peaceful means of contributing to international dispute resolution in which the mediator takes matters into his own hands to resolve existing disputes through negotiation and discussion (Ago, 1956). In the Gulf crisis, Kuwait's mediation efforts were an attempt to bridge the Gulf rift that occurred between more than half of the GCC countries with Qatar, especially with regard to the escalation of tensions to armed conflict that might lead to regime change in Doha. Kuwait's mediation efforts are faced with a constant threat represented by the long duration of the crisis and the failure to reach a satisfactory resolution. For decades, Kuwait has placed diplomacy and mediation at the centre of its regional engagement with the Arab world. Successive leaders in Kuwait sought to create and expand the options available to a small country

surrounded by larger and more conventional neighbours and a turbulent regional arena.

The interests of the mediator as a third party have significant potential to influence the mediation process and its outcome. That is why the interests of third parties should always be examined to understand what impact they can have in mediating conflicts. Looking at the Gulf crisis, it can be argued that, for Kuwait, successful mediation is in the interest of national security. Kuwait's primary interest is a peaceful resolution that leads to a united and strong GCC as a security umbrella for its six members (Ibrahim Fraihat, 2020).

This paper discusses Kuwait's leadership in regional mediation in the crisis involving Qatar and three Gulf Cooperation Council neighbours - Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) - first in 2014 and then again between 2017 and 2021.

METHODOLOGY

The type of research used by the author in this study is descriptive, in which the author seeks to describe Kuwait's involvement in the mediation process during the conflict between Qatar and the Gulf crisis in 2017-2019. In this research, data collection is sourced from secondary data by means of

literature study, and analysed by qualitative methods.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework Conflict Theory

Conflict is a difference or opposition between individuals or social groups due to differences in interests and a combination of threats or violence against each other to achieve goals to achieve goals (Soekanto, 2006). According to Coser, as cited by Henry Iwansyah (2013) conflict is a struggle for values and claims regarding status, power, and scarce resources. The goal of both parties is to neutralise the pain or eliminate the opposing party. Then Wallenstein (2004) added that conflict is something that cannot be avoided by humans. Conflict can be constructive, but it can also be destructive. Although conflict can be destructive, basically the participants involved need to resolve the conflict through negotiation. Antonius (2002) explains that conflict is behaviour that has the effect of obstructing, inhibiting, or disturbing other parties that occur between groups in the social environment or interpersonal relationships of each person. This is in accordance with Deutsch's view, someone in the field of conflict resolution (in Maftuh, 2005) suggests that in conflict, social interactions between individuals or groups

are more influenced by differences than similarities, therefore resulting in a clash because of things that are not in line. Meanwhile, according to Scannell (2010) conflict is a natural and normal thing that arises due to differences in perceptions of each goal or value in a group of individuals and is common in social life.

Conflicts can be divided into three: *interstate conflict* or *international conflict*, conflict related to *state formation conflict* and *internal/intra-state conflict* (Wallenstein, 2012). As the name suggests, interstate conflict involves two or more states that are members of the international system. Wallenstein (1981, 1994) explained that interstate conflict can be divided into four categories, namely based on geopolitical, realpolitik, idealpolitik, and capitalpolitik factors.

Conflict Resolution

Nicholson (1991) explains that conflict resolution is a way to create solutions to the various impacts of conflict. Conflict resolution is also a process of trying to reduce or even resolve conflicts. Then Mindes (2006) adds that conflict resolution is the ability to integrate differences and is an important aspect of social and moral

development that requires skills and expertise to negotiate, compromise and develop a sense of justice in the parties to the conflict. Conflict resolution can be interpreted as comprehensive, which means that the deep-rooted root causes of conflict need to be resolved in order to resolve the conflict. Conflict resolution is an integral part of the work towards development, social justice and social transformation, which aims to address various problems in human life. A broad understanding of conflict resolution involves not only mediation between disputing parties but how to resolve them in a way that is sustainable and lasting (Miall, 2002).

Dahrendorf in Putra (2009) explains that there are three forms of conflict management that are commonly used as conflict resolution, namely: a) Conciliation, where all parties discuss and debate openly to reach an agreement without any parties monopolising the conversation or imposing their own will; b) Mediation, when both parties agree to seek advice from a third party (in the form of certain figures, experts or institutions that are considered to have in-depth knowledge and expertise on the issues faced in the conflict), the advice given by the mediator is not binding on the two parties to the conflict, only as advice; c) Arbitration,

both parties agree to get a legal final decision from the arbitrator as a way out to resolve the conflict (Keethaponcalan, 2017).

Mediation Concept

Mediation is a process in which parties to a conflict identify disputed issues with the help of a mediator, then seek solutions, consider alternatives and work towards finding a joint solution (Spencer & Brogan in Jamil, 2007). Mediation is also a conflict management process in which both parties to a dispute try to resolve their differences with the help of a third party acceptable to both parties to negotiate an agreement acceptable to both parties (Deutsch, 2006; Hernandez, 2014). This is motivated by conflicts that have reached the stage of violence and destruction of each other, thus making communication and relationships between the two parties deteriorate (Djumala, 2013). Cole in Woodhouse (2010) explains that the mediation process has established four basic elements. Firstly, the role of a mediator is to establish, maintain and improve communication. Second, to provide information to the conflicting parties and the parties to the conflict; third, to "befriend" the conflicting parties; and fourth, to encourage what he calls active mediation, which is to

foster a willingness to participate in cooperative negotiations.

In this regard, the mediation process is particularly important in long-standing and deep-rooted conflicts, as it is impossible to resolve such conflicts without external assistance (Kazanský and Andrassy, 2019). Among them, an external party as a mediator usually aims to assist and play a role, restore the relationship and communication between the disputing parties, and then find a solution that is acceptable to both parties. This avoids the conflict leading to a win-or-lose strategy (Deutsch, 2006). The mediator is positioned as a party who provides advice or determines the procedures for mediation in order to find a fair settlement. In addition, it should also be noted that the mediator's ability to help resolve conflicts must be considered, because according to Muslih in (Jamil, 2007) the mediator must be truly impartial and seek a solution for the good of the disputing parties fairly and most importantly, a mediator must really master the field of conflict (Coleman, Deutsch, & Marcus, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Geopolitics; Qatar is a small country with big ambitions

Qatar is a small country in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, and Qatar itself

is a peninsula bordering Saudi Arabia a country on the Arabian Peninsula and bordering the Persian Gulf (Mohamed Tirab, 2014). Qatar is bordered at sea and land by the kingdom of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. Qatar has an area of 11,850 square kilometres, and gained independence in 1971 from Britain. Qatar's modern history begins with the Al Thani family, who ruled the small country since 1878 (<http://www.moi.gov.qa/site/english/aboutQatar/>). According to data from the *Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Annual Statistical Bulletin* in 2017, Qatar's petroleum production is 651,500 barrels per day with petroleum reserves reaching 25.244 billion barrels (*OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin* 2017).

In terms of politics, Qatar is a small country dominated by the largest Persian Gulf ruling family, the Al Thani with the head of state being the Amir. Qatar is a country with an absolute monarchy system of government where the government is divided into 3 (three) bodies namely legislative, executive and judicial (<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/qatar/>).

Geopolitically, Qatar is surrounded by many

challenges and problems, such as Iran and concerns about its energy-focused foreign policy and diplomatic relations with Israel. So the Qatari rulers believe in the need to be protected from their largest neighbour Saudi Arabia, but both countries are strongly developing their relationship with the United States. Despite these geopolitical factors, Qatar continues to invest in efforts to gain a front seat on the international stage.

To achieve that goal, the Qatari government directs the potential of its economic and media machinery, such as supporting the uprisings or bringing them to the negotiating table. All of that is just to achieve the main target, and support their goal of getting a front seat in the international arena. The US' protection of Qatar gives it the confidence to concentrate efforts on independence from the influence of the Saudi kingdom. Thus Qatar's foreign policy on this issue is based on creating distance from the oil market, making gas the core of the investment product, thus making them the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas.

Qatar had signed a Defence Cooperation Agreement in 1999 with the

United States, after withdrawing its military bases in Saudi Arabia, and they went further in cooperating with the west, and their support to NATO to establish a non-flying zone in Libya, (Ulrichsen, 2014). Then since 2001 we can see that in most regional conflicts, in Africa or in Arab countries, Qatar has been involved in them as a mediator. Just like the conflict in Yemen, Qatar conducted two mediations that lasted for two phases. The first phase started in 2007 to 2008 while the second phase started in 2010 and only managed to reach an agreement for a ceasefire in August 2010 (Barakat, 2012).

As Qatar expands its influence as a regional superpower and mediator, Saudi Arabia is watching the situation very carefully, as it used to lead and play this role exclusively before Qatar took the stage in the Middle East region. Saudi Arabia still considers itself a political superpower, at least in the Arabian Peninsula, but has not ruled out suspicion of Qatar's growing power. Qatar's involvement in the Libyan conflict, by providing direct military support to the rebellion against Qaddafi during the 2011 uprising, was a turning point in rapidly shifting Qatar's image from strong mediator to leading Arab superpower.

Termination of diplomatic relations with Qatar

One of the most serious crises in the region is the Gulf crisis. It is true that the region has been and continues to be involved in a series of successive crises, both due to the policies of internal and regional parties with specific agendas and due to the intervention of international powers in the affairs of the region. However, it is also true that this crisis, following the decision of three Gulf states (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain), as well as a number of Arab countries led by Egypt, to sever all their ties with Qatar, represents a fundamental turning point not only in the policies and orientations of these countries but also in the affairs of the region and the redefinition of its borders back in accordance with the interests of those who seek to increase tensions among the countries in crisis.

These parties are trying to put crisis countries in a very vulnerable position. They are trying to force these countries to engage in military wars to achieve gains at the expense of the interests of Arab countries and their people. This would have led to the end of the Gulf regional system. This did not work thanks to the leaders of the Gulf

countries. They made great efforts to preserve this unitary entity, which provided an important platform for the convergence of the Gulf's will to preserve its national and political stability. In particular, the Arab regional framework, which could effectively deal with regional risks and threats, was weak (Taher, 2017).

The Gulf's decision was not a sudden one. However, this step was taken after continuous tense relations between the two sides. In fact, the roots of the Gulf crisis go beyond allegations that Qatar supports terrorist groups. The crisis began after 1995 when Qatar adopted a more active foreign policy at the international level. In this context, substantial changes have been made in the sectors of education, diplomacy, mediation, culture, sports and media. Qatar was able to build an active foreign policy based on two principles; independence and openness to the outside world. It can be said that Qatar's foreign policy is based on three core strategies. The first strategy is based on building its own image derived from diplomatic, media, educational and sports aspects. The second is to build good reactions with neighbouring countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey. The third is to build alliances with major powers and players such

as the United States and France (Abdullah, 2017). This led to successive developments between Qatar and its neighbours from the Gulf countries and also Egypt. Egypt censured Qatar more than once for Qatar's interference in Egypt's internal affairs, harbouring the Muslim Brotherhood and refusal to extradite a number of leaders who have been sentenced in Egypt (Alenezi, 2018).

Historically, Egypt is the political centre of the Arab world. Egypt and Saudi Arabia became the fulcrum in its hidden conflict and political war with Iran. Since the Arab spring as well as with the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly in Egypt, Qatar started supporting them politically, financially, and through its powerful media machine. For a long time Qatar was a strong supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood, and it lasted for decades, which made their relationship quite strong. Qatar was clearly the biggest supporter of former Egyptian president Mohamed Mursi, but the Saudis and other Arab states were in the position of considering the Muslim Brotherhood an organisation with expansionist political goals. For the Saudis and other Gulf states in their group, Qatar is

the wrong country to support the Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt.

Saudi Arabia is not the only Gulf country to object to the expansion of the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly in the Gulf states. Several other GCC members share Saudi Arabia's serious concerns about it, the closest countries to Saudi Arabia on this issue, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain, the Gulf media witnessed a crackdown on the so-called Muslim Brotherhood cells in the United Arab Emirates, with security links to Saudi and Bahraini cells, at the same time the royal family ties between these three monarchs are very strong, which is why any security issues can touch even the social structure.

In 2017, Qatar's relations intensified in the form of state relations termination and economic embargo with the official reason that Qatar supports hardline streams such as the Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS, Hamas groups and other radical streams. Qatar's support for these radical groups is done through financial support in the form of funds for the purchase of weapons. In addition, Qatar is also considered too interfering in the internal affairs of neighbouring GCC member countries. The third trigger came

from Saudi Arabia's takeover of the leader of Qatar's leader, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in a military ceremony who called Iran a "great power" (<https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-40169036>). The 2017 Qatar diplomatic crisis did not stop at the diplomatic cut-off by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt against Qatar. More than that, Saudi Arabia and several Gulf countries also added suffering to Qatar by issuing a blockade policy against it. If we look at the map of the Middle East that the State of Qatar is isolated from all its neighbours namely Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, Qatar is blockaded from the south, west and east. Qatar's only land border with another country has been closed, namely Saudi Arabia, then with the sea border blockaded by the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Qatar only has access out of the north through the State of Iran and through the northeast towards the country of Oman (Baabood, 2017).

The blockade policy is one of the real forms of political turmoil that often occurs in the Middle East. The blockade policy carried out by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt against Qatar is a clear example of the political turmoil that

befalls the country as well as a test for Qatar to survive in the circumstances it faces (Baabood, 2017). The implementation of the blockade carried out by Saudi Arabia and several other Gulf countries against Qatar still continues, this is certainly very detrimental to Qatar from various aspects including politics, economy, transportation and accommodation and humanity.

The impact of the blockade policy implemented by Saudi Arabia against Qatar in the political field can be seen from several other countries that previously established diplomatic relations and cooperation with Qatar suddenly decided to follow Saudi Arabia's lead in terminating diplomatic relations with Qatar. These countries include the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain and Egypt (Dennis, 2018). The blockade of Qatar has affected supply chains and the flow of goods and services causing significant losses to businesses in countries on both sides of the dispute. Banks from embargoing countries have withdrawn deposits and reduced business with Qatar, as well as international banks are more cautious about doing business with Qatar, HSBC, for example, ruled out a large deal in Qatar's new dollar bonds and multinational companies are less willing to invest or open branches in a politically

unpredictable region (Abdullah Baabood, 2018). The economic embargo has also affected aviation. Qatar Airways reported a loss of 252 million riyals (\$69 million) as of 31 March 2018. Qatar Airways had an instant loss of 18 destinations from its route map. Flights to other countries were also affected, as the airline was no longer able to fly through the airspace of embargoed countries, so routes to many destinations had to be redrawn and extended which resulted in additional fuel costs for the airline. As a result, the airline lost a large number of passengers (<https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2017/10/27/qatar-iran-economic-relations-will-improve-contrary-to-saudi-arabias-intent/>).

Qatar is a country of mediators, in need of mediators

Mediation has appeared in the charters of several international organisations in a very explicit manner; foremost among these organisations are the United Nations and the League of Arab States. These mediators sometimes invoke the interests of some neighbouring or regional parties and even the international community especially when conflicts between two or more states occur. These mediation efforts seek to resolve such

conflicts quickly and to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. The aim of mediation is to narrow the differences of views and enable discussion between the conflicting parties. The mediators themselves must be impartial and acceptable to all parties to the conflict (Alajmi, 2018).

International mediation has historically been practised by parties with different capacities, including small states, and is not limited to superpowers. Small states have important characteristics that make their interventions particularly significant. As Randa Slim (1992) explains, "The strategic weakness of small states usually endows their mediation efforts with moral superiority, which superpowers cannot claim". Due to the highly sensitive context of international conflicts, parties often accept small states' initiatives to mediate, as they are generally perceived as non-threatening to the parties. Therefore, small state mediation can help both strong and weak parties. As Christopher Moore (2003) provides a view on influence and power in the negotiation and mediation process, mediators are often directly involved with parties in conflict in identifying, managing, and assisting parties in selecting the most effective influence strategies, with the aim of

reaching agreement. He also emphasised that mediators can use a variety of means of influence with the aim of changing the dynamics of negotiations. On 31 May 2017 a few days before the crisis officially broke out (5 June), the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, paid a visit to the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to discuss tensions in the Gulf, among other issues. The visit can be considered as the formal beginning of Kuwait's mediation efforts to address the crisis and find a solution to it (Ibrahim Fraihat, 2020).

Sheikh Sabah invested heavily in crisis mediation by associating himself closely with the process and the goal of preventing escalation, especially in the early days of the crisis. He visited Saudi Arabia on the second day of the blockade on 6 June, and the UAE on 7 June, to meet with heads of state. He sent letters, made phone calls, and dispatched his Foreign Minister as part of a full-scale mobilisation to de-escalate the crisis. In December 2019, Sheikh Sabah assigned the Deputy Foreign Minister, Khaled Al-Jarallah, to follow up with the Emir of Qatar and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia to ensure Kuwait's constant intervention during the

crisis (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/6/7/emir-of-kuwait-wraps-up-gulf-mediation-visits>). The Emir of Kuwait not only attempted to mediate and negotiate the conflict issues between the conflicting parties, but also attempted to create a dialogue within the GCC to discuss its resolution (Garcia 2019). It has also engaged in back-channel diplomacy between Riyadh and Doha to overcome obstacles that have prevented serious dialogue between the parties. In December 2017, Kuwait hosted the 38th GCC Summit in the hope that a breakthrough in the crisis could be achieved, but the summit was attended by only two heads of state (the emirs of Kuwait and Qatar), with the Quartet sending representatives at ministerial and deputy ministerial levels. Although planned for two days, the summit ended after just two hours due to the challenges faced (Deutsche Welle 2017).

Kuwait as Mediator

Following the withdrawal of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Bahrain ambassadors from Qatar in 2014, Kuwait stepped up its mediation efforts significantly. While it has achieved some success in the past, it has failed to resolve

some issues. Recent measures seem more determined and more firmly established. Mediation efforts have more ground to work with and are relatively stable, resulting in increased expectations. These expectations are fuelled by the people undertaking the mediation efforts, represented by the head of the political leadership himself, Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad (Alajmi, 2018).

Kuwait's involvement in regional affairs is policy-making and goes beyond its personal role in mediation and diplomacy. One of the earliest recorded examples of Kuwaiti mediation came in 1938 during a period of tension in relations between Qatar and Bahrain over the disputed Hawar Islands, which both countries claimed as their own (Salama 2017; Wiegand 2012). In the mid-1950s, Kuwait's (pre-independence) leadership provided financial aid and development assistance to several Trucial States (which became the United Arab Emirates in 1971), most notably Dubai, where Kuwait financed projects to dredge the river, which had become silted up, and improve port facilities (Ramos 2009). As a sovereign state after June 1961, one of the first acts of the new Kuwaiti government was to establish the Kuwait Fund for Arab

Economic Development (KFAED) six months later, in December, as a mechanism to share oil revenues throughout the Arab and Islamic world and strengthen Kuwait's regional political position (Turkey, 2014).

Various factors fed into the decision by successive Kuwaiti leadership throughout the 20th century to become actively involved in regional affairs, not only in the Gulf but also more broadly across the Arab world. Perhaps the most enduring was the sense of strategic vulnerability caused by Kuwait's small size and geographical location, sandwiched between two much larger neighbours (Saudi Arabia and Iraq), each with a history of territorial designs on Kuwait. Almost two-thirds of Kuwait's territory was 'lost' when the boundary between Kuwait and Najd (which became part of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932) was finalised by British officials at the Uqair Conference in December 1922, although Farah al-Nakib argues that the "degree of authority of the Al Sabah tribe" in the shifting political allegiances of the time was inappropriate (Al-Nakib, 2012). The ruler of Najd, Abdulaziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud, who later became the founding King of Saudi Arabia, subsequently imposed a desert trade blockade

with Kuwait that lasted throughout the 1920s to the mid-1930s (Toth, 2005).

The recurring Gulf crisis in 2017 was the longest and most severe in regional relations since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 (Cole 2018). The rift lasted 43 months, from 5 June 2017 to 5 January 2021, when Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, and Egypt severed political and economic ties with Qatar, as a reconciliation deal was signed at the GCC Summit in Al-Ula in Saudi Arabia (<https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-55546780>). During those 43 months, regional relations considered a diplomatic crisis that the region had never seen before, as the closure of Qatar's borders with Saudi Arabia and restrictions on the free movement of people and goods ensured that the crisis was not only between political elites, as it was in 2014, but impacted people and communities that were separated from each other and also vulnerable to media and social media vilification (Baabood, 2019).

Kuwait's mediation efforts came to a bright spot at the 41st GCC Summit in 2021 held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Kuwait's form of mediation is peaceful mediation through dialogue between the disputing or conflicting parties. Kuwait calls for "solidarity and

stability". The substance is the importance of unity among GCC countries in order to strengthen regional security, peace and prosperity. To realise this, the blockade conflict against Qatar by Saudi Arabia and its alliance must end (Sari, 2021). The 2021 GCC Summit finally resulted in a peace agreement between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Saudi Arabia along with other blockading countries, namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Yemen, and Egypt agreed to lift the blockade against Qatar. Following up on this agreement, Saudi Arabia and Qatar began opening major land borders on 9 January 2021. Then, on 11 January 2021, Saudi Arabia-Qatar and Qatar-Saudi Arabia flights reopened (Endarti, 2021), then Arab media showed the reopening of security posts on the borders of the two countries (<https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/setelah-3-tahun-berselisih-arab-saudi-pulihkan-hubungan-dengan-qatar/5726076.html>).

The Emir of Sabah made three attempts to mediate the Gulf crisis during his opening two months. On each occasion, he faced opposition from Saudi and Emirati officials who sought to discourage his efforts and make it clear that they did not support dialogue. Such a backdrop was not conducive

to productive engagement, but Emir Sabah at least ensured that the crisis was 'stabilised' and that a negative cycle of action and reaction did not occur. During this period, Emir Sabah reduced tensions when he persuaded Emir Tamim not to deliver a strong speech at the beginning of the blockade and conveyed the demands of the blockading countries, and Qatar's response to those conditions, through Kuwait (Bakeer 2017). Emir Sabah also assigned Foreign Minister Sabah al-Khalid and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al Sabah, to lead Kuwait's mediation efforts 'on the ground' (Kabalan, 2018).

Qatar's policy of viewing Kuwait's current mediation efforts as a last resort before the crisis reaches a more critical stage. This Qatari statement refers to Kuwait's stance, reflecting its gratitude and mediation efforts. In addition, Kuwait's statements are always balanced certainly have a great impact on progress, as they reveal that Doha is willing to negotiate. This may have given Kuwait as a mediator enough wiggle room to continue negotiations between the parties involved in the crisis (Ajmi, 2018). Qatar seems to view Kuwait as the most expansive and calm bridge in its mediation efforts

to resolve the crisis. Kuwait has been an effective mediator in the effort to bring Doha, Abu Dhabi and Cairo together; a relentless mediation effort dealing with a very complex and tense relationship.

Kuwait's ability to bring crisis parties together around the same table is a welcome step, compared to other international efforts that have so far failed. Kuwait's attempt to stand in for and host the "Gulf 23" also reflects a state of political *détente*. The Emir of Kuwait, clearly more concerned that geopolitical conditions would sooner or later put the fledgling system and all its countries in crisis, called for the establishment of a committee to amend the system's statutes to ensure a mechanism to resolve disputes between members.

CONCLUSION

In this diplomatic crisis, Qatar can be said to have suffered the consequences of their 'bold' foreign policy that is considered a regional threat to the Saudis. However, both Saudis and Qataris understand that Doha cannot compete with the Saudis as they hold power over the two holiest cities for Muslims around the world. Qatar's attempts to enter the international stage were met with diplomatic obstruction in the form of a

blockade, which eventually became the worst diplomatic crisis in the history of the Gulf region.

Kuwait in this situation occupies the void left by Qatar as a regional mediator. As a small country that often does not show so much power, their efforts to show their existence on the regional stage show conflict resolution on an extraordinary diplomatic scale. The narrative built through "solidarity" and "stability" is the last step they take as their external factor in the conflict resolution process. GCC members understand that regional stability and security are indispensable and their main goal as countries in a region whose dynamics are very challenging, so solidarity is the key to achieving this goal. Kuwait's leadership could pose a new challenge to Qatar's role in the Gulf region. Their success in mediating this conflict is a yellow light for Doha in carrying out a 'bold' foreign policy, but Kuwait also wants to convey a message that Qatar must be careful because Kuwait can also be a player that is no less big than Doha. Despite their not so great resources such as media bombardment in the international media stage.

REFERENCE

- Al-Mutairi, Mohammed S. , Dhakir Abbas Ali. 2022. Attitude Of Kuwait Mediation From Gulf Crisis. *Journal of Positive School Psychology* 2022, Vol.6, No.4, 3982 - 3991
- Al-Nakib, Farah. 2012. The Lost "Two-Thirds": Kuwait's Territorial Decline between 1913 and 1922. *Journal of Arabian Studies* 2 (1): 19–37.
- Alajmi, A. 2018. The Gulf Crisis: An Insight into Kuwait's Mediation Efforts. *International Relations and Diplomacy*, 6 (10), 537–48.
- Alenezi, Adnan. 2018. The regional challenges affecting Kuwait's national security. *Journal Review of Economics and Political Science* Vol. 5 No. 1, 2020 pp. 57-68
- Antonius, dkk. 2002. *Empowerment, Stress dan Konflik*. Jakarta: Ghalian. Indonesia.
- Arab states issue 13 demands to end Qatar-Gulf crisis <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/7/12/arab-states-issue-13-demands-to-end-qatar-gulf-crisis>. Diakses 15 Mei 2022.
- Baabood, A. 2017. Qatar's Resilience Strategy and Implications for State-Society Relations. *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, 2.
- Bakeer, Ali. 2017. GCC Crisis: Why is Kuwaiti Mediation Not Working? *Al Jazeera*, 11 August. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2017/8/11/gcc-crisis-why-is-kuwaiti-mediation-not-working>. Diakses 15 Mei 2022.
- Barakat, Sultan. 2012. The Qatari Spring: Qatar's emerging role in

- peacemaking. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/59266/1/The-Qatari-Spring%20-%20Qatars-Emerging-Role-in-Peacemaking.pdf>. Diakses Diakses 15 Mei 2022.
- Bunyamin, Maftuh. 2005. Implementasi Model Pengajaran Resolusi Konflik Melalui Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Sekolah Menengah Atas, Disertasi Doktor pada Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia: tidak diterbitkan.
- Christopher W. Moore, 2003, *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*, 3rd ed, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publisher.
- Cole, Juan. 2018. David and Goliath: How Qatar Defeated the Saudi and UAE Annexation Plot. *The Nation*, 16 February. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/david-and-goliath-how-qatar-defeated-the-saudi-and-uae-annexation-plot/>. Diakses 15 Mei 2022.
- Coleman, P.T., Deutsch, M., Marcus, E.C. (2014). *The handbook of conflict resolution: theory and practice*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Darmansjah Djumala, 2013, *Soft Power Untuk Aceh, Resolusi Konflik dan Politik Desentralisasi*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Deutsch, M 2006a. Cooperation and competition. In *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice*, edited by M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman, and E. C. Marcus. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Deutsche Welle. 2017. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) meeting breaks up within hours. <https://www.dw.com/en/gulf-cooperation-council-gcc-meeting-breaks-up-within-hours/a-41665718>. Diakses pada Diakses 15 Mei 2022.
- Discovery. Working paper. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, November. <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/blueprint-history-dubais-spatial-development-through-oil-discovery>. Diakses 15 Mei 2022.
- Emir of Kuwait wraps up Gulf mediation visits. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/6/7/emir-of-kuwait-wraps-up-gulf-mediation-visits>. Diakses pada Diakses 15 Mei 2022.
- Ennis, E. E. 2018. *International Coverage of Qatar During Blockade*. Northwestern University in Qatar, 2.
- Fraihat, Ibrahim. 2020. Superpower and Small-State Mediation in the Qatar Gulf Crisis. *Journal The International Spectator* 2020, Vol. 55, No. 2, 79-91.
- Garcia, B. 2019. Washington Supports Kuwait's Efforts in Stabilizing the Region. *Kuwait Times*, 4 September. <https://www.pressreader.com/kuwait/kuwait-times/20190904/281496457964267>. Diakses pada Diakses 15 Mei 2022.
- Herz, J. H. 1950. Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma. *World Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Jan., 1950), pp. 157-180.
- Hugh Miall, D. 2002. *Resolusi Damai Konflik Kontemporer*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.
- Iwansyah, Henry. 2013. *Segregasi Sosial dan Relevansinya dengan Konflik Komunal Berbasis Sara*. Lampung: Percetakan Osa.

Jamil, M. Mukhsin. 2007. *Mengelola Konflik Membangun Damai: Teori, Strategi dan Implementasi Resolusi Konflik*. Semarang: Walisongo Mediation Centre.

Jurnal

Kabalan, Marwan. 2018. *Kuwait's GCC Mediation: Incentives and Reasons for Failure*. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/kuwait-gcc-mediation-incentives-and-reasons-for-failure/>. Diakses Diakses 15 Mei 2022.

Kazanský, R., & Andrassy, V. 2019. *Conflict Resolution Approaches Towards Smart Sustainability of Internal Relations. Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 6(3), 1468–1484.

Keethaponcalan, S. I. 2017. *Conflict resolution: an introduction to third party intervention*. London: Lexington Books.

Krisis Qatar: 'Capaian historis', Saudi dan pemimpin negara Teluk akhiri embargo tiga setengah tahun. <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-55546780>. Diakses 15 Mei 2022.

Krisis Qatar: Empat faktor kejengkelan tetangga Arab. <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-40169036>. Diakses Diakses 15 Mei 2022.

Laman Situs

Mindes, Gayle. 2006. *Teaching Young Children Social Studies*. United States of America: Praeger Publishers.

Nicholson, M. 1991. *Negotiation, agreement, and conflict resolution: The role of rational approaches and their criticism*.

Dalam Raimo V. (Ed), *New Directions in Conflict Theory: Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation*, London, UK: Sage Publication.

OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2017, https://www.opec.org/opec_web/static_files_project/media/downloads/publications/ASB2017_13062017.pdf. Diakses Diakses 15 Mei 2022.

Putra, P.F.G. 2009. *Meretas perdamaian dalam konflik pilkada langsung*. Yogyakarta: Gava Media.

Qatar-Iran Economic Relations Will Improve, Contrary to Saudi Arabia's Intent. <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2017/10/27/qatar-iran-economic-relations-will-improve-contrary-to-saudi-arabias-intent/>. Diakses Diakses 15 Mei 2022.

Salama, Samir. 2017. *Kuwait Does What It Does Best – Mediation*. Gulf News, 24 July. <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-does-what-it-does-best-mediation-1.2063455>. Diakses Diakses 15 Mei 2022.

Scannell, Mary. 2010. *The Big Book of Conflict Resolution Games*. United States of America: McGraw – Hill Companies, Inc.

Setelah 3 Tahun Berselisih, Arab Saudi Pulihkan Hubungan dengan Qatar. <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/setelah-3-tahun-berselisih-arab-saudi-pulihkan-hubungan-dengan-qatar/5726076.html>. Diakses Diakses 15 Mei 2022.

Soekanto, Soerjono. 2006. *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.

- The World Factbook Central Intelligence Agency <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/qatar/>. Diakses Diakses 15 Mei 2022.
- Tirab, Mohamed. 2014. Qatar as Mediator Needed a Mediator. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* Vol. 4, No. 9; September 2014.
- Toth, Anthony. 2005. Tribes and Tribulations: Bedouin Losses in the Saudi and Iraqi Struggles over Kuwait's Frontiers, 1921-1943. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 32 (2): 145-67.
- Turki, Benyan. 2014. The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and Its Activities in African Countries, 1961-2010. *Middle East Journal* 68 (3): 421-35.
- Wallenstein, P. 2012. *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace, and the Global System*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Wallenstein, Peter. 2012. 'Armed Conflicts, 1946-2011', *Journal of Peace Research* 49/4 pp.565-75.
- Waltz, K. N. 1959. *Man, the State and War*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Woodhouse, T. 2010. Adam Curle: Radical Peacemaker and Pioneer of Peace Studies. *Journal of Conflictology*, 1(1), 5.