

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY TO OVERCOME GULF STATES' DIPLOMATIC SANCTIONS**

This chapter examines Qatar's foreign policy strategy to overcome Gulf States' diplomatic sanction in 2017. The explanation will focus on Qatar's foreign policy strategy to overcome diplomatic sanction and the continuation of its effort to end the diplomatic crisis with the Gulf States.

#### **A. Qatar Improve the Effectiveness of Diplomatic Relations**

The crisis that happened between Qatar and four Arab states become one of the worst crises that ever happened in Qatar's diplomatic history. These crises have been affected many fields including politics, economics, and also the stabilization of the Arabian Peninsula. The crisis and diplomatic sanction imposed by four Arab states have changed the geopolitical landscape especially the direction of foreign policy and international politics in both Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East.

As a country that affected the most, Qatar viewed that rebuild the diplomatic relations with four Arab States by accepting their demands are an impossible way to solve the problem. The government of Qatar viewed that those demands did not represent the essence of peace but as a way of Saudi and other Arab state's intention to intervene Qatar in politics and international relations.

The diplomatic crisis and sanctions have changed the geopolitics landscape in the Middle East. The changes of geopolitics landscape also hampered the development of Gulf region because all accesses linking Qatar and Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt cut off. Therefore, this condition affected many fields including politics,

economy, security, and also Qatar relations with the other Gulf States.

The diplomatic crisis was triggered by several accusations made by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates towards Qatar's involvement in funding terrorist organizations and other opposition groups in the several Gulf States. In addition, those countries also protest against Qatar's foreign policy approach that allegedly tends to support Iranian government which is the rival of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States.

As a sovereignty country, Qatar viewed those demands and accusations as parts of a strategy of these four Arab States to isolate and limit Qatar's power regionally. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, the foreign minister gave his clarification in responding to the crisis, he stated that those accusations are totally false information, because Qatar and Saudi Arabia have conducted cooperation in security and intelligence agencies.

Qatar and Saudi Arabia also have been serving the purpose of the national security of Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Mohammed also continued that all accusations that imposed on Qatar have no legal bases because Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and even Egypt could not prove their accusations. Meanwhile, Qatar also will not consider those demands and tend to solve this problem through diplomacy and negotiations process (Hunt, Roberts, & Victoria Brown, 2017).

Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani stated that diplomatic crisis only became the reason for those Arab States to change the regime in Qatar. It is proven by several shreds of evidence that already happened in the history of Qatar and other Gulf States diplomatic relations. Emir also stated that diplomatic crisis and sanctions will not hamper Qatar's foreign policy. The government of Qatar will not also accept

anybody interfere the country and tends to maintain its sovereignty (Aljazeera, 2017).

The impacts of diplomatic crisis and sanctions imposed by four Arab States have created many disadvantages in both economics and politics. Geographically, Qatar is surrounded by those countries that imposed sanctions and most of the economic relations including export and import are conducted through Saudi and the United Arab Emirates territories. The severing of diplomatic ties has affected the availability of food, drink, and other things that related to the infrastructure development of its preparation to host FIFA World Cup in 2022.

According to this evidence, the government of Qatar has redesigned its strategic that implemented through its foreign policy to do open door diplomacy which can fulfill domestic need and availability of food supplies to stabilize the domestic need. Qatar tried to enhance the effectiveness of diplomatic relations with Iranian and Turkey government as a part of a short-term solution in order to stabilize the country during the crisis.

The implementation of this strategy as the manifestation of Qatar's way to reduce the domestic problem and enhance international support beyond the Gulf region. Turkey and Iranian government are seen as two major powers in the Middle East that can help Qatar to solve the crisis and end the sanctions.

In addition, Turkey takes important roles in many international organizations such as non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Organizations of Islamic Cooperation, Arab league, G20, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), NATO, IMF, and also the first member EU Customs Union, while Iran has a very extensive power and influence in international energy

security and world economy. Another side, Iran is a founding member of the United Nations, The Economic Cooperation Organizations (ECO), and OPEC. Regionally, Iran also has a strategic position that closes to Qatar and has a good cooperation in the exploration of natural gas in the North Dome. Strategically, both countries have an extensive role to resolve the crisis together in the Gulf Peninsula.

### **1. Iranian-Qatari Relationship**

The diplomatic sanctions imposed by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, and United Arab Emirates have isolated Qatar in the Gulf region. These countries do not only sever the diplomatic ties by withdrawing their ambassadors from Doha. However, this crisis was followed by assertive and coercive policies to blockade all access from and to Qatar. The blockade includes sea, air, and land. Automatically, this condition affected the cooperation in many fields including trade, finance, banking, and other economic matters, while this disrupted policy also affected to the political relations among them. Therefore this condition threat Qatar's position because Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates are the biggest Qatar's trade partner who contributes to the domestic needs such as food, drink, oil, and construction equipment. However, the diplomatic relations between the two sides have been severed since 5 June 2017. This attempt to isolate Qatar will backfire and lead to Qatar improving economic relations with other regional states and especially Iran and Turkey (Abu-Sirriya, 2017).

Qatar-Iran diplomatic relations has been started since Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani came to power in 1995. These two countries have a very close economic relationship which affects their diplomatic relations, particularly in the oil and gas

industries. The income of Qatar comes from the oil field that is related to Iran. The two countries jointly control the world's largest natural gas field. Qatar owns 13% of the world's total proven gas reserves. It is producing 650 million cubic meters of gas per day from its section of the field, and Iran produces 5750 million cubic meters of gas from the field. Moreover, the two countries also cooperate in the shipping sector.

The relations between two countries become strong after the three Gulf States along with Egypt severed the diplomatic ties. Qatar through its Foreign Ministry Affairs stated to the media that Qatar will express its aspiration in order to strengthen bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in all fields (Raghavan & Cunningham, 2017). This official announcement is a part of the strategy to response the crisis and to stabilize its politics and regional power in the Arabian Peninsula.

This brief decision is taken by the government in order to prevent the massive impact that would affect the country in the future. Since the diplomatic crisis, all access has been cut off and there is no opportunity for Qatari government to restore diplomatic relations with the four Arab states instead to start and build its relationship and bilateral cooperation with the Iranian government.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt has proposed thirteen demands to Qatar as requirements to end the crisis. However, those demands are alleged by Qatar as part of an effort to shut down the legitimacy the country as well as undermine the sovereignty of the country.

A week after the diplomatic crisis, the scarcity of food and drinks happened in the entire places of Qatar. The government found difficulties to get supply because all access from and to Saudi and UAE have been cut off. Therefore, this condition also affected export and import activity from and hampered the development of the country's economy.

The initiation to overcome the crisis has been made by Qatari government to put their foreign policy forward to uphold the further action in responding the crisis. Qatar looked Iran as the major player in the Middle East and has a very influential role in international security. This position has become the strategy on putting its perspective to initiate the bilateral relations with the Iranian government. Qatar insists that the relations with Iranian government as part of cordial relations to fulfil the commercial necessity, while this relationship also part of solidarity between Sunni neighbours and Shiite-led Iran because both have involved in the diplomatic confrontation in January 2016. Then, this cordial relation is a manifestation to strengthen the two countries cooperation in both regionally and internationally (Walsh, 2017).

The cordial relations between the two countries have been advanced when all economic ties with the three Gulf countries and Egypt were cut off. On November 26, Qatar's Economy Minister Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim Al-Thani travelled to the Iranian capital for talks with government ministers on business links between the two countries, including Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Shariatmadari and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The trade between the two countries was currently

worth around \$1 billion a year, but Qatar wanted to boost this five-fold to \$5 billion a year. The two countries economic relations have grown sharply in 2017 and there is certainly more potential.

The report from Iran Customs Administration shows that Iran exported \$139 million worth of oil goods to Qatar in the seven months to October 22, a timeframe which covers both pre- and post-boycott periods. The increasing of this relation up to 117,5% on the same period a year earlier. According to the Iranian business daily the Financial Tribune, bitumen, food, and agricultural goods are the most important products. This trade showed that the trade between the two countries is accelerating, with \$50 million of the \$139 million of the total coming in the Iranian month ending October 22, up five-fold from the same time last year. In addition, Iran is also acting as a critical trade route for goods originating in other countries such as Turkey and Azerbaijan. In order to accelerate this process, Qatar proposed a new trade agreement with Iran and Turkey. These three countries signed a three-way trade agreement with Tehran in order to make easier for goods to move between the three countries (Dudley, 2017).

The cooperation between the two countries only parts of Qatari strategy to maintain the domestic stability. It can be seen from the matter of cooperation where all cooperation only refers to economic development between the two countries. Iran becomes the major partner in the crisis because the position geographically is really close to Qatar. Therefore, the distribution of goods and other trade would be easier. Qatar also could manage the expenditure of import and create an economic stability.

By June 11, Iran has sent five cargo planes carrying a combined total of 90 tons of fruits and vegetables to Qatar, and three ships carrying 350 tons were also set to leave Iran. The Iranian government decisions to provide the economic support has given an extensive impact for Qatari government to overcome the blockade has normalized the condition domestically and fulfill the scarcity of foods and decrease the pressure within the country.

## **2. Qatar-Turkey Relations**

Turkey is one of the newly emerging powers in the Middle East. Turkey also played a very crucial and influential role in several international organizations such as G-20, OIC, NATO, OECD, OSCE, IMF and also World Bank. In addition, Turkey is the world's 13<sup>th</sup> largest GDP by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) and 17<sup>th</sup> largest nominal GDP. This condition made the position of Turkey has counted by any other nations as an important actor in both international and regional including Qatar.

The Qatar-Turkey relation was established in 1972 and to be continued until the current Emir. Both countries are consistent to maintain peaceful coexistence through dialogue on regional or international issues since 2010. Turkey ranked as Qatar's 23<sup>rd</sup> largest investor with 3 companies making investments worth \$239 million meanwhile Qatar also invest to Turkey with the total of investment more than \$2,1 billion through two Qatari companies. The foreign relations of the two countries carried out on the basis of mutual benefit.

The mutual understanding and cooperation between the two countries brought

these two major power into a great cooperation in tackling many issues in both regional or international. Since 5 June 2017, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, along with Egypt severed ties with Qatar. This diplomatic termination also led to the decision of those countries to isolate Qatar through the cooperation in many fields including politics, economics, and also military relations. The blocked and boycott affected Qatari's position geographically because most of the trade access is closed by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and also Bahrain. These three countries prohibited all trades to across their territories. In result, Qatar faced many problems within the countries including the scarcity of foods, the decline of Stock Exchange trade, Travel ban, finance, and also Qatar's preparation on infrastructure development to hosting FIFA World Cup 2022.

Along with the ongoing diplomatic crisis that happened to Qatar, Qatar restores and improve its diplomatic relations with Turkey, especially in politics and economics as the strategy to overcome the problem that happened domestically. Qatar and Turkey signed 15 new trade and cooperation agreements in the food and construction sectors and the pharmaceutical industry (Dailay Sabah, 2017). In response to this crisis, President Erdogan stated his disappointment towards those countries' decision to sever diplomatic ties with Qatar, the President also added that this decision as inhumane action, because it will give a huge impact not only for Qatar but also for other regions within the Gulf region (BBC, 2017).

The involvement of Turkish government in the diplomatic crisis that happened between

Qatar and Anti-Qatar coalition as parts of alliance strategy and Qatar's way to go beyond its comfort zone. The bilateral relations between the two countries are made to reduce the dependence of Qatari government towards the three Gulf States and also Egypt. Qatar tried to show to the whole of the Gulf region that it could stand on its position even if there was a pressure towards its position. Qatar did not only open the opportunity to Turkey for improving the economic relations, but also provide a place for Turkey to open the military base in its country. The existence of Turkish military base is a part of Qatar's strategy to protect its security during the crisis.

As a result of the diplomatic approach, Qatar succeeds to get much more assistance from Turkey in order to fulfill the domestic needs. Since June 5, The total of Turkey's export to Qatar was \$32,5 million and \$12,5 million in food. This figure is three times the normal level of the economic cooperation between the two countries (Reuters, 2017). Turkey also sent more than 100 cargo planes of supplies to Qatar. In the other hand, Qatar and Turkey along with the Iranian government signed the three-way trade agreement as a strategy to overcome the lack of food supplies and open a new way of trade between these three countries. The objective of this agreement is to ensure all goods from and to these three countries run well.

Furthermore, these two countries also enlarge the field of cooperation into politics. Qatar also approaches Iranian government to mediate the crisis and offer Saudi and others to conduct the negotiation and diplomacy to end the crisis. in response to the demand, President Erdogan visited Saudi Arabia to talk and discuss normalization

between the two parties. Erdogan also travelled to the entire Gulf States to gain support from those states to ask them to end the crisis. In the other hand, the government of Turkey also stated their support to Qatar and will give any other assistance to help Qatar to end the crisis.

The cooperation between Qatar and Turkey can be seen as part of Qatari government's strategy to deter Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt in the region. Both Iran and Turkey have a huge impact on the international security in the Middle East. It can be shown by the opening of military bases in Turkey in Qatar and also the agreement of three-way agreement that signed by these countries. Those efforts are taken as part of the solution to overcome the impact of the crisis between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt.

### **B. Qatar Enhances Independent Foreign Policy to Reinforce Diplomacy and Negotiation during the Crisis**

The diplomatic crisis and sanction that imposed by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt to Qatar have contributed to the geopolitical changes in the Middle East, particularly the Gulf region. This crisis affected the massive isolation that done by those states as a part of protest against Qatar in accordance with the accusation made by these countries about Qatar's support towards Iran, Muslim Brotherhoods, and other Islamist Organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and Al Qaeda that viewed by Saudi Arabia and its coalition as parts of terrorist. Qatar was accused by those countries played an important role in both funding and uses those organizations to expand its power and play an extensive action to interfere other's countries security within the region.

The position made the government of Qatar has to take an immediate action in order to tackle the problem and reduce the tension in the region. The biggest problem right now that still faced by Qatar in dealing with the crisis is the massive blockade and isolation as well as diplomatic sanction that imposed by those states. This diplomatic sanction has seen as part of the intention of those countries to shut down Qatar's power and role in the Gulf region. Another hand, those demands are a representation of Saudi-led coalition way to overthrow the power of Emir and demanding for the regime changes.

Qatar has the long history of diplomatic tensions with the other Gulf State since the leadership of Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. The tensions happened because there were several differences in exercising the power and also foreign policy objective. Qatar under Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani tried to bring Qatar to be more independent nations in the Gulf region by conducting open-door foreign policy. This foreign policy aimed to stabilize the rest of the conflict that happened within the region by conducting dialogue, peace talks, diplomacy, negotiation and also coalition to create peaceful coexistence and security. However, this foreign policy has been seen by some of the Gulf States as a part of Qatar's way to interfere other's country on behalf of mediation several conflicts. At that moment, Saudi led Coalition also accused Qatar's way of diplomacy and foreign policy as its effort to support and funding terrorist group.

Back in 2017 where the diplomatic ties were cut off and followed by the diplomatic sanctions imposed by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt in order to protest against Qatar. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar responded to the initial announcements by stated that the accusations have no legitimate justification for actions taken by the four countries to sever the diplomatic relations and the decision was a violation of its sovereignty (Aljazeera, 2017).

Throughout, Qatar has stated that it strongly rejected the accusations made by those countries, either Emir or even Foreign Ministry is open the possibility of negotiation and peace talks between those countries. Qatar also is willing to negotiate with the boycotting countries and have welcomed calls from international leaders for the parties to sit down around the table.

Ministry of Foreign affairs of Qatar will never surrender to the pressure being applied by its Arab neighbors and will not change its activist and independent foreign policy to resolve the problem that has put the region on edge (Aljazeera, 2017). Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani stated that Qatari government will always enhance diplomacy and negotiation to end diplomatic crisis and sanctions. However, Qatar will not accept the sanctions through its neighbors and always tried to find any other way to solve the crisis by peaceful means.

In the era of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Qatar implements activist and independent foreign policy as a tool in order to deal with the condition of the Gulf region right now. Qatar saw that there is the opportunity to start negotiation with the two neutral nations in the GCC member states. Qatar realized that the implementation of activist and independent foreign policy should be followed by a good negotiation and coalition within the region. This position was taken in order to get much political and diplomatic support that aim to force Saudi and other neighbors to come into negotiation and eliminate the sanctions. As a small state, Qatar could not stand in its position in order to solve that problem by itself. There must be an effort in order to actualize that foreign policy into an action which can contribute to the peace and stabilization process within the region.

As a result of the independent foreign policy, Qatar response this situation by enhancing diplomacy and

negotiation based on equality and mutual respect. This independent foreign policy is actualized by the government in Qatar in order to maintain its position as the independent and sovereignty nation while this action also is done to show its rejection towards the diplomatic sanctions imposed by its neighbors. As an effort of its diplomacy within the region, Qatar tried to keep its consistent movement and diplomatic approach by following objectives:

First, Qatar tried to strengthen and enhance its diplomatic relations with the United States. Qatar tried to reach out to several United States' institutions including Pentagon and State Department in order to create a balanced perspective regarding Trump's view on Saudi-led coalition accusations. Qatar enhances its bilateral relations with the United States government in the economic matter such as signing the transaction of a \$12 billion deal to buy F15 Jets from the US and signed a memorandum of understanding on combating the financing of terrorism with the US (Bayoumi, 2017). In the other hand, Qatar and the United States' government also signed the agreement on fighting terrorism financing; this agreement was launched when the US secretary of the States made its official visit to Qatar. In results, the US government sent the Top diplomat to the Middle East to help resolve the standoff between Qatar and the led-Saudi coalitions (The New Arab, 2017).

Second, Qatar also utilized its power of diplomacy by enhancing its diplomatic relations with world powers, especially in European countries to help its position in the Middle East. Qatar tried to utilize the European countries' power to gain their backing, and strengthen relations in the face of the blockade. In result, Qatari government succeeds to get the support from Germany. Germany is willing to contribute as mediator towards the on-going crisis. Through Germany Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, Germany expressed his rejection towards Trump's claim over Qatar in

accordance with Qatar's involvement on supporting and funding the terrorist group, Germany also disagrees with the US imbalance position on the crisis. In addition, Qatar's diplomacy also succeeds to reach out Russia, China, and Japan to enhance its cooperation in order to solve the current crisis. Throughout its negotiation and diplomacy, Qatar succeeds to reach out Russia and conduct the bilateral meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow. In this meeting, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Tani highlighted the crisis as the main topic of the meeting and approach Russia to mediate this conflict (Sterling, 2017).

Qatari independent foreign policy works well, Qatar also got support from the government of China to solve the problem. Throughout its spokesperson, Hua Chunying stated that the government of China would be part of the solution of the ongoing problem that still happening in the Gulf region. China will deal with the condition by conducting dialogue and consultation among the Gulf States and will stay united to jointly promote regional peace and stability of the region (Yellinek, 2017). Furthermore, Japan also expressed its willingness to help Qatari government to end the crisis. Through Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Taro Kono on his diplomatic visit in the Gulf Region. Japanese government expressed its gratitude to be part of mediator on the crisis and willingness to enlarge economic and political cooperation with Qatari government to prevent the blockade and also secure any potential damage that would arise in the future. In addition, the Japanese government also would like to diversify both countries relations in all areas (The Peninsula, 2017).

Third, Qatar utilized its diplomacy by dispatching representatives of its National Human Rights and Shura Council to the United States and Europe in order to enlarge the understanding and insights to help explain the human impact in the blockade. In addition, Qatari government also hosted an international conference on media freedoms to help counter

demands by blockade states to shut down Qatari financed critical media.

Fourth, Qatar also played its diplomacy to approach and strengthen its diplomatic relations with the neutral and sympathetic neighbors such as Kuwait and Oman. In this part, Qatar saw the blockade as an attempt to isolate it regionally and instead of caving in to pressure or carrying foul about foreign conspiracy backed by the US president; Qatar responded this crisis with more foreign policy openness and by reaching out to the US institutions and to the world and regional powers.

In addition, Qatar viewed that the important to start with regional diplomacy as one of the possible ways to solve the problem. Meanwhile, the neutral foreign policy among the two neighbors is a strategy of Qatar to enlarge its diplomacy and ask Oman and Kuwait to be part of the regional mediator. In result of negotiation and diplomacy, Kuwait Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah engaged in shuttle diplomacy, travelling between Qatari, Saudi and Emirati capital shortly after the crisis erupted. Meanwhile, Oman's Foreign Minister Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah went to Doha on his official visit prior to the severance of several Arab States' ties with Qatar. Both countries are always tried to be the mediator of Qatar's advocacy in ending the crisis (Cafiero & Karasik, 2017).

Qatar viewed that its effort to end the diplomatic tension and sanctions imposed by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt might not have helped to end the crisis yet. But this effort has helped prevent further escalation and may have put its opponents on the defensive and under increasing international pressure for dialogue. Meanwhile, it also activated its diplomacy and economic relations to explain its position. Qatar also conducted its diplomacy by formulated a response that seemed modern,

rational and diplomatic to counter force-based logic used by its adversaries.

The way of Qatar to ensure and stand on its independent foreign policy as part of its manifestation which would not allow any other intervention from other parts of its neighbor and as part of its way to maintain its position as well as power within the region.

### **C. Qatar's Conducts Strategic of Mediation Through International Institutions**

Mediation and dealing with international institution have become Qatar's government vision in order to uphold its power in both regional and international. The effort on mediation has been mentioned in Qatar's country constitution, article 7 which specifically mandating that Qatar foreign policy is based on the principle of strengthening international peace and security by means of encouraging a peaceful resolution of international disputes (Barakat, 2014). The objective of its constitution has brought Qatar to apply its soft power through diplomacy.

Qatar has various experienced in mediating many conflicts both in the Middle East or even other international disputes. These experiences brought Qatar to embrace mediation as a part of its soft power to deal with the current crisis and diplomatic sanctions. Since the crisis begun, Qatar faced many problems in both politics and economics which affected to its position in both Gulf region or even its membership in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The diplomatic sanctions imposed by Arab Saudi, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt brought disadvantages condition to Qatar in accordance with geopolitical changes in the region.

Qatar is one of the major players in the Middle East because it has become a home for more the biggest US military base in the Middle East. With this position, Qatar has an important position in stabilizing the condition of politics

and security in the Middle East as well as managing the geopolitical changes within the region. The diplomatic sanction imposed by its neighbors has changed Qatar foreign policy direction as well as its soft power to mediate the crisis. Under Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Qatar conducts independent foreign policy to move forward beyond the region and build a coalition in order to solve the crisis. The manifestation of its independent foreign policy has been implemented through soft power by upholding the importance of dialogue and peace talks through diplomacy and negotiation. Qatar also rejected all accusations and demands from Arab Saudi, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt to change its direction of foreign policy. In result, Qatar chose to stand on its position and offering the process of normalization should be achieved through mediation.

In view of the importance given by its foreign policy to the peaceful settlement of conflicts in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, Qatar has focused to implement its soft power on mediation through the international institution to solve this on-going problem. Qatar believes that mediation is the optimal solution to avoid conflicts and avert the growing number of disadvantages impact that will be happened in the future. The objective of mediation is to give the opportunity to other parties from each institution to contribute to resolving the ongoing crisis together. In addition, to achieve all the objectives of mediation and reducing the tension between Qatar and the Saudi-led coalition, Qatari government tried to look forward in order to bring this case to be discussed in several regional and international institutions. This decision aims to attract other parties beyond Gulf region to take part and contribute to the reconciliation of the ongoing conflict that happened right now. In result towards its effort to maintain peace and stability of the region, the government Qatar utilized its position in this institution to uphold international mediation and diplomacy prior to solving the crisis. Those institutions are potentially seen by the

government of Qatar could attract the attention of the world to help Qatar end the sanctions. Therefore, Qatar utilizes the opportunity to address and highlight the issue through several institutions as follows:

### **1. Gulf Cooperation Council Summit**

The GCC Summit is the summit that provides a place for the heads of the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council in order to discuss the problem or future vision of the GCC member states. This summit was held on December 5, 2017, in the capital city of Kuwait.

Gulf Cooperation Council Summit 2017 is a result of Qatar's diplomacy to convince Kuwait in order to take a part of this ongoing crisis as a mediator between the GCC member states. Even though this Summit was held in the middle of the ongoing diplomatic crisis and sanctions, the summit runs well and successful to bring those six Gulf States into the chamber to discuss the peace and stability within the region. In addition, GCC Summit can be seen as part of a vocal platform that can be used by Qatari government in order to address and highlight the case of Gulf diplomatic crisis where this country is impacted the most. This Summit could be very positive steps to Qatar's diplomacy in order to influence those member states to come to the negotiation table to discuss the prolonged crisis.

The outcome of this summit is part of Qatari government approach to encourage Kuwait to host this summit in order to bring positive understanding on the Gulf States about the presence of Qatar's willingness to talk and resolve the problem within the internal of GCC member states. In results, this summit succeeds to bring all of six member states in Kuwait and possible to

start their willingness to engage in dialogue, even after the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain stated that they would not attend the Summit unless Doha changed its ways (Wasm, 2017).

The 38<sup>th</sup> of the GCC Summit was mainly talking about creating peace and stability of the region. In response towards the crisis, GCC member states come into consensus in order to call for the formation of a committee to resolve the crisis. The Summit would like to take an immediate action by preceding a reworking of the GCC's charter to include a more robust conflict resolution mechanism. Meanwhile, the participation of Qatari government in this Summit during the crisis can be seen as Qatar's soft diplomacy and foreign policy approach to ensure that Qatar is open the opportunity for the negotiation and reconciliation of the crisis. Throughout this summit, the Advisory Council of Gulf Cooperation Council praised the participation of Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in the meetings of the Supreme Council of the GCC. In this occasion, Emir Qatar also stressed the importance of continuity of the GCC out of Qatar's Keenness on activating its role as well as its commitment to joint GCC action (The Peninsula Qatar, 2017).

Throughout this Summit, Qatar has successful to bring its foreign policy and soft power through diplomacy into the front line. As results, Qatar get much more support from Oman and Kuwait as part of GCC member states to help Qatar in ending the sanctions and crisis. Meanwhile, the position of GCC Summit as a platform of advocacy and diplomacy has been contributed in supporting Qatar's intention to create peace and stability within the region.

Therefore, the outcome of Qatar's was the formation of the special committee which would be the bodies who will assist to accelerate regional peace and security among Qatar and the other Gulf States including Egypt.

## **2. European Union**

The European Union and its constituent member states are important partners for the States of Qatar. Qatar has extensive and multi-faced bilateral relations with non-EU, as well as EU, States in Europe (Miller, 2016). This condition became the main objective of Qatar's soft power to open the opportunity for the European countries in order to be part of mediator and approach Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and also Egypt to create peace and stability within the region and end their diplomatic sanctions to Qatar.

The ongoing diplomatic crisis between Saudi –led blockade and Qatar has become the critical issue both for Qatar or even other parties outside the Gulf region, including the European Union. The European Union viewed this ongoing crisis could impact the development of cooperation in economic and politics between the two countries. Europe believed that this ongoing crisis could affect the interest of European Union in both Middle East and Gulf region.

Generally, the ongoing crisis could impact the cooperation of the State of Qatar and the European Union in two aspects, politics and economics. Politically, the blockade has further complicated an already multi-faceted European policy toward the region. All the EU countries are now enjoying their diplomatic relations with both Saudi and Qatar. In addition, one of the European Union member states deepening its relationship

with Qatar on regional issues, including the future reconstruction of Syria (Osiewicz, 2017).

On June 9, Qatar Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani met the High Representative of the European Union Federica Mogherini in order to talk about the willingness of the European Union to help Qatar to solve this ongoing crisis together. Prior to the meeting, Qatar succeeds to get European support to solve this ongoing problem together. The European Union also sends a clear signal that they are highly concerned with the recent developments in the Persian Gulf. European Union officials also stressed that their willingness to strengthen cooperation as well as preserve stability in the neighboring regions.

On June 19, Mogherini announced that the European Union was ready to support the Kuwait-led mediation efforts. This message was delivered to Qataris, Emiratis, and Saudis in order to avoid the future escalation and engage in dialogue. On the other hand, she also stressed that the European Union will be ready to be a mediator between Qatar and its neighbors to get into negotiation process within the region.

The support of the European Union in order to be part of the coalition of Qatar to resolve is a part of the successfulness of Qatari government soft power to ensure that organization to be part of their diplomacy within the region. Otherwise, the application of independent foreign policy that conducted by Qatari government also gives much more opportunity to the Qatari soft power to attract those countries in the European Union to come together to solve the problem. Qatar also highlighted their economic relations with the EU as part of the soft power element to

attract that supranational body to come together and solve the problem.

### **3. The United Nations**

The United Nations is one of the platforms that utilized by the government of Qatar in order to highlight and voice about the current crisis that happened in the entire Gulf region. Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani utilized opportunity that's given by the United Nations to address the 72<sup>nd</sup> United Nations General Assembly at United Nations Headquarters in New York, United States of America.

Through this institution, the government of Qatar highlights the crisis of the Gulf region as one of the crises that should get international and global audience attention. In this opportunity, Qatar also delivered its disappointment towards the unilateral decision made by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt without listening and asking the clarification from the Qatari government. Qatar also addressed that the goal of the blockade made by those states is in order to isolate and interfere Qatar's sovereignty. Emir also delivered that the blockade was deliberately done because those countries always tried to overthrow the regime, and this condition ever happened in the era of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

While speaking in the 72<sup>nd</sup> United Nations General Assembly session, the government of Qatar encouraged all nations to support the reconciliation the crisis by participating as mediator or parties which enforce the normalization and stability within the region. In this occasion, Qatar also highlighted the importance of unconditional dialogue based on

mutual respect for sovereignty (Bayoumy & Mason, 2017). The function of unconditional dialogue is to accelerate peace process in the Gulf region.

Qatar also utilized the opportunity in the United Nations General Assembly as part of its lobbying to gain coalition to support its further action and solution towards the crisis. In this session, the Emir delivered two main messages: the first was internal and it urged a permanent enthusiasm, and the second was foreign, informing the West that Doha is ready to solve its problem with the former and to alleviate concerns related to funding and backing terrorism (al-Dorasy, 2017).

In the other hand, Qatar through its Foreign Minister has a plan to address the crisis in United Nations Security. This planned was followed by the support from China Ambassador to UN, Liu Jieyi who stated that the crisis will be discussed in the UNSC if there is a formal request from the government of Qatar. Furthermore, Qatar also tried to uphold its effort by conducting the process of UNHRC investigation in Doha regarding the violation made by the four Arab Countries that imposed the sanction on Qatar. In result, Qatar succeeded to ensure the UN investigation team to release a report regarding the human rights violation that made by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Egypt towards their decision to sever ties to Qatar. This report clearly stated that the reasons behind the blockading countries are not a mere diplomatic severing of relations, but it is just those countries' way to isolate Qatar through economic boycott. This decision is unilateral, abusive; arbitrary that is impacting citizen and expats in Qatar. However, the report of UN investigation has been

condemned by those states. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt rejected the UNHRC investigation report and look forward to any further clarification from the four countries.

Meanwhile, the role of Qatari government in handling their foreign policy strategy has been seen from the successfulness of its effort to ensure and convince every parties and UN bodies within the UN to help this country to solve the problem. As result, Qatar gets much more support as an impact of its presence to bring this case into the global forum. Otherwise, this tactic has been made as part of its way to transfer its oft power and influence through the international institution in order to create peace through dialogue and mutual respect.