

**THE TERMINATION OF SAUDI ARABIA'S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
WITH QATAR IN 2017**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explain the termination of diplomatic relations faced by Saudi Arabia and Qatar and to reveal what lies behind the events behind the termination of diplomatic relations that occurred. In this study, researchers conducted research from various legitimate sources to support this research. Like media online that broadcasts or preaches about it as well as supporting books to conduct this research. By analyzing the contents of an emergency from all sources; the findings show the following. First, diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar often experience friction. Second, Qatar's increasing economy is a source of concern for Saudi Arabia. In making this decision, of course, there is interest to be achieved by Saudi Arabia. The interests of defense and security are two national interests to be achieved by the government of Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, political terminations, tension, rivalry

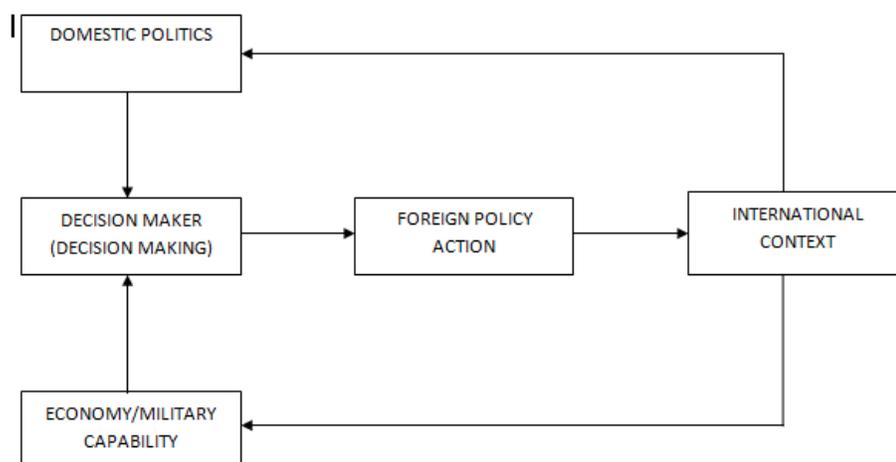
Background

Since the establishment of Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia's policy has always focused on the Middle East region. Conditions of the Middle East countries will directly affect the stability of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, Saudi Arabia prioritizes its relationship with the region. Qatar got full independence from Britain on 3 September 1971 (Diwan, 2008). From historical facts, the relationship between Qatar and other Gulf countries was initially a good relationship. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Arab Kingdom of Qatar are countries that both share the majority of the population with ethnic and Arab cultural backgrounds with the Sunni sect (Jatmika, 2014). However, precisely in the leadership of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani in 1995, relations between Qatar and the Gulf countries began to experience turmoil (Coates, 2014). Many foreign policies were opposed to Saudi Arabia and several other Gulf States. The emergence of relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar began to stick to the surface since the Arab Spring in 2011. Saudi Arabia - The Qatar bilateral conflict continues with Qatar's policy of accepting the Muslim Brotherhood in July 2013 and relations between Qatar and Iran in the form of economic cooperation in the fields of oil and natural gas production. As a result, Saudi Arabia decided to stop diplomatic relations with Qatar in early 2014. On June 5, 2017, Saudi Arabia announced the termination of diplomatic relations with Qatar. The termination of Saudi Arabia's diplomatic relations with Qatar is not the first thing to do.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Foreign Decision Making

A country's foreign policy is generally the result of a series of decisions related to the phenomenon of nations. Usually, the policy is issued by certain countries to address issues that develop with other countries. This theory is able to explain the reasons behind taking foreign policy by the state. Therefore, it is important to know the definition of foreign policy in advance by William D. Coplin. According to Coplin, the foreign policy contains a number of activities that can be classified into three types, namely general policy, administrative decisions, and critical decisions. The general foreign policy consists of a series of decisions that are only related indirectly (Coplin, 2003, p. 32).



a. Domestic politics

Foreign decisions are the result of domestic political processes involving various actors under certain conditions. There is an interaction between foreign policymakers and domestic political actors who seek to influence foreign policy or in the context of Coplin referred to as "policy influencers". These interactions are embedded in the policy influence system. Policy influencers are a source of support for the strengthening of certain regimes within a country. This applies to all government systems, both democratic and autocratic. Then the stability of the country and domestic conditions are taken into consideration in making decisions. In some countries, the state leader (President, Prime Minister, or King) is the dominant actor in decision making (Coplin, 2003, p. 74). So that decision makers can refer to domestic conditions, whether support and demands from the community are in line with policies formulated in political institutions.

In the context of Saudi Arabia, when viewed from an autocratic system of government, the King of Saudi Arabia has a dominant role in Saudi Arabia's foreign decision-making. Saudi Arabia unites religious and political beliefs and does not have a constitution and prohibits political party activities. The king is the head of state and religious leader. The royal family controls the country's political, economic and military power. Cabinet decisions, agreements, and agreements signed with other countries must be ratified by the king. The Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet are the basis of state law enforcement.

b. Economy and Military Capability

Decision making must take into account the economic and military conditions that the State has in making a foreign policy. Not only that, but decision-making must also pay attention to the economic and military strengths, as well as the weaknesses of the country in preparing foreign policy. Decision making must pay attention to and align the commitments and capabilities of the country and also understand the limitations of the country. (Coplin, 2003, p. 124)

Saudi Arabia has a strong economy and military in the Middle East region. It can be known if Saudi Arabia is a developed country. In economic terms, Qatar is a serious threat to Saudi Arabia. This happened since the leadership of Emir Sheikh Tamam bin Hamad Al Thani, the economy and political policy of Qatar increased positively (Wicaksono, 2017).

c. International Context

The international context explains why a country behaves in certain ways towards other countries. This international context is related to the geopolitics of a country and realist scientists have provided an explanation. Hans J. Morgenthau argues that each country has a certain relationship with the international environment which it has determined as an objective set of national interests (Coplin, 2003). In addition, international pressure tends to force a state to change

norms and to conduct a certain policy in order to survive and to defend national sovereignty (Maksum, 2015, pp. 7-8).

In the international context, Saudi Arabia is a country that has a power relationship with the Gulf State. In the GCC, Saudi Arabia was regarded as the leader of the Gulf state, seeing its formation in 1981 as a reaction to the Iraq War versus Iran. Qatar, a small country on the Persian Gulf which is part of the GCC along with 4 other countries should follow Saudi direction in terms of sphere of influence. Whatever decisions or policies issued by Saudi Arabia must be followed by the countries that are members of the GCC. Qatar wants to get out of the shadow of Saudi Arabia. The progress seen from the Qatari State in any field such as economics and technology makes Qatar want to be independent in terms of managing and deciding policies without having to interfere with Saudi Arabia. However, Saudi Arabia cannot just release Qatar because the historical fact tells if Saudi Arabia considers that Qatar is still under Saudi control. As well as fear if Qatar starts to look towards Iran, Saudi Arabias can read if it is a form of betrayal of the alliance.

Research Method

1. Type of Research

This type of research in this thesis is qualitative research. According to Bogdan and Taylor defines qualitative research as research that produces

descriptive data in the form of written words, or verbally from people and observable behavior (Moleong, 2002). In qualitative research, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of closeness to people and research situations, so that researchers gain a clear understanding of reality and real-life conditions (Poerwandari, 1998).

2. Method of collecting data

Method of Collecting Data conducted for this research are:

- a. Library Research: This research was conducted by obtaining references from various books, journals, reports and related material with research objectives. (Zed, 2004)
- b. Field Research: This research was carried out by obtaining information directly from officials and authorities in the company to provide information regarding the purpose of the study. (Bailey, 1982)
- c. Questionnaire: The questionnaire is a structured question that is filled in by the respondent or the informant alone or by the interviewer himself by reading the question and recording the answer given. (Churchill, 2005)

3. Method of analysis data

The research of this undergraduate thesis uses analysis technique by gaining data as much as possible and classifying the data which is coherent with this topic. Later, the data are systematically presented based on the relation between one and another subtopic.

Result and Discussion

Considerations of Saudi Arabia to terminate diplomatic relation with Qatar

1. Domestic Politics in Saudi Arabia

The problem underlying the royal family involved in terminating diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar is the displeasure of Saudi Arabia with Iran, where Qatar cooperates well with Iran. The displeasure of royal members towards Iran was also due to the spirit of the revolution spread by Iran. The spirit of this revolution affected the minority Shiite population in Saudi Arabia. The spirit of the Iranian revolution gave rise to activist movements and demonstrations in the Southern Province of Saudi Arabia where the majority of the population is Shia. Shiite minorities in the area have repeatedly demonstrated that voiced discrimination experienced by the Shiite minority in Saudi Arabia (TV, 2011). Moreover, Riyadh accused Doha of being involved in an attempt to assassinate King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

2. Saudi Arabia Thinks That Qatar's Economy is a Threat

The things that have been explained above about Qatar's economic growth which is considered a significant cause of Saudi Arabia as the richest country in its era feel threatened by the current economy of Qatar. Qatar's economic independence is what makes Qatar successful in prospering the State and citizens. The strategic potential in question is in terms of income,

education and natural resources it has. This is the result of Qatar's innovation which is now considered to have rapid development.

The different views that occurred between the two countries became another trigger for termination of diplomatic relations. Differences in views occurred when Qatar did not agree to the invasion of the United States to Iraq in 2003. In addition, another cause was the desire of Qatar as a super power country in the Middle East. Furthermore, there is the power of Qatar to support the occurrence of internal political changes that result in differences when compared to other Gulf countries. The final cause is the openness of Qatar making it the State of Qatar easily accepted by European countries compared to other Gulf countries. The cause or trigger that has been described above is considered a threat to the Middle East by Saudi Arabia due to economic growth and independence of Qatar which will reduce dependence on other Gulf countries, therefore the termination of diplomatic relations is done to hamper the economic growth of the State of Qatar.

3. Saudi Arabia Suspects Qatar Supports the Radical Movement

In 2014, the first time Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries severed diplomatic relations with Qatar due to the same problem, Saudi Arabia supported a radical movement by funding their weapons. Qatar supports the Muslim brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood government came to power in Egypt after the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak in 2011. At that time, Qatar contributed up to billions of dollars in funds to the government of Mohamed

Morsi under the Muslim Brotherhood bureau. Then, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain accuse Qatar of supporting Shia militants in several conflict countries backed by Iran. One of them is Houthi militants in Yemen. Qatar's Ambassador to the United States, Meshal bin Hamad Al Thani acknowledged that his country had relations with Iran, including the cooperation of underwater natural gas, but they had the same attitude as the Gulf countries in the case of the Yemeni conflict (Armandhanu, 2017).

Apart from the circulation of news related to Qatar's support for extremist and Iranian groups, the termination of Saudi Arabia's diplomatic relations with Qatar in 2017 was caused by Qatar's support for Iran regarding uranium enrichment in Iran. The act was criticized by Arab countries because this is a form of Iran's ambition towards its nuclear program which could endanger security in the Arab region. The closeness of Qatar to Iran actually aroused emotion for Saudi Arabia, giving rise to a diplomatic crisis in Saudi Arabia to Qatar.

4. The closeness Qatar with Iran

Qatar has good relations with Iran; both countries are members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). In December 2010, military cooperation between Qatar and Iran was an officer in the Iranian Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) meeting with the commander of the Qatar army. Hamad bin Ali Al Attiyah, Qatar's Defense Minister, met with Iranian naval forces

and stated that Qatar was ready to carry out military exercises along with Iran (Fulton, 2010).

In January 2014, Qatar provided Iranian assistance by taking gas. During Qatar's diplomatic crisis, Iran provided support in diplomatic and economic form to Qatar (Marzooq, 2017). On June 5, the day the crisis erupted; Iran asked Arab countries to resolve their dispute through dialogue (Hafezi, 2017). On August 23, 2017, it was announced that Qatar would return its ambassador to Iran. On August 26, 2018, during a telephone conversation between the Emir of Qatar and Iranian President Rouhani, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani stated that "Thanks to the integrity and solidarity of the Qatari people and cooperation and assistance from friendly countries, especially Iran, we have overcome problems an unjust and cruel siege and we will never forget the Iranian attitude in this matter (Agency, 2018)."

Conclusion

Termination of diplomatic relations has been carried out by Saudi Arabia in 2014 and is repeated again in 2017. Relationships that are established are not always good. Most relationships are based on problems that always begin with Qatar. The three considerations outlined above prove that all four are interconnected and produce an absolute decision, namely the termination of diplomatic relations carried out by Saudi Arabia against Qatar.

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