

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF TURKEY AND SAUDI ARABIA BILATERAL RELATION

This chapter discusses about the history of bilateral relations between the Republic of Turkey and The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The discussion is started from the beginning of bilateral relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia which was happened since 1932 or in the era of cold war, then continued by discussing the dynamics of bilateral relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia since the first time of its relation or in the post-cold war era until today, spesifically after the Jamal Khasoggi murder incident that really have a big influence towards their relation.

A. The Beginning of Turkey and Saudia Arabia Bilateral Relation in the cold ward era

The Westernization perfect has been the core value of the Turkish Republic from its origin in 1923. Kemal Ataturk and his adherents unmistakably envisioned a common, Western-style, mixed economy and popularity based polity. The essential inclination of turning into a fundamental piece of the West was fortified in the after war time frame by the Cold War and the Soviet risk. The key advance toward this path included participation in NATO during the mid 1950s and the parallel improvement of a cozy association with the United States. The normal subsequent stage appeared to be participation in the Europea Economic Community (EC). The Republic of Turkey and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have established the diplomatic relation in 1932 after the establishment of the new Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018) In the same year, Saudi Arabia started to relished full international recognition as an

independent state. These two countries have not revealed abundant of interest significantly since in that era the Turkey's secular ruling elite was more attracted to have economic and strategic cooperation with the West rather than to the Arab World and then Turkey decided to join the NATO in 1951 two years after the NATO formation. (The Conversation, 2018)

Since Turkey and Saudi Arabia have differences in foreign policy, ideology and political systems, there's no any further effort for developing the bilateral relations between both until the mid of 1960s but when it comes to 1970s, the relation between Turkey and Saudi Arabia relation began to develop because of number of incidents that happened during that era. Turkey started to adopt a different orientation on its foreign policy with broad international support to its Cyprus cause in the early 1960s and 1970s. It leads to the reapproachment with Muslim Countries where Turkey's decided to join with the new born Islamic organization named *Organization Islamic Cooperation* in 1969 and established official relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1975. Meanwhile Saudi Arabia was very positively in responding this developments and didn't oppose Turkey's military intervention in Cyprus in 1974. Other than that, Saudi Arabia was one of the main destinations sought by the Turkish migrants in the 1970s and 1980s who worked in Saudi's infrastructure projects. In the 1980s upon the adaptation of the economic liberalization program by Turgut Ozal's administration in Turkey, Saudi Islamic banks started to flourish in the Turkish economy and also there were many Islamic NGOs were established in Turkey and Saudi Arabia that developed economic ties with the pro-Islamic Turkish businessmen and politicians (usually known in Turkey by the followers of Milli Gorus). The changes in Turkish foreign policy proceeded by the domestic

changes and rise of Islamic based political figures in the mid 1980s that encouraged Saudi Arabia to invest in the Turkish market. In 1985, there were three big Saudi Islamic financial institutions like : Albaraka Turk Ozel Finans, Faisal Finans and Family Finans that opened in Turkey. (Koni, 2012)

In 1991 when there was a Persian Gulf war, Turkey and Saudi Arabia were on the same side of the international coalition led by the United States that against Saddam Hussein in Iraq. During this war, Saudi Arabia was giving help to Turkey financially through loans so that it can overcome the bad aftermaths of the war on Turkish economy. Nevertheless, the relation between these two countries are getting tense at the end of 1990s as a result of the weakening of Turkish-Syrian relations over Syria's support to the Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK) and the problems on the usage of the Euphrates river, where Saudi Arabia lobbied against Turkey's request for a loan from the World Bank to finance building dams on the Euphrates river that goes from Turkey to Syria. (Altunisik, 2012) Since then Turkey relations with Saudi Arabia encounter the ups and downs phase until today since facing the issues that happened surround them.

B. The Dynamics of Turkey And Saudi Arabia Bilateral Relation in the Post-Cold War era

Since the establishment of these two countries bilateral relation, their relations are actually highly dependent on the regional conditions in Middle East and the ways about how each country approach and responds toward the situation. Therefore, the dynamics of Turkey and Saudi Arabia relation will be elaborated based on the the most influence situation as follows :

1. The weakening of Turkey-Syria relation in 1991

After a long good relation that have been developed since 1932 until 1990, Turkey and Saudi Arabia started to face the dynamics on both countries relation. It was started in 1991, Turkey and Syria's relation getting worse because the Syria support the Kurdistan Worker Party when they have conflict with Turkey. The conflict known as The Kurdish-Turkish conflict. It was an armed conflict between the Republic of Turkey and several Kurdish insurgent groups which have demanded separatism from Turkey to create an independent autonomy or greater political and cultural rights for Kurds inside the Republic of Turkey in which the main rebel group is the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). (Altunisik, 2012) Besides, Turkey also have problems on the usage of the Euphrates river where Saudi Arabia lobbied against Turkey's request for loan from the World Bank fo finance building dams on the Euphrates River which goes from Turkey to Syria. The Saudi's perception of Turkey is rather influenced by the Islamic conservative and Arabism worldviews. According to Wahhabism, Secularism is a non-Islamic discourse and the Turkish governement was not included as an Islamic government. Based on Arabism perspective, Saudi Arabia opposed Ankara's high cooperation profile with Israel in the late 1990s as well as Turkish stance against Syria in the water disputes, which led the relations between these two coutries becoming stagnant. (Pourebrahim, 2015)

2. The rise of Justice and Development Party (AKP) under president Erdogan administration in 2000

In 2000 the Justice and Development Party (AKP) was obtain power in Turkey, scholarly publications dealing with its political and ideological orientation have generally focused on the party's relationship with Islamism. (Demirkol, 2015) It gave a big influence to the relation between Turkey and Saudi

Arabia where these two countries found a tight footing relation. Under the administration of Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan together with the AKP party, they placed a high priority on constructing the stronger relationships with its Arab and Muslim neighbors. The AKP, while being a new party, capitalized on its predecessors' (Refah and Fazilet parties) massive societal infrastructure and entered the political scene in 2001–2002 as a fully functional political party. (Yeşilada, 2016)

3. The US. invasion to Iraq in 2003

The armed conflict between the United States with Iraq in 2003, there are three objectives that US had to attack Iraq such as the US wants to destroy weapons of mass destruction, get rid of international terrorist threats and release the Iraqi people from oppressing Saddam Hussein's regime by restoring democracy in Iraq. (Mahally, 2003) The invasion of Iraq was actually had left significant implications on the Arab Regional System and revealed the degree of the weakness that had infected the main parts of the system. The Arab League States failed to hold an urgent summit to discuss the consequences of the US invasion. (Salem, 2008)

In the case of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and several changes in the balance of power that happened on that region was resulting the relationship of Turkey and Saudi Arabia getting closer since both of them feeling concerned about Iraq that fall into the hands of their common rival, Iran whose military and political influence increased as a result of the invasion. They also wanted to contain Iran's influence in Syria and Lebanon. (CNN-INTERNATIONAL.COM, 2003)

Based on the development of the relationship between Turkey and Saudi Arabia that has been explained previously, the high-level of diplomatic contacts nurturing the development of business and

investment. Turkish exports of textiles, metals and other products to Saudi Arabia rose from US\$397 million in 2000 to \$2.74 billion in 2011. (The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2018) Furthermore the Saudi Arabian businessman strated to look Turkey as an attractive partner to cooperate with, since they felt unwelcome in the U.S. and Europe after the tragedy of 9/11.

4. The Arab Spring wave 2011

In the year of 2011, there was a huge protests demonstrations named the Arab Spring which was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions that spread across the Middle East including Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Libya, Egypt and Bahrain. This protests actions was aimed to increase democracy and cultural freedom. (Thought.Co, 2017) Nevertheless, when the Arab Spring began to impact Turkey via the conflict in Syria, the ‘Arab Spring’ gradually transformed into the Turkey Autumn, it also caused the emergence of ISIS and other terrorist activity that give a long-standing dilemmas inherent in the Turkish Foreign Policy towards the middle east. (Hüseyin Işıksal, 2017) The Arab Spring of 2011 is likely to go down in history as a season of profound political changes that swept across the domestic politics of the Arab world. (Kamrava, 2012) Moreover The ‘Arab uprisings’ are consider different from the twentieth century revolutions in Russia, China, Cuba, Iran, or even those in 1989 in Eastern Europe, where revolutions came to mean a rapid and radical overhaul of the state, driven from below by popular uprisings. (Bayat, 2013) What first appeared as an isolated act of protest against local authorities quickly gained broader significance, as it was followed by a series of demonstrations that has

shaken the grip of autocratic regimes across the Arab world. (Chor, 2012)

In responding to these huge demonstrations and protests, here Turkey and Saudi Arabia started to show their inequality in seeing the issue. Turkish responses were varied according to particular interests in the fate of each regime. However, as the inevitability of the Arab Spring appeared to take hold, the Ankara government's responses became increasingly coherent and stimulated around a principled approach in favour of the change sought by Arab Spring protestors. Saudi Arabia, in contrast, viewed the start of the revolutions with a mixture of concern and scepticism. (Momani, 2013) So it could be said that Mr. Erdogan, as an advocate of political Islam, looks welcome the revolutions and the new form of government resulted. On the other hand, for Saudi Arabia, they saw this action as a destabilizing condition. This disagreement of views reached to the peak when it comes to Egypt where Mohammad Morsi, who was closely associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, won that Egypt's first post-Hosni Mubarak administration election in 2012. In this case, Mr. Erdogan supported Muhammad Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood to have power in which it was opposed by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states such as United Arab Emirates that have a long history of unfriendliness with the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab World and feel concerned that the victory would give a strong power to this movement in their own country. When it comes to 2013 when the military coup ousted Muhammad Morsi, Mr. Erdogan revealing his condemnation and offered aid to the Muslim Brotherhood refugees who take shelter in Turkey. Meanwhile Saudi Arabia took side by offering billions in financial aid for the sake of Egypt's new military rulers. Moreover

in 2014 Saudi Arabia take an active role to broke Turkey's efforts to become a nonpermanent member of the United Nations' Security Council. (Sassounian, 2014).

5. Qatar Crisis in 2017

The problem started in the late May when the state-run Qatar News Agency was being hacked by a major cyber attack in which the hackers posted articles that cast positive light on Iran, Israel, the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. The articles are actually caused anger from Saudi Arabia and its regional allies even though Qatar denied the authenticity of statements attributed to the Qatar leader Mr. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani that describing Iran as a regional and Islamic power. For four years, Saudi Arabia along with United Arab Emirates and Egypt criticized Doha for having and maintaining relations with Iran and Supporting Islamist organizations. The problem caused several countries cuts their relations with Qatar on June 2017. Those countries are Saudi Arabia, the Uni Arab Emirates, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen. They cutting off all the air, land and sea links with the Arab Gulf state. Some of them also asked the Qatari diplomats to leave and recalled their ambassadors from Doha. (Sanders, 2017)

In responding this this issue, Saudi Arabia and Turkey again have an opposite point of view. In one side Saudi Arabia along with its regional allies and detached all of their relations with Qatar and decided to enforce economic blockade as the last support for Muslim, Tukey on the other hand, try to expand its engagement with Qatar, offering economic aid and sending troops to its small military base in Qatar. Moreover, the Turkish shipments to Qatar played a critical role in the ability to endure the economic blockade. (BBC NEWS , 2017)

6. Jamal Khasoggi Murder in 2018

In 2018, the International world was shocked by the murder of a journalist from the United States but has Saudi Arabia citizenship, named Jamal Khasoggi. He was killed in Saudi Arabia consulate in Turkey when he wants to arrange marriage documents with his Turkish national fiance named Hatice Cengiz. Since this murder happened in Turkey, Turkey government directly took immediate action as the responses towards this tragedy. As the result of the investigation, there is no clarity regarding how the Khashoggi died and where his body now that made the news still confusing and catch the world's attention. (Eneng Susanti, 2018) As the host country, Turkey is not remain silent but still continue to find out the clarity and who is the suspect behind this murder. By having several evidences from the investigation that Turkey held, most of the result shows that Saudi Arabia is one of the part that involved in this murder incident, but Saudi Arabia rejected this accusation and asked Turkey to share the evidences but then Turkey did not want to share the evidences and rather to continue the investigation until they found a more a further evidences.

By facing this incident, Turkey and Saudi Arabia is really have an opposite action that cause these two countries relation getting worse. Turkey's pressure to Saudi Arabia bring a more big influence towards their relation, even it also impact to the internal situation of Turkey. Moreover, because of Turkish deep intervention towards this case, a boycott towards Turkish product is being announced by Saudi Arabia that could threatened Turkis economic. However, it doesn't make Turkey stop its commitment to resolve this case for the sake of justice.