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# The Influence of American Foreign Policy on Qatar's External Behavior <sup>(1)</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

### PURPOSE

This paper aims to investigate the influence of United States foreign policy on Qatar's external behavior as an explicit example of the relationship between great and small states to predict the future trajectories of such influence based on an investigation of the tools and determinants of both foreign policies.

### DESIGN/ METHODOLOGY/ APPROACH

The rational choice approach is used based on which decision-makers are considered rational and purposeful in their actions, and consequently, state behavior will be rational towards other states or events. The Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is provided to explain how states respond to external threats according to internal factors and to the most influential large states in the international system.

### FINDINGS

All the successive American administration's foreign policy towards the GCC in general, and Qatar in particular, is constant despite their different implementation mechanisms. The close relationship between Qatar and the U.S. has not prevented Qatar from developing its own foreign policy, which is activist, independent, and provides economic and political gains, besides security. Qatar remains an important ally to the U.S., due to its gas reserves, being a source of U.S. energy supplies and a strategic military base of operations, and a site of U.S. foreign policy.

### ORIGINALITY/ VALUE

The key contribution is to investigate the direct influence of U.S. foreign policy on Qatar from the perspective of international relations. In addition, refute the realist theory which argues that small states participate less in international issues, and have limited foreign policy due to their limited capabilities, compared to great powers.

### KEY WORDS

International Relations, American Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy Analysis, Rational Choice.

**Paper type:** Case study

## المخلص

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى التحقق من مدى تأثير السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة على السلوك الخارجي لدولة قطر كمثال واضح للعلاقة بين الدول الكبرى والدول الصغيرة بهدف التنبؤ بالمسارات المستقبلية لهذا التأثير بناء على استعراض وتحليل أدوات ومحددات السياسة الخارجية لكلا الدولتين. وللتحقق من هذا التأثير استخدمت الدراسة منهج الاختيار العقلاني (الرشيد) الذي يركز على قاعدة هامة مفادها أن صانعي القرار يعتبرون عقلانيين وهادفين في أفعالهم، وبالتالي، سيكون سلوك الدولة هو الآخر عقلانياً تجاه الدول أو الأحداث الأخرى. كما اعتمدت الدراسة على تحليل السياسة الخارجية (FPA) باعتبارها أداة لتوضيح كيفية استجابة الدول للتهديدات الخارجية وفقاً للعوامل الداخلية ووفقاً لتأثير الدول الكبيرة الأكثر نفوذاً في النظام الدولي.

توصلت الدراسة إلى أن السياسات الخارجية للإدارات الأمريكية المتعاقبة تجاه دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي بشكل عام، وقطر بشكل خاص، ثابتة على الرغم من اختلاف آليات تنفيذها، كما أن العلاقة الوثيقة بين قطر والولايات المتحدة لم تمنع قطر من تطوير سياستها الخارجية الخاصة، التي تتسم بالنشاط والاستقلالية، وتوفير مكاسب اقتصادية وسياسية، إلى جانب تحقيق الأمن. أيضاً أكدت النتائج أن قطر لا تزال حليفاً مهماً للولايات المتحدة، بسبب احتياطياتها من الغاز، كونها مصدراً لإمدادات الطاقة الأمريكية وقاعدة عسكرية استراتيجية للعمليات، وموقعاً هاماً لتنفيذ السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية.

يتمثل الإسهام العلمي الرئيس لهذه الدراسة في التأكيد على التأثير المباشر للسياسة الخارجية الأمريكية على السياسة الخارجية القطرية من منظور العلاقات الدولية. يضاف إلى ذلك، مخالفة النظرية الواقعية التي تجادل بأن الدول الصغيرة تشارك بشكل أقل في القضايا الدولية، ولديها سياسة خارجية محدودة بسبب قدراتها المحدودة، مقارنة بالقوى العظمى.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** العلاقات الدولية، السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية، تحليل السياسة الخارجية، الاختيار

الرشيد

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of foreign policy deals with defense, security, international relations, and international economic development, in addition to the relations between state and non-state actors in the international system. It simply refers to the goals and actions of the state's government in the international system. U.S. foreign policy refers to what the U.S. government aims to achieve, and the steps to be taken in this regard towards different international actors and issues. The U.S. has historically depended on geopolitical isolation and neutrality, which is a selective foreign policy that changed after the Second World War. After the Cold War, the American administration adopted tendencies of retrenchment and engagement in its foreign policy, which has become a strategic consideration for U.S. foreign policy today. Moreover, the number of small states increased, following the aftermath of the Second World War, the decolonization process in the 1960s, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. These states began to be represented in various international institutions, such as the United Nations, hence, influencing international politics. Therefore, it is critical to study the foreign policy of small states, in order to achieve learned lessons for foreign policy analysis, and international relations.

Many researchers have noted that small states are disadvantaged in the international system due to their smaller population, and their less aggregate structural power (the total amount of resources and capabilities compared to large states), yet play an increasingly influential role in international relations. Their important roles cannot be ignored in a world of different power relations, as their impact may exceed their theorized potentialities in many cases. Their militarily weakness, owing to the constraints imposed by their small populations and economies, is another form of disadvantage. As a result, their adopted security policies differ according to the unique national and external challenges they face. Subsequently, there is no one strategy to apply to all of them.

The Qatari state provides an explicit model for studying the increasingly significant role of small states, and their growing importance in reshaping international patterns. This can be noticed through the cooperation agreements between the U.S. and Qatar which has been one of the United States' strongest allies in the Middle East over the last decade. Qatar has

provided political and financial support to U.S. initiatives, and legitimized its diplomacy in the Middle East, in addition to Qatar's unprecedented mediating role in the region, leading to a discussion on its independent regional role despite its smallness.

Hence, this study investigates the influence of great states in the international system on small states, as applied on the U.S. and Qatar as good examples of these states, through four sections. **The first section** discusses the theoretical background and conceptual framework of small and great states in international relations theories. **The second section** explains constants in the foreign policy of the U.S. and Qatar. **The third section** highlights the U.S. and Qatar foreign policy tools and mechanisms. **The fourth section** examines the current and future trajectories of the U.S.-Qatar relationship. Finally, the paper provides conclusion, results, and future agenda.

## **Section I: Small States and Great States in International Relations Theories**

### **1.1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

The world is dominated by large powers, and led by unpredictable actors, including the United States. Some of the disadvantages of small size are based on common sense, such as the lack of military ability, and the limited resources. Moreover, small states may not be able to defend themselves against hostile attacks, and may depend on regional and international organizations by making use of them to solve the soft security problems. Small states can be influential with in these international bodies such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth and the European Union by prioritizing core interests, banking on the informality and flexibility of their diplomatic corps, relying on the expertise and advocacy of institutional bodies (such as the Commission in the EU or the Secretariat in the UN) and other states, and creating images of themselves as neutral, trustworthy, honest, compliant and useful brokers and contributors. (Thorhallsson,2018:8).

Small states follow different types of security policies; they can either stay neutral or join alliances. A wide range of literature shows how small states prefer to subordinate themselves to large states and great powers in the international system as a tool to obtain rank, enhance security and territorial integrity, reduce trade and transaction costs, as well as to define and protect

national and international rights through reducing disputes and uncertainty. By obtaining all these benefits, small states can get considerable autonomy in economic benefits exchange, and realize security against internal and external threats (Lake,2010:712).

Different theories in international relations explain the domestic or international practices of small states. One of the most important theories is realism, according to which small states cannot have a defined policy outside their borders because they do not have the physical power, especially the military power that enables the development of influential foreign policy. As a result, small states cannot develop this effective policy. Therefore, realism theory shows that the best behavior of small states is to be dependent on great states (Galal,2019:40). In this regard, realism argues that small states have few choices of foreign policy to ensure their survival, realists are more concerned with larger states such as Great Powers, and small states are of marginal interest unless they have a geostrategic value or are an integral part of an international crisis or problem. As small states have fewer military capabilities, they have to adopt strategies designed to enhance their security as much as possible. (Simpson, A. 2018)

Hence small states are encouraged by realism doctrine to adopt strategies of aggregation, coalition-formation, and integration. In other meanings, it is often suggested that the small states are not powerful because they are poor. Realists believe that power is the currency of the international community. If this is true, then if small states were more powerful, they might be less poor. Moreover, if poor states are interested in becoming less poor, they might do so most effectively by first becoming less powerless to gain power as the road to prosperity. (Gleason, G.et al. 2008)

So, according to realists, small states would be encouraged to pursue policies of aggregation, coalition-formation, and integration to enhance its power by joining coalitions and alliances with great power the matter that need more reviewing and explanation as some small states today play an activist great role through mediation efforts that supported by the economic and geostrategic status such as Qatar. In other words, small states should not act like large states; they should act like states pursuing a different set of strategies for the enhancement of their own power.

On the other hand, Marxist perspective doubts the ability of small states to realize economic independence, and stresses the constrains imposed

by external factors on the autonomy of small states. On such basis, world order is determined by capitalist production relations, and control of world economic surplus (Lake,2010:712). Accordingly, dependency theorists assume that small states are not separate units with an endogenous development, rather international units with integrated economic relations to the world market. The most recent hypothesis regarding small states has changed, since they are no longer at the mercy of great powerful actors, and have more international visibility and legitimacy now than at any other time in the past (Mohammadzadeh,2017:21).

Max Weber defines hierarchy as an established system wherein small states subordinate to superpowers. Weberian stratification theory introduces a useful thinking tool to the place of small states in such system. It becomes possible to talk about the international system in terms of stratification when small states take subordinate ranking in their relations with larger and more powerful states, which continue over time. In this light, Weberian stratification theory concludes that small states are structurally pushed into continuing status goals, which leads to getting privileges, such as prestige, respect, and honor, when their material capabilities are weak and cannot be improved (Mohammadzadeh,2017:19). Moreover, the strategic depth theory provides a comprehensive perspective, in which all the factors affecting the creation of state capacity are defined and formulated in the state power equation, including static data plus potential data, multiplied by the factors of strategic thinking, (ST) strategic planning, (SP) and political will (PW). Static data (SD) refers to given factors: history, geography, population, and culture, which are not to be changed over time. Potential data (PD) refers to the elements of economic, technological, and military capacities (Cavusoglu,2016:13).

Other groups of literature divided the small states according to two perspectives, which are constraints and vulnerabilities on the one hand, and resilience on the other hand. The emphasis on vulnerabilities in the political, military, and economic position of small states generates an expected foreign policy that is defensive, and interested in positive tendency towards global institutions to achieve their goals. Resilience is based on the concept of systemic pressures that could be mitigated by permanent and contingent conditions, such as the level of economic development, internal stability, support of the population, and the geographical proximity to strategic interest

areas (Mohammadzadeh,2017:22). Furthermore, the special needs of small states can be understood through their foreign policy choices. The fulfillment of these needs can also be a useful indicator for the success of small-state foreign policy. First and foremost, these states need a peaceful international order with security guarantees provided by powerful states and organizations, as they cannot defend themselves, which has always been the most pressing concern facing small states (Steinsson, et al.2017:135). However, on the contrary, small states may sometimes privilege their ideals above their own physical security, leading to foreign policies that are mainly against what a rationalist framework would adopt. In other words, small states play a specific role when decision-makers and officials strongly perceive ideas such as smallness, and factor these ideas in their calculations, and in determining their preferences and attitudes (Mohammadzadeh,2017:24).

In recent studies, the status of small states with limited possibilities has changed with the rise of the multipolar world, as multipolarity seems to provide small states with more choices than was the case with bipolarity or unipolarity; they have the choice to decide with whom they can cooperate (Katzman,2021:8). According to liberalism, cooperation between states is possible, regardless of their size, and can be sustained even in an anarchic world. Liberals added that democracy, trade, and institutions mitigate the fears and uncertainty that anarchy generates, and make sustained peaceful cooperation possible. In the modern international system, small and large states are increasingly controlled by institutional and interstate relations that create significant constraints, particularly on large powers (Thorhallsson,2018:23).

Based on the aforementioned review, this present study strongly supports the perspective of liberalism. In the recent international system, size does not mean a lot for today's international relations, since several small states have the economic status, and the strategic geopolitical position, which reshape the international relations between small and large states.

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## 2.1. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section discusses the conceptual framework of large and small states. According to the new global order, multidimensional definitions have been provided to include a wide range of elements that affect the real meaning of size in the modern international system, since many studies overestimate



the significance of population, territory, economy, and military (Fazal, et al.2014:80).

Related definitions of ‘small states’ have no consensus within academic research, although most definitions of small states concentrate on their lack of power and influence, and depend on population which is the most common variable in defining the state size, territory, economy, and military. According to the United Nations, small states have populations of less than one million people. Other researchers consider the gross national product (GNP) as a criterion for defining the small state, while other scholars focus on the idea of perception (Steinsson, et al.2017:134, AbuSulaib,2017:30, Rookwood,2019:26). Moreover, the international nation significance has often been determined by the perceived ability and use of military and economic power. For example, small states have typically been assumed to lack international visibility, and have frequently been categorized as vulnerable actors with little influence in the international system (Rookwood,2019:26). Some definitions adopt a psychological perspective to define smallness, considering the small power as “a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system” (Abu Sulaib,2017:30). Accordingly, there are many types for considering the state size, fixed size (population and territory), sovereignty size (degree to which a state controls its internal affairs and borders), political size (military and administrative capabilities, national cohesion, and foreign policy consensus), economic size (GDP, market size, and development), perceptual size (how a state is perceived by internal or external actors), and preference size (ideas, ambitions, and priorities of decision-makers regarding their role in the international system) (Thorhallsson,2006:13).

The reviewed literature defines small-state foreign policy according to three groups. The first group focuses on the influence of internal factors on the external behavior of small states, regardless of what these internal factors are. The second addresses the analysis of the external behavior of small states based on the viewpoint that the decisions of foreign policy makers are affected not only by the international stratification, but also by internal factors. The third group confirms that foreign policies of some small states depend on forming a perceptual image, acting as a mediator, and making great contribution to regional and international organizations (Gala,2019:42).

Furthermore, the characteristic features of small-state foreign policy are the inability to compete with great countries concerning the engagement in international issues, or to impose its diplomacy on global events, while preferring economic and developmental tools to the political considerations in its international relations. These features also include adopting low-cost mechanisms, such as the use of international organizations to maximize its capacity, and increase its influence, in order to realize the standards of international legitimacy. Finally, the personalization of foreign policy decisions especially in the international affairs is characteristic of small-state foreign policy (Bin Ali et al.2016:18). As a result, security policies adopted by small states reflect the unique domestic and external challenges they face. They generally prefer multilateralism to influence and limit larger states. They can develop disproportionate power compared to their size on the most important issues to them, by following the strategies of coalition-building and self-image-building. Although they lack the resources of their larger counterparts, the flexibility and informality of small states, as well as the autonomy of their diplomats are distinguished in negotiations and within institutional framework (Steinsson, et al.2017:140).

Considering the size or population, Qatar is the smallest state in the Middle East, with a landmass of only 11,571 kilometers. It also has the second smallest population in the region, with a total population of 1.74 million, out of which 250,000 are national citizens. On the other hand, if the “idea of perception” or foreign-policy behavior are considered, defining Qatar as a small state is debatable, because despite its small size and population, Qatar acquired a great regional and international influence, as discussed in the following section (Abu Sulaib,2017:32).

Based on the forementioned, there is a great difference between the meaning of power, influence and capability of the small state in the international community. As the real essence of the international unit power is a combination of the influence of its internal factors, its external behavior, its foreign policy makers, its perceptual image branding, and its mediating role concerning the engagement in international issues, in addition to its economic tools. All these aggregated factors reshaped the meaning of small states in the international relations field.

## Section II: Constants in the Foreign Policy of the U.S. and Qatar

It is necessary to first explain the concept of constant and change in foreign policy. Constant (continuity) means the continuation of decision-makers in maintaining the foreign policy type towards the international context, whether the regime is democratic or not. Accordingly, various factors drive decision-makers to sustain the existing foreign policy, and ensure its stability, including bureaucracy, regional and global resources, and the features of decision-makers (Goldman,2014:6). The concept of change (variables) has no consensus like most of the other social concepts. It refers to major changes in terms of the international unit objectives, or mechanisms to comply with pressures resulting from the internal, regional, or international contexts. Two major trends analyze changes in foreign policy, which are the gradual change, and the radical change (Al-Qahtani,2018:5). In this regard, a radical change in foreign policy may be the result of regime change or state transformation, for instance. On the other hand, change that occurs when the existing government decides to drive foreign policy in different directions refer to the gradual change. (Dugis,2008:101)

### 2.1. CONSTANTS IN THE U.S. AND QATAR FOREIGN POLICY

#### 2.1.1. CONSTANTS AND CHANGE IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

##### A. GUARANTEE ISRAELI SECURITY

Israel is viewed as a close ally of the United States in the Middle East, and critical to American national security interests. Since the Cold War, Israel has served as a safeguard against Soviet communism and Arab nationalism. Therefore, preserving Israel's security and qualitative military advantage as an essential regional power is a fundamental principal of U.S. strategy. Any other policy must be compatible with this principle, since protecting Israel ensures U.S. stability in the region, and solidifies American national security interests there (Al Sarhan,2017:461).

##### B. SECURING STRATEGIC ACCESS TO OIL IN THE GULF REGION

Ensuring the United States access to oil is among the highest priorities for two reasons, the first of which is primarily economic, while the second stems from how strategic policy is dictated by the fact that the United States

must supplement its domestic output of oil from resources in the Middle East (Al Sarhan,2017:459). Therefore, the basic U.S. strategy is to establish American hegemony in oil-rich countries in the region of the Middle East, supporting there all kinds of non-democratic and even dictatorial regimes that express political loyalty to Washington (Sotirovic,2019:57).

### **C. MAINTAINING THE UNITED STATES MILITARY BASES**

One of the main aims of the United States is to maintain its military bases, particularly those in oil-rich Arab states, along the trade routes and pressure points, enabling the United States influence in the region. The United States' military bases are defined as military places that are used for training purposes, preparation, and stocking of military equipment for American military assistance or operations throughout the world. They are not open to the public and usually, take different shapes according to the military purpose for which they were established. The United States' military bases can be classified into four primary categories: Air Force; Army or Land; Navy; and Communication and/or Spy (Al Sarhan,2017:455).

### **D. IMPOSING U.S. LEVERAGE AND MAINTAINING THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER UNDER ITS LEADERSHIP**

During the different successive American administrations, it was important to stress the development of an 'America First' worldview and foreign policy (Stokes,2018:135). U.S. leadership of the world order has been seen as both necessary for creating and sustaining the order, and desirable for ensuring that the order fulfills U.S. concerns that would otherwise deteriorate if another state takes up the leadership role (Michael et. al,2016:43).

### **2.1.2. CONSTANTS AND CHANGE IN QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY**

Small states are more sensitive to changes in the external context than larger powers, because the former lack the physical possibilities to respond to external essentialities. This understanding reflects its reactive and involuntary foreign engagement, making small states realize that they can never act alone, or make a significant impact on the system in many cases (Miller et al.,2020:6). Despite their sensitive responsiveness to external environment changes, some small states, and Qatar especially, define their own constants in this changeable environment, as follows:

### **A. GUARANTEE REGIME SURVIVAL (SURVIVAL STRATEGY).**

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Qatar's foreign policy is derived from the need to guarantee its regime's survival. The Qatari leadership has played an essential role -at all levels- in securing its survival, as the Qatari regime is ideologically independent, thus willing to make alliances, either temporary or long-term. Besides, Qatar is a very rich small country living in a hostile region (Haykel,2013:2). Qatar as one of the smallest states in the international system, with a small population under one million citizens, raises concerns over whether such small actor could act in the international context (Miller et al.,2020:10). As a small state in a rough region, much of Qatar's diplomacy, including its mediation efforts, is advocated by a broader survival policy that aims at ensuring the security of the ruling Al-Thani (Kamrava,2011:555).

### **B. PROTECTING ITSELF FROM REGIONAL THREATS, AND ENSURING ITS SURVIVAL**

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Qatar adopts a strategic offensive foreign policy to ensure its safety in an environment with larger and more powerful states. Since the revolutions of the Arab Spring in 2011, it has not had the choice to be neutral. Moreover, while located between two large neighbors, Saudi Arabia and Iran that compete for control over the area Qatar searches for a regional role away from the domination of these two regional powers, in order to ensure its survival, and satisfy its ambitions. This is because both of its large neighbors voice the opinion that Qatar's role decreases their own influence, and stands against their interests (Kabalan,2019: 65).

### **C. PURSUING INDEPENDENT ECONOMIC POLICIES**

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Qatar has made use of its great financial capabilities to maintain its security, and achieve international and regional recognition for its role. Its massive financial resources from the huge investments in the extraction and processing of liquefied natural gas have represented Qatar's greatest strength for its regional role, international relations, and foreign policy. In other words, financial independence is Qatar's first and utmost important step towards maintaining its foreign policies independent of the regional powers (Ossorio et al.2021:115). Qatar has turned from a mediator to an activist state in its foreign policy. While its loyalty to the United States maintains numerous U.S. military projects, as well as political and cultural initiatives, it is described by the U.S. Embassy as "highly personalized," and with "an orientation towards the middle." Its activist and independent foreign policy can positively impact

Middle East security, and help move the region towards a power equilibrium (Kaussler,2015:15).

The relationship between Qatar and US is interchangeably, as in the time that US tries to ensure access to oil by controlling the oil-rich countries, maintain its military bases and maintain numerous U.S. military, and cultural initiatives in this vital region, Qatar could enhance Its activist and independent foreign policy which create power equilibrium in the region by using its geostrategic status, its economic power, and recently it had effectively employed its soft power. By this meaning the power elements in the international relations community are varied from case to case according to different sets of factors imposed by the foreign policy constants and continuity.

## **Section III- the U.S. and Qatar Foreign Policy Tools and Mechanisms**

### **3.1. U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOOLS AND MECHANISMS**

#### **A. THE ECONOMIC TOOL**

The U.S. remains an advantaged hegemon due to many factors that include the continued use of the dollar as a global currency, which is referred to as the 'dollar hegemony.' These special privileges enable it to effectively control the region. If the dollar loses its international reserve currency status, other aspects of the U.S. hegemony, most notably its international military supremacy, will deteriorate, as other currencies compete for international monetary leadership. Moreover, the dollar hegemony has also reinforced geopolitical implications, because the U.S. can fund its overseas military operations largely with dollars (Stokes,2018:143). Moreover, the U.S. keeps on expanding its economic investments as a tool to strengthen its influence all over the world, and ensure its supremacy (Paterson,2018:26).

#### **B. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AS A TOOL OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

The U.S. spends billions of dollars on foreign aid to help other countries economically and militarily. Military assistance, for example, permits the U.S. base facilities in overseas locations. The economic and military assistance stimulates the U.S. economy, because it comes directly from U.S. business firms. The U.S. benefits financially from productive

overseas markets that produce revenue, and generate jobs for Americans (Paterson,2018:20).

### **C. THE MILITARY TOO.**

The United States has become the underwriter for global regimes by seeking to shape a world order in America's own image, and reveal free-market democracy around the globe, using its overwhelming military priority. From this perspective, U.S. intervention and global engagement is a choice that stems not only from a national security need, but also from a globalist ideology that has considered it militarily overcommitted (Stokes,2018:140).

### **D. A POLITICAL TOOL**

Most presidential doctrines focus on overseas national security interests as, for example, the assistance to allies in Truman's case, the protection of strategic national assets in Carter's case, or the shift of strategic focus, as in the case of Obama (Paterson,2018:6).

### **E. A SOFT POWER TOOLS.**

The international order protects U.S. values by maintaining an environment in which the ideals of a free and democratic society, like that of the United States, can be applied. First, it demands that the U.S. takes the responsibility of world leadership through accepting risks, and bringing order and justice, by means that are consistent with the principles of freedom and democracy. Successive U.S. administrations have repeatedly referred to the liberal democratic character of the desired U.S.-led international order. As a result, the United States has sought to strengthen the order by encouraging states to democratize, liberalize, and integrate into shared institutions (Michael et. al,2016:45).

## ***3.2. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY TOOLS AND MECHANISMS***

Qatar attempts to take advantage of foreign opportunities to create its own image as an important player in the international arena. State branding is a survival technique used by many small countries to distinguish themselves, whether regionally or internationally. Qatar depends on different tools in the success of its foreign policy, as follows:

### **3.2.1. THE SOFT POWER TOOLS.**

Hard power was previously the prevailing view; it differs from soft power that is based on attracting others to shared desires and needs. It can be



realized in terms of cultural components, perceived legitimacy, cultural engagements, literature, and education that share information, ideologies, and nation reputation to influence others beyond domestic boundaries (Rookwood,2019:30). Al Jazeera satellite television channel is the other tool of soft power adopted by Qatar in boosting its regional influence. It is a remarkably effective tool for promoting Qatar's image and practices (El Etreby,2014:25). Established as one of Qatar's private satellite stations, the station has been granted editorial freedom by the Qatari government, in addressing the utmost critical and debatable issues. Hence, this medium has become one of the most popular channels in the region and the Middle East (Stasz et al.2007:10). It plays a vital role in boosting Qatar's mediating efforts, enables Qatar to maintain communication channels with a wide range of actors, and serves as a bridge between conflicting parties (Barakat,2014:6). Qatar invests heavily in Al Jazeera's ability -as a new soft power- to reach record audiences, and put Qatar on the map. During his first tour to Washington in 1997, Sheikh Hamad emphasized that Qatar needed greater openness to 'secure itself in the future,' in addition to state autonomy, and a new external promotion to Qatari identity, nationally and internationally. This is what is called 'the Al Jazeera Effect' (Miller et al,2020:18). State branding through soft power helps to create long-term mutual interdependencies that can reinforce security and stability, and give other countries a powerful argument in maintaining strong relations with Qatar. Al Jazeera has soon become a useful tool for disseminating the Qatari image and culture to the rest of the Arab world (Mohammadzadeh,2017:32).

Furthermore, Qatar is currently heavily investing in the sports sector by hosting prestigious sporting events, such as the Asian Games, the handball and the football World Cups, as well as promoting the sports success via local and naturalized athletes, and investing in famous sports clubs abroad. Qatar uses sports as a domestic and foreign policy tool to build relations with as many countries and people around the world as possible, in order to gain soft power, and maintain national security (Reiche,2014:8). Hosting the World Cup 2022 is another practice of soft power, and nation branding of Qatar. The Cup used to be hosted by countries with high populations, football traditions, and infrastructures. Therefore, it is such a significant event for a powerful small state committed to branding itself as a modern center of world sports.



It can be seen as the ultimate sports event in the Middle East for the first time, and an achievement. (Rookwood,2019:29).

### **3.2.2. THE MEDIATION ROLE IN REGIONAL DISPUTES (DIPLOMATIC TOOL)**

Mediation is an important feature of Qatar's foreign policy to overcome its limited demographic, geographic, and military capabilities. It serves main goals related to branding and enhancing Qatar's soft power, and global image, as well as expanding its influence as a regional player, particularly compared to Saudi Arabia. Additionally, for Qatar, mediation is considered a "survival strategy" to support its security and stability, and prevent others from getting closer to its borders, especially Iran, in light of the role played by Iran in those conflicts, and in the Gulf (Abu Sulaib, 2017:39, Khatib, 2013:420). Qatar's mediation efforts have come as part of the state's attempts to brand itself, while boosting its international reputation (Barakat, 2014:10). Qatar has adopted an apparent policy of mediating disputes throughout the region to make itself appear as an important player in regional politics. Thus, Qatar's foreign policy has presented much more than the military alliance (Haykel,2013,2).

One of these various mediation initiatives in foreign policy is Qatar's engagement in conflict resolution in Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, Libya, and Iraq, among the other cases over the last fifteen years as Qatar's most famous success as mediator was realized in Lebanon conflict in 2008 that granted Qatar a great credibility. Sheikh Hamad and his Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jasim with his delegation could achieve an agreement establishing longstanding peace between Hezbollah and the other parties in a conflict where the Arab League, the UN, and France had failed to resolve previously (Cavusoglu,2016:15). So, It has not been successful in many of these diplomatic efforts, such as in Yemen, yet succeeded in others, such as in Lebanon (Haykel,2013: 2). In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Qatar has been involved many times between Hamas and Fatah to reach a reconciliation (Barakat,2012:14). Moreover, Qatar has mediated the talks between the conflicting parties in Darfur in 2003, and was heavily involved in the negotiations by hosting the Mediation, as a result of its good relations with the government of both parties, thanks to its humanitarian aid to the Darfuri population, and the legitimacy of Qatari policy makers in the eyes of both parties during the negotiations to end the conflict in Darfur. Doha Document

for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) is the result of two and half years of negotiations (Gaiballa,2017: 8).

The common assumption in international relations was that small states are expected to play a background role in conflict resolution. However, the main goal of small states being a mediator is to commit to peace as part of “state branding” that reinforces their soft power, or cultural influence, since they do not possess the hard power essentialities utilized by large states. Moreover, their real influence is based mainly on the power of persuasion and negotiation (Barakat,2014:23). However, Qatar’s mediation is organized, and its efforts are equivalent to its branding strategy to enhance Qatar’s international reputation. Yet, mediation is also a self-interested strategy intended to maximize influence by maintaining close relations, and open channels of communication with friends as well as adversaries (Kamrava,2011:540).

### 3.2.3. THE ECONOMIC TOOL

In the 1990s, Qatar has become one of the world's wealthiest countries after producing natural gas. Such wealth emerges primarily from the international sale of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and crude oil; Qatar is the world’s largest distributor of the former, and third largest supplier of the latter (Rookwood,2019:27, Cavusoglu,2016:18, Mohammadzadeh,2017:20). Qatar’s per capita income is considered the highest among the GCC member states; it is about \$130,000 which is more than double that of the USA. Oil and gas account for more than 60% of the GDP (Qatar GDP is \$334 billion), and 70% of government revenues. Qatar’s proved reserves of natural gas exceed 25 trillion cubic meters, which is the third largest reserve in the world, with Growth Rate of 2.6%. The most important export partner is Japan, and the largest import partner is the United States (Stasz, et al.2007:20, Katzman,2017:19). Consequently, with this highly beneficial combination of small population, massive wealth, and fast-paced economic development, Qatar has emerged as an important diplomatic power broker, with a high-profile mediation initiative aiming to brand itself for achieving a status of international significance.

### 3.2.4. STRATEGIC DEFENSE AND SECURITY ALLIANCES

The relationship between the U.S. and Qatar is great evidence of Qatar’s ability to intersect itself with the strategic interests of the dominant

powers. Qatar is adept at understanding international trends, and like sea-waves rides them to its concern (Izevbogie,2019:67).

### 3.2.5. THE POLITICAL AND DECISION-MAKING TOOL

Analyzing Qatar's transformation according to its distinctive policies and achievements is a process in which elements of strategic depth are employed. Historical factors and leadership are considered the key factors in analyzing this distinctive transformation (Cavusoglu,2016:19). Leadership style is one of the most influential determinants when it comes to foreign policy of a country (Ossorio,2021:100). Ultimate decisions are concentrated in the hands of a small number of individuals in Doha. The personalized leadership style, and the flexible nature of Qatar's state institutions make the foreign policy less institutionally determined, and face more twists and turns. Overcoming security issue, and achieving economic independence do not happen because of vulnerability mitigation, but occur through the ambitious foreign policy elite (Ossorio,2021:112). Qatar's decision makers had to find a suitable strategy to help them adopt a foreign policy independent of the influence of the two regional poles, Iran and Saudi Arabia, by attempting to remain independent, while enjoying an influential regional role (Kabalan,2019:70). Qatar has moved from a mediator-integrator role to an active-independent one. Emir Hamad was skillful in distinguishing Qatar as a regional power, by keeping himself far from the traditional GCC neighbors. Moreover, his engagement in the Arab Spring marks his passage from mediator to actor to activist. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 2013, Emir Tamim attempted to readjust Qatari foreign policy by adopting a more pragmatic, and a less interventionist policy in regional issues, in order to maintain Qatar's independent foreign policy making. The policy would seek to take a more cooperative and multilateral approach, yet less ideological than in the past (Mohammadzadeh,2017:29).

Hence, Qatar's foreign policy cannot be analyzed, or its influential regional role understood without considering the personal characteristics of the decision-making elite. As the new leadership adopts an active foreign policy that bypasses political and economic concerns, and ambition to play an influential regional role at the international level, it seeks to extract the utmost benefit from the country's wealth and natural riches, and to employ them to serve a foreign policy agenda.

## **Section VI- The Current and Future Trajectories of the U.S-Qatari Relationship**

This section discusses the importance of Qatar's status and position for the different U.S, successive administrations, and the American policies and situations towards Qatar as a strategic ally in the region, especially in times of tension. In addition, the current and the future of American-Qatari relationship is explained as a main contribution of this study.

### ***4.1. QATAR IN U.S SUCCESSIVE ADMINISTRATIONS VISION.***

Qatar is the most important U.S. strategic country, as the U.S. has paid a great deal of attention to the Middle East in general, and the Gulf region in particular. The American interest in the Gulf region began in the 1970, after the British withdrawal from the region, followed by the Nixon Doctrine based on two pillars, namely Iran and Saudi Arabia, to be responsible for the Gulf security. Hence, USA took Britain's place. After the Iranian revolution in 1979, Carter Doctrine was announced, based on which any attempt by an external power to control the Gulf region would be considered a direct threat to the American interests, and would be faced by all means including military ones (Al-Qahtani,2018:9). To well understand the foreign policy towards Qatar, the U.S foreign policy towards the Gulf region should be explained, as Qatar is a foremost GCC member.

#### ***Usa Policy Towards The Gulf After September 11, 2001***

The events of September 11 were a turning point in the U.S. foreign policy towards the Gulf region in general, and towards Qatar in particular. According to the American viewpoint, the gulf region moved from the region exporting oil to the one exporting terrorism. This shift led to the tension in the relationships between the U.S. and some Gulf countries. As a result, the U.S. put the Gulf region under a series of different pressures (Al-Qahtani,2018:10).

#### ***Bush's doctrine towards the Gulf and Qatar (2001-2009)***

The main constants of the Bush doctrine towards the Gulf region are the stability of this vital region through three points. The first was the proactive war in which the USA would attack an enemy nation, or a terrorist group before they had a chance to attack the USA. The second was that the USA would take a defensive action, unilateral and alone, if necessary, to

defend itself either internally or externally. The third point included spreading freedom and democracy all over the world, focusing on concepts such as free markets, free trade, and individual liberty. In this light, Qatar's defense is almost wholly dependent on, and not apart from the United States security umbrella (Banerjee,2020,222). The Qatari leadership realizes that the U.S. is the power that can protect it from Saudi Arabia, Iran, and any other foreign military threats, therefore considers itself an important Washington ally in the region. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. decided to turn its military forces from Saudi Arabia to Qatar, and the latter was more than happy to host the U.S. Central Command's forward headquarters in the al-UDEID air base. Qatar even contributed significant sums to the construction of that base (Haykel,2013:2).

The Bush administration failed to use the mechanisms of hard power, such as the military option, imposing democracy and pressure on regimes to push them towards the political reform, and achieve the objective of the US foreign policy (Al-Qahtani,2018:14).

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#### *Obama's doctrine towards the Gulf and Qatar (2009-2017)*

The Obama doctrine started in 2009 with a new policy towards the Gulf region, which depended on Iran as a critical partner. The Obama administration attempted to move to the soft power mechanisms of the U.S. foreign policy, such as dialogue, negotiations, and partnership, which emerged after the outbreak of the Arab Spring revolutions. For instance, the USA held a nuclear agreement with Iran in July 2015, which may affect the security of the Gulf region. However, Obama did not fully abandon the military mechanisms or realism to protect USA's concerns abroad (Fraihat,2020:10). However, when Barack Obama came to power, there were different external threats. Therefore, the beliefs and perceptions of the decision-maker were based on the use of soft power, in order to get closer to the Middle East and the Arab world. Yet, the events of the Arab Spring changed the U.S. foreign policy, which led to the occurrence of tensions between the USA and the Gulf countries. After the revolution of January 25, 2011, the USA supported the Muslim Brotherhood (Al-Qahtani,2018:14).

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#### *Trump's doctrine towards the Gulf and Qatar (2017- 2021)*

Qatar seems to have come out of the blockade all the stronger. The blockade of Qatar has clearly confirmed its vulnerability, and the success of its perseverance strategy, because Qatar has been able to face the negative

repercussions of the blockade, and has been able to win measurable political and economic support from international countries as well (Roberts, 2017:7). Additionally, the United States and Qatar signed a broad memorandum of understanding to cooperate against international terrorism (Katzman, 2021:17). In order to maintain its security during the blockade of 2017, it was noticeable that Qatar's position is in the safe zone thanks to hosting the U.S. in its El Udied military base in Doha, as well as the support from Turkey and Iran in preparation for any immediate actions, as a result of the high tension in the region that might arise at any time (Wahyuni, 2018:85). During the 2017 blockade period, Qatar's foreign policy adopted a new strategy based on establishing relations with essential actors in the region, such as Iran and Turkey. The USA, many international powers, and the European Union aimed to prevent crisis escalation, and advocated a negotiated solution to the crisis. The USA's position was probably influenced by the fact that Qatar is the site of CENTCOM's forward headquarters, and by Qatar's announcement of a deal to purchase weapons and F-15 fighter jets for twelve billion dollars (Capaccio, et al, 2017). The U.S. appointed a Special Envoy to the Gulf specifically to negotiate a possible resolution with the parties, with a former commander in the U.S. Central Command. However, there was no forward action on resolving the conflict between Qatar and its Gulf neighbors (Fraihat, 2020:9). Unlike Trump's support for the blockading countries in his first statement, on the first day of the crisis, the U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson treated the crisis as a priority for his foreign policy agenda. He believed that the crisis did not help the Gulf states or Washington in dealing with the security challenges both parties face. He stated that "restoring the unity of Gulf nations remains in the interest of all parties in the region," and advocated these countries to "immediately take steps to de-escalate the situation and put forth a good faith effort to resolve the grievances they have with each other" (Fraihat, 2020:11).

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### *Biden's doctrine towards the Gulf and Qatar (2021- now)*

On December 27th, 2020, the foreign Ministers of the GCC countries met virtually to establish a roadmap, and resolve the conflict at the council's annual summit in January 2021. The summit, held in Riyadh, concluded with the signing of the Al-Ula Declaration, ending a four-year blockade on Qatar. Qatar agreed to drop its pursuit of legal cases against those countries in international organizations. The intra-GCC reconciliation process has

proceeded. Saudi Arabia's pressure to end the disagreement with Doha responds to the need to reduce tensions with the Biden administration, which promised to review bilateral relations with Riyadh (Ossorio,2021:97, Katzman,2021:14).

To recap, the U.S. foreign policy towards the Gulf region did not change despite the different implementation mechanisms, changes in the nature of the stage, and leadership change because the U.S. foreign policy has constant and continuous interests. For example, although the events of September 11 led to tension occurrence between the USA and the Gulf countries under the Bush administration, and despite the conclusion of the nuclear agreement between international powers, including the USA under the Obama administration, the relations between the Gulf region and the USA did not change, and the USA is still committed to the security of the Gulf. Thus, successive American administrations have recognized the USA's interests in the region as a source of U.S. energy supplies, a strategic military base of operations, and as a site of U.S. foreign policy influence, through the relationship with individual small states, especially Qatar.

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## **4.2. CURRENT U.S- QATAR CO-OPERATION**

The cooperation between Qatar's policy makers and the United States is mainly directed towards securing the Persian Gulf, as do the other GCC leaders. This cooperation takes different levels, as follows:

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### **4.2.1. DEFENSE AND SECURITY COOPERATION**

The United States and Qatar have had a formal Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1992, which was renewed for 10 years with some modifications, in December 2013; this includes the U.S. troop presence in Qatar, U.S. arms sales to Qatar, U.S. training, and other defense cooperation. Additionally, under the DCA, Qatar hosts more than 8,000 U.S. forces, and is the regional headquarters for U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) at various military facilities, including the large Al Udeid Air Base (Katzman,2021:15).

#### **A. AL UDEID AIR BASE (AIR FORCE/CENTCOM)**

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The Al-Udeid is the largest overseas air base used by the United States with two active runways capable of handling every aircraft in the US inventory, besides great fueling and ammunition storage abilities. Moreover, the base houses the forward headquarters of the U.S. Special Operations Central Command (SOCCENT), and the U.S. Air Forces Central Command



(AFCENT) with their advanced command and control infrastructures. This complex has been built over 14 years, with much of the funding provided by Qatar. In conjunction with U.S.-Iran tensions since mid-2019, the United States deployed F-22 combat aircraft to Al Udeid (Ossorio,2021:100).

In his report, confirmed that the U.S.-Qatar Strategic Dialogue has produced agreements to expand defense and security cooperation, including the possibility of “permanent” U.S. basing at Al Udeid over the next two decades (Izevbigie,2019:33). During the second U.S.-Qatar Strategic Dialogue in January 2019, the Qatar Ministry of Defense and the U.S. Department of Defense signed a memorandum of understanding to support sustainment costs, and future infrastructure costs at Al Udeid Air Base. As highlighted in the September 2020 U.S.- Qatar strategic Dialogue joint statement, the U.S. and Qatar emphasize the vital contribution provided by their defense partnership for the security and stability of the region (Katzman,2021:17).

## **B. U.S. ARMS SALES TO QATAR**

According to the defense security cooperation agency 2019, and the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. has over \$26 billion in active government-to-government cases with Qatar, under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) system, making Qatar the second largest FMS partner in the world. Recent and significant FMS sales include Integrated Air & Missile Defense System, the Patriot long-range missile system, the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System, and the AN/FPS-132 Early Warning Radar; F-15QA fighter aircraft — the most advanced F-15 in production; and AH-64E Apache attack helicopters. Each of these programs includes facility construction, extended munitions, logistics, and training support (Capaccio, et al, 2017).

### **4.2.2. COUNTER-TERRORISM COOPERATION**

Although the U.S.-Qatar relationship started to be stronger after the signing of the 1972 defense alliance agreement, Qatar's willingness to cooperate with the U.S. in the famous “war against terror” deepened this relationship, as Qatar followed the international “anti-terror wave” with keen interest (Izevbigie,2019:25). Qatar and the United States signed a bilateral CT Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in July 2017 to deepen their counterterrorism (CT) cooperation. In May 2017, Qatar became a member of the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC), a collaborative effort among Gulf countries to formalize cooperation on terrorist financing (Feiler,



et al.,2017:23). The memorandum outlines several procedures that the U.S. and Qatari governments will each take in this regard to further eliminate terrorist financing networks, and address global terrorist activities more broadly (Dr. Levitt, 2017:7). In November 2018, Qatar began using its own funds to pay for a three-year U.S. Department of State Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) training program, including a training pertinent to Qatar's preparations to host the FIFA World Cup in 2022. There were no terrorist incidents in Qatar in 2019 or 2020 (Rookwood,2019:36). In addition, the Qatari government passed a new AML/CFT (anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism) law in 2019, and sought feedback from the International Monetary Fund, and the U.S. government during the drafting process (Akkas,2021:545).

#### **4.2.3. U.S.-QATAR ECONOMIC RELATIONS**

The Qatar American Institute (2020) reported that Qatar is the world's top exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG), with annual sales estimated at \$180 billion. The LNG sector in Doha is led by American companies that have brought U.S. expertise and investments into the field. Qatar Airways fleet is composed largely of Boeing aircraft. The \$92 billion that Qatar Airways adds to the U.S. economy through Boeing purchases create over half a million American jobs. Qatar's sovereign wealth fund manages \$335 billion in the U.S. According to the U.S. Statistics of foreign trade in 2020, U.S. exports to Qatar are estimated at \$3.4 billion in terms of aircraft, machinery, and information technology. U.S. imports from Qatar are about \$1.2 billion, consisting mainly of petroleum products (Katzman,2021:15). Regarding the U.S. Assistance, Qatar receives virtually no U.S. assistance due to its wealth. At times, small amounts of U.S. aid have been provided to help Qatar develop capabilities to prevent smuggling of arms and narcotics (Jaganathan, 2021).

#### **4.3. THE FUTURE TRAJECTORIES OF THE U.S.-QATARI RELATIONSHIP.**

Based on the analysis mentioned above, it is apparent that the U.S.-Qatar security relationship is essential for achieving common security objectives in the region. The common goal of the United States and Qatar is working together to establish a stable and secure region, partnering on different issues. Identifying the features of the future U.S.-Qatar partnership depends on some indicators, at different military, economic, or cultural levels. The U.S. foreign policy under the Joe Biden administration is perceived to

focus more on building positive relations with regional alliances, maintaining the U.S. position by setting norms and rules, and building institutions to reinforce America's position (Grabowski,2021:8). However, the U.S. under Biden's administration needs to make fundamental changes to its security efforts in the Persian/Arab Gulf and the Middle East, create a new structure of deterrence and defense in the Gulf by rebuilding and strengthening its security partnerships with the GCC, especially Qatar, and to address a wide range of new security issues beyond extremism, and issues like the Israeli-Palestinian peace process (Cordesman,2021:17).

### *At the military level*

Qatar financed the U.S. Al-Udeid with nearly one billion dollars, making it the largest U.S. base in the region. Qatar, in this regard, views the base as a tool for its security. It is more than an airbase to Qatar, because in its strategic calculations, the base is a deterrent against enemies and potential invaders. Qatar's willingness to host U.S. troops and allies on its land is a major factor that makes the small state of Qatar strategic to the U.S. militarily, hence strengthening the partnership between both states (Gulf Studies Center Report:2020). Moreover, the USCENTCOM – the key U.S. command in Qatar – provides a tangible, real-world structure for rebuilding and strengthening the U.S. strategic partnerships in the region. It is the U.S. key tool in carrying out such efforts, and rebuilding effective partnerships, and military capabilities. Nevertheless, there are still real opportunities for building a more stable structure of deterrence and defense. USCENTCOM has maintained strong military-to-military relationships. Besides, the end of the Quartet boycott of Qatar offers a major new chance to create collaborative forces and collective security (Cordesman,2021:12). In addition, the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act has authorized \$790 million for military construction projects for Al Udeid, pursuant to an agreement with the State of Qatar for the required in-kind contributions. In 2018, the State Department approved the sale of equipment of an estimated value of about \$200 million to Qatar, in order to upgrade its Air Operation Center (Katzman,2021:15). On Monday, the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 2022, President Biden designates Qatar as a “major non-NATO ally” of the United States, which clears the way for greater security cooperation and investment in the Gulf nation, at a time when Mr. Biden seeks help boosting the natural gas supplies in Europe, and reassuring

allies that they will not face shortages in case war between Ukraine and Russia breaks out, since Qatar is a major natural gas provider (Shear,2022).

### *At the economic level*

Qatar's sovereign wealth fund manages \$335 billion, and plans to invest \$45 billion in the U.S. in the next three years (The Qatar American Institute Report,2021). Its large oil and gas reserves, and its small citizen population have combined to make Qatar the country with the world's highest per capita income. Oil and gas still account for over 90% of Qatar's export revenues, and over half of the government revenues. Proven oil reserves of about 25 billion barrels enable Qatar to continue its current levels of oil production (about 700,000 barrels per day) for over 50 years. Its proven reserves of natural gas are about 13% of the world's total, while it is the second largest exporter of natural gas in the world (Jaganathan,2021). The joint statement of a 2018 U.S.-Qatar Strategic Dialogue "recognized" the commitment of Qatar's investment authority with \$45 billion in future investments in U.S. companies and real estate (Katzman,2021:19). Qatar Petroleum has announced in early 2021 that it will boost LNG output by about 40% by 2026, through expansion projects at its North Field. Qatar has not reduced its gas supplies to the other GCC states due to the blockade (Jaganathan,2021).

### *At the sports and educational levels*

The U.S. and international reports, investigating Qatar as its hosting of the World Cup approaches in 2022, criticize Qatar for not meeting international standards of labor right practices. However, taking steps towards improving the conditions of expatriate workers reinforces Qatar's position (Rookwood,2019:37). Different U.S. universities, such as Cornell University, Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University, Brookings Institution, and Rand Corporation have established branches and offices at Qatar Foundation's Education City outside Doha (Katzman,2021:20).

Based on the aforementioned, Qatar is a key partner of the U.S. multilateral efforts in the region at different levels. The United States works with the GCC to increase cooperation in security, military preparedness, arms transfer, cybersecurity issues, counterterrorism, etc.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study provides an analysis of two different foreign policies for great and small powers. As explained in this paper, small-state foreign policy adopts one of two fundamental perspectives to protect themselves; one of which is forming alliances with great powers in their regional systems to confront a larger power, while the other is small states joining a larger power that takes charge of protecting them. Hence, Qatar is an interesting example to prove how existing and potential capacities of a small state can be transformed into power, with the employment of strategic components under a very efficient leadership. This explains how Qatar can strategically intersect itself with dominant powers, in a way that makes it difficult for these states to ignore its valuable weight to them. By reviewing all the U.S. foreign policy strategies and practices, especially in the Gulf region, it is apparent that the U.S. main objective is to protect its concerns and interests in the most strategic region in the world. Thus, the U.S. must always reassure its allies that it will maintain its deployed forces, in order to create an effective security structure, stress the creation of cost-effective forces, and consult with its partners concerning the strategic and essential security affairs.

The U.S. recognizes that it faces direct strategic challenges, particularly in the Gulf region, from different international powers, such as Russia, China, and – to a lesser extent – Turkey, leading to a great competition concerning, for example, the growing Russian presence in Syria, and the new Russian and Chinese cooperation efforts to sell arms and technical support to America's strategic partners in the region. These challenges from Iran and Turkey, as well as from the extremists, in addition to the Russian and Chinese pressures provide the U.S. with the great opportunity to make USCENTCOM the focus. Therefore, the U.S. will take over the regional defense and security mission, in case it focuses on enhancing such capabilities, and treats its partners with the adequate respect. The U.S. consistently attempts to face these challenges by limiting its direct confrontation, and adapting its own foreign policy, in order to avoid major conflicts, while strengthening its strategic allies inside such an important region.

Qatar considers this base as a way of intersecting itself with the security interest of the U.S. Qatar has learned to position itself with the interest of great powers, as to be highly valuable to them. This has been a

traditional pattern in Qatar's international relations history. Hence, Qatar consider itself a key international ally to the U.S. in exchange of three benefits. Firstly, it gets security in such a volatile region by hosting the al-Udeid U.S. Air Force. Secondly, Qatar realizes its goal of establishing itself as a state with a competitive international economy beyond an oil-based economy, paying more attention to gas exports as an effective foreign policy tool. Thirdly, international alliances direct the attention away from Qatar's own shortcomings, and focus on its position as a strategic ally.

One of the main results of this study is concluding that despite Qatar's close relationship with the United States, the relationship has not prevented Qatar from developing its own foreign policy. In other words, Qatar can be seen to resume a largely activist and independent foreign policy, even though the state has enjoyed a formal defense cooperation with the United States since 1991, and hosts the CENTCOM Headquarters on its land. Therefore, Qatar is a key partner of the U.S. that invests heavily to modernize its military, protect itself from external assaults, and increase its military capability, in order to participate effectively in regional security efforts. Furthermore, Qatar has at sometimes used its military forces in its interventions. It has moved to an influential and active foreign policy at the international level, and towards being a state with political stability at the domestic level. This activist foreign policy provides economic and political gains, besides security. Qatar's foreign policy is usually understood through its intensive branding for the state. In this regard, Qatar is internationally well recognized through the promotion of its image as an international sponsor of educational, cultural, and sports events with little cost, which accelerates the state branding process in a way that attracts business and international investors, although Qatar is willing to go beyond its commercial providence.

Another distinctive feature of the Qatari foreign policy is the promotion of culture, education, and sport through Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development, according to Qatar National Vision 2030. It is considered a main strategy for branding a positive image of Qatar on an international level. The distinctive tool of the new Qatari foreign policy is its adoption of the mediator-integrator role, especially in regional conflicts. Qatar's mediation efforts should work towards building the Qatari brand, by ensuring lasting agreements. Mediation can be recognized in terms of building a reputation as a peacemaker, which intersects with the

state's intensive financial capacity to offer financial incentives to conflicting parties, leading to Qatar being a mediator for several peace negotiations. Its abundant financial resources support its foreign policy, attempting to influence outcomes in the region, and enabling Qatar to mediate some regional conflicts. In addition, Qatar's humanitarian work plays a great role in reinforcing its existing political engagement, and new foreign policy, and will assist the country in considering legitimacy as a mediator.

The development of Qatari-U.S. relations, particularly in the field of security and defense, is significant because it settles many critical security issues for the United States, as the regional and bilateral issues are reportedly the focus of high-level U.S.-Qatar meetings. The main goal of U.S. foreign policy is to protect the American interests in the region, which is reflected in the recent events concerning the normalization of relations between Israel, UAE, and Bahrain in September 2020, as derived from the common will to face Iranian expansionism in the region, and the decisive mediation by the Trump administration in this normalization process. Few months later, GCC countries signed the Al-Ula Declaration, ending the boycott responding to the need of the new Biden administration to reduce tensions in the region.

## **FUTURE AGENDA**

The present study recommends further relevant research, including studies on the influence of the Russian-Chinese rapprochement on Qatar's foreign policy, the effects of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis on the future of the U.S.- Qatari relationship, and the impacts of Qatar joining the NATO on restrengthening the relationships with the U.S.

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