

Sources of decision-making and determinants of Saudi foreign policy

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Summary

The Horn of Africa is a vital maritime gateway overlooking the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, making it of paramount importance to maritime security, particularly with regard to the passage of oil tankers and global trade. Saudi Arabia is keen to secure these waterways to ensure stable energy supplies and protect its economic interests.

Saudi Arabia seeks to strengthen its presence in the Horn of Africa to confront security challenges such as terrorist threats and piracy. It also aims to limit the influence of some competing regional powers and ensure stability in the region, which will positively impact the Kingdom's security. Saudi Arabia invests in infrastructure, agriculture, and ports in the Horn of Africa, as the Kingdom's economic interests are linked to exploiting the region's natural resources and emerging markets.

To enhance its influence, the Kingdom played a role in the reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2018, strengthening its position as an influential regional power based on the import of agricultural products and livestock from the Horn of Africa. This makes enhancing stability there essential to ensuring the continued flow of these resources.

Therefore, the Horn of Africa region remains a key focus of the Kingdom's foreign policy, whether through enhancing security and economic investment or by playing a mediating role in conflict resolution.

Keynote: Saudi Arabia, Horn of Africa, Terrorist Threats, Regional Powers, Decision-Making.

INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia is working to expand its economic relations with the countries of the Horn of Africa through investments in various sectors, such as agriculture, energy, and infrastructure. This falls within the framework of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which seeks to diversify sources of income and strengthen international partnerships. Therefore, Saudi Arabia is investing in infrastructure, agriculture, and ports in the Horn of Africa, as the Kingdom's economic interests are linked to leveraging the region's natural resources and emerging markets.

To enhance its influence, the Kingdom played a role in the reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2018, strengthening its position as an influential regional power, relying on the import of agricultural products and livestock from the Horn of Africa. This makes enhancing stability there essential to ensuring the continued flow of these resources. Therefore, the Horn of Africa region remains a key focus of the Kingdom's foreign policy, whether through enhancing security, economic investment, or mediating conflict resolution.

First: Sources of decision-making in Saudi foreign policy.

The political system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on Islam and Islamic law. This political system is not governed by a written constitution as is common and applied in other political systems, but rather it is governed by the Holy Quran⁽¹⁾. Although the Basic Law of Governance, which was issued in the Kingdom in 1992, serves as the country's constitution.

⁽²⁾Article Seven of it states that the government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia derives its authority from the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, which govern all state systems.

⁽³⁾The system of government in the Kingdom is hereditary, with the ruling family dominating the executive and legislative authorities, and to some extent the judiciary. The system of government derives its legitimacy from two basic sources: Islam and tribal traditions⁽⁴⁾. The political system in the Kingdom remains committed to the pact concluded in 1744 between the Emir of Najd, Muhammad ibn Saud, and the preacher Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, founder of the religious reform movement known as Wahhabism. The political system still relies on two main

pillars in exercising power: the first is the Al Saud family, whose members number between 5,000 and 7,000 princes and princesses⁽⁵⁾.

Among them are senior officials who still play a decisive role in the kingdom's political decision-making. Second in the line of succession are religious scholars, most of whom are members of the Al Sheikh family, descended from Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab⁽⁶⁾. In addition to Saudi religious scholars who belong to other families.⁽⁷⁾

The sources of political decision-making in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia consist of the following institutions:

1. The King:

The "King" began to crystallize as an actual political institution with the issuance of Royal Decree No. 2716 on September 18, 1932, approving the renaming of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia instead of the Kingdom of Nejd and Hejaz and its Dependencies. King Abdulaziz Al Saud ruled from the capital, Riyadh⁽⁸⁾.

He appointed political governors to administer the regions and issued them direct instructions according to the requirements of each region⁽⁹⁾. The king is the supreme authority and the reference in organizational, political and administrative affairs. He is bound by the provisions of Islamic law in accordance with what is stated in the Holy Qur'an and the Noble Prophetic Sunnah and what the noble Companions and righteous predecessors followed⁽¹⁰⁾.

This role assigned to the King was practically deepened by his assumption of the position of Prime Minister, as he must be in direct contact with the general conditions in the country and have the final say in most of the decisions and policies issued by the Council of Ministers⁽¹¹⁾. This amendment to the position of the king took place after King Faisal bin Abdulaziz (1964-1975) assumed the rule of the country, and King Khalid bin Abdulaziz (1975-1982), King Fahd bin Abdulaziz (1982-2005), King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz (2005-2015), and King Salman bin Abdulaziz (2015) followed this, so the position of the king combines the supreme head of state and the head of the Shura Council, which was held by⁽¹²⁾ Until 1992, when the new Shura Council was issued, which made the head of the Shura Council other than (the king), despite the latter's selection of the head of the Shura Council and its members.⁽¹³⁾

The Royal Court:

The Royal Court is one of the most important decision-making centers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is the King's executive office, the source of authority, and the direct reference for all state affairs. The Royal Court includes the offices of the King's advisors for foreign and domestic policy, religious affairs, international relations, national security, and royal protocol. In addition, the King's private office operates from this office. The King conducts most government affairs, including the drafting of regulations and royal decrees. In addition, the King receives high-ranking state guests at the Royal Court. It is also customary for the King to receive citizens to submit personal requests for intervention to redress grievances or assist in private matters against the state bureaucracy.⁽¹⁴⁾

Since the establishment of the Royal Court during the reign of the founding king, Abdulaziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud, until King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the head of the Royal Court has had and continues to have a major role in shaping the Kingdom's domestic and foreign policy.⁽¹⁵⁾ This is done by following up on the work of the specialized centers and departments affiliated with the Royal Court, including the Decision Support Center, which is organizationally affiliated with the Court. Its mission is to make decisions and public policies and support decision-making in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and to improve its effectiveness and efficiency in various fields, through scientific and practical mechanisms and means that support decision-making. Likewise, the Private Affairs of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, as a government agency, is responsible for managing the private affairs of the King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.⁽¹⁶⁾

Crown Prince:

This position is new, as it was first created in 2014 during the reign of King Abdullah. The crown prince position came as a compromise to transfer power to the second generation.⁽¹⁷⁾

There is a common feature among all forms of monarchy, which is what is known as the “system of inheritance of the throne.” What distinguishes the inheritance of the throne in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is that the inheritance is not compulsory, like the traditional monarchy, which limits the inheritance of the throne to the eldest son.⁽¹⁸⁾ .

In addition, many factors point to the institution of the succession to the throne in the Allegiance Council, which is a body established by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz in 2006, consisting of a council whose members represent the male sons of King Abdulaziz, and each member has one vote, and their mission is to elect the king and the crown prince by secret ballot and to ensure their ability to carry out their duties. Recently, the mission of electing the crown prince was added to it.⁽¹⁹⁾ .

The tradition in Saudi Arabia is to limit the inheritance of the throne to the sons of King Abdulaziz, so the throne is taken over by brother after brother, not son after father, with preference given to the eldest. The crown prince position requires the availability of qualities and conditions specified by Islamic jurisprudence, which are.⁽²⁰⁾ :

_Physical sufficiency.

_Scientific sufficiency.

_Justice.

_Courage.

_And above all, he must be of the people of complete authority.

The Council of Ministers:

The Council of Ministers is the second official authority in the state hierarchy after the King. It assumes both legislative and executive functions, in addition to its important role in political decision-making for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, both domestically and internationally. This is stipulated in Article (18) of the Council of Ministers Law of 1958, which states that the Council of Ministers formulates domestic, foreign, financial, economic, educational, and defense policy. International treaties and agreements are not considered valid without its approval, and its decisions are final, except for those that require the issuance of a royal order or decree.⁽²¹⁾ .The Council of Ministers has become one of the most powerful bodies of the political system in the Kingdom, as it enjoys broad powers and derives its strength from its close connection to the King, after the latter became Prime Minister since King Faisal bin Abdulaziz assumed power and ascended the throne, and the Crown Prince became Deputy Prime Minister⁽²²⁾ .King Khalid and King Fahd followed this approach, which was enshrined in the Basic Law of Governance and the King's powers in the Council of Ministers. The King is the Prime Minister and appoints the Deputy Prime Ministers, as well as the ministers who are members of the Council of Ministers, the Deputy Ministers, and those in excellent ranks, and relieves them of their positions by royal decree. The King has the power to dissolve the Council of Ministers and reconstitute it⁽²³⁾ .

Shura Council:

The Shura Council in the Kingdom consisted of between 60 and 90 members, headed by the King. It was merely an advisory council appointed by the King and accountable to the King, not the people. Therefore, it had influence over the political decision-making process⁽²⁴⁾ .

After the issuance of the political system, it came to include 120 members and a president chosen by the King from among people of knowledge, experience and expertise. The Shura Council expresses its opinion and advice on the general policies of the state that are referred to it by the Prime Minister. The President of the Shura Council can also submit to the Prime Minister a request to attend the Shura Council sessions. The Shura Council system also stipulates that every ten members of the Shura Council have the right to propose a new system or amend an existing system and present it to the President of the Shura Council. The President of the Council must present the proposal to the King. The term of the Shura Council is four Hijri years, and the new Shura Council is formed at least two months before the end of its predecessor. If a member wishes to resign, he submits his resignation to the President of the Council, who in turn presents it to the King. If a member becomes vacant for any reason, the King chooses a member to replace him⁽²⁵⁾ .

The National Security Council

Also known as the Supreme Defense Council, has an official responsibility for setting defense policy. The Council's members include Saad Al-Nasser Al-Sudairy, the Secretary-General, who was appointed by a royal decree in 2006. The National Security Council is an advisory body that prepares strategic studies on political, economic, and security affairs. As a result, its recommendations are submitted directly to the King, who takes some decisions related to what is submitted to him, in light of the results reached by the Council, which is the backbone of the state through its members who represent all the pivotal joints of the state ⁽²⁶⁾.

The new role of the National Security Council will be to establish a regulatory mechanism that supports decision-making procedures on various issues of the state's domestic and foreign policy. This institution is distinguished from other institutions by several features, including:

- A. The mission of this institution is to develop an effective mechanism for fostering coordination and cooperation between the various state agencies and sovereign institutions, with the aim of formulating effective policies at both the domestic and international levels. It is primarily an advisory institution rather than an executive one.
- B. Develop a comprehensive vision for the state's interests and assess the risks and challenges it will face.
- C. Carry out coordination between state institutions of various specializations, on the one hand, and decision-makers at the top of the power pyramid, on the other. In several countries, the National Security Institution has worked to develop its role to become a link between decision-making bodies.

Second: Determinants of Saudi Foreign Policy:

The determinants of foreign policy refer to all the influential factors that determine the form and nature of a state's foreign policy toward its regional and international environment. The state develops its foreign policy program in accordance with these determinants, which are divided between political, economic, geographical, regional, and international ⁽²⁷⁾.

1. Geographical location: Geographical location is an important determinant of a country's foreign policy and one of the most stable components of a state. Location is even more important if a country has significant sea coasts, and this applies to the location of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located in the far southwest of the Asian continent, between latitudes 15-33° north and longitudes 34-56° east. It is one of the largest Arab countries and the Middle East country, with an area estimated at approximately 2,250,000 square kilometers, covering 80% of the Arabian Peninsula. ⁽²⁸⁾.

The length of the Kingdom's borders on all sides is (7543) kilometers, including land borders and sea borders, where the length of the land borders is (4430) kilometers, distributed on the northern side by (1850) kilometers, of which (740) kilometers are borders with Jordan, (900) kilometers with Iraq, and 210 kilometers with Kuwait. As for the eastern and southeastern borders, their length is (1340) kilometers, of which 80 kilometers are with Qatar, 560 kilometers with the United Arab Emirates, and (700) kilometers with the Sultanate of Oman, while the length of the southern borders is (1240) kilometers with the Republic of Yemen. ⁽²⁹⁾ As for the maritime borders, their length is about (3112) kilometers, as the Kingdom overlooks two bodies of water, the Arabian Gulf from the eastern side with a coast of (704) kilometers in length ⁽³⁰⁾. The Red Sea on the western side has a coastline of (2408) kilometers, ⁽³¹⁾. This important geographical location has forced the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to bear great political burdens and responsibilities.

⁽³²⁾ The Kingdom has assumed internal and regional responsibilities in the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea regions, by implementing a policy of achieving stability in the region through peaceful settlement of political disputes, and adopting the principle of security for the Gulf and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. ⁽³³⁾ As for the Kingdom's interest in its coast overlooking the Red Sea, it is because it is the shortest and fastest route linking the East and the West compared to other sea trade routes. The Red Sea is the most important route through which Gulf oil passes, especially Saudi oil, in addition to its proximity to the oil fields in the Arabian Gulf and to the primary resources in the African continent, in addition to its geopolitical location as a commercial and military route and a link between the East and the West. Among the

determinants of the geographical location of the Saudi coast on the Red Sea is its proximity to the coasts of the Horn of Africa region, which has witnessed many internal and external conflicts .⁽³⁴⁾

Intellectual Determinants:

The intellectual determinant relies on Islamic principles to determine the form of Saudi foreign policy, which implements its political and ideological orientations. Accordingly, Saudi foreign policy is described as that of a conservative state that adheres to the intellectual principles of Islam and works to disseminate and protect them through all means and methods that are consistent with the spirit of the times.⁽³⁵⁾

A number of determinants can influence the internal components of the Kingdom on the nature of the work of Saudi diplomacy. The first of these components is Islamic legislation and the Arab-Islamic identity, which had the greatest impact on domestic policy and left their mark on the external behavior of the Kingdom.⁽³⁶⁾ In order to achieve Islamic solidarity, the Kingdom sought and took the initiative, along with its sister Islamic countries, to establish a system of Islamic governmental and non-governmental institutions, including the Muslim World League in 1962 AD, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 1969 AD, and the Kingdom hosted their headquarters. This effort stems from the integrated vision of the meaning of Islamic solidarity, which includes several concepts, perhaps the most important of which is the concept of collective security for countries, economic aid to Islamic countries and societies with limited capabilities, providing urgent assistance and relief to afflicted countries, supporting Muslims and defending their causes, and providing material and moral support to Islamic communities wherever they are through generous contributions to building mosques and establishing Islamic cultural centers.⁽³⁷⁾

The political determinant (system of government): The ruling political system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represents the main determinant in directing foreign policy. The king is at the head of the supreme authority and the highest reference in all internal and external political affairs of the state. The king is the highest diplomatic authority in the state. The kingdom's ambassadors abroad are called ambassadors of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and not ambassadors of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia because the entire state is represented by the person of the king.⁽³⁸⁾ The Council of Ministers in the Kingdom draws up the foreign, domestic and economic policy and supervises its implementation. It also discusses the Kingdom's policy and positions towards external events. The Shura Council is responsible for expressing its opinion on the general policy of the state that is referred to it by the King. The Supreme Defense Council in the Kingdom draws up and implements the Kingdom's domestic and foreign policies in areas related to the country's national security. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs manages the foreign policy and the mechanism for its implementation in the Kingdom and its various departments .⁽³⁹⁾ Therefore, the person responsible for directing Saudi foreign policy is the King, and this stems from his powers granted to him by the Constitution (the Basic Law of Governance). Consequently, the King's personal ideas and opinions represent a determinant of foreign policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia..

Regional determinant:

The regional determinant has had a clear impact on Saudi foreign policy, especially given that the Saudi regional determinant includes the Arabian Gulf region, the Middle East, and the African continent bordering the Red Sea, on which Saudi Arabia has a significant coastline⁽⁴⁰⁾. Therefore, Saudi foreign policy has always sought to support regional stability in the Gulf region, the Middle East, the Red Sea, and the Horn of Africa. It has presented many initiatives in this regard to heal the rift in inter-Arab relations or find solutions to regional crises and issues. This policy is activated through a number of Gulf, Arab, and Islamic circles. In the Gulf circle, the Kingdom presented many initiatives to resolve border disputes between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and presented initiatives towards Arab countries facing internal and external crises such as (Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, and Somalia)⁽⁴¹⁾. In addition, the Kingdom entered into competition with regional powers such as the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The International Determinant: The international determinant contributed to guiding Saudi foreign policy, particularly when the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea region, as a strategic location, and its countries, enjoyed significant and distinctive importance in the international conflict during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Following the British withdrawal from Aden, overlooking the Bab al-Mandab Strait, in 1967, and the Arabian Gulf in 1971, the major powers (the United States and the Soviet Union) intensified their presence in the region and intervened in its affairs, directing the policies of the Gulf and Red Sea countries to serve the goals and interests of their respective military strategies.⁽⁴²⁾

The British withdrawal from Aden and the Arabian Gulf contributed to deepening the American strategy towards the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea region by adopting a two-pillar policy in the Arabian Gulf, i.e. the Iranian pillar and the Saudi pillar, as two powers allied to Washington in the Arabian Gulf region⁽⁴³⁾.

The changes that occurred in a number of countries of the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa contributed to raising Saudi and American fears of the countries falling within the framework of what the Americans called the "arc of crises," which pushed the atmosphere of a cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Among those changes was the seizure of power in Ethiopia by the Marxist military wing led by Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1977, and the developments in South Yemen following the fall of the rule of President Salim Rubaie Ali and the new regime's strengthening of its relations with the Soviet Union and Ethiopia.⁽⁴⁴⁾

In contrast, the United States focused its attention on arming Saudi Arabia, especially after 1979, following the fall of the Shah's regime in Iran. If the United States sought to strengthen... The Kingdom's defensive capabilities enable it to confront any external aggression. American sales and technical military assistance to Saudi Arabia during the eighties and nineties of the last century, and Saudi-American relations, pushed it towards becoming the most influential international factor in the international determinant of Saudi foreign policy directions.⁽⁴⁵⁾

CONCLUSION

After completing our research, we reached the following conclusions:

1. The political system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on Islam and Islamic law. This political system is not governed by a written constitution, as is common and applied in other political systems. Rather, it is governed by the Holy Quran, although the Basic Law of Governance, issued in the Kingdom in 1992, serves as the country's constitution.
2. The sources of political decision-making in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia consist of the following institutions: The King: The King began to crystallize as an actual political institution with the issuance of Royal Decree No. 2716 on September 18, 1932; the Royal Court: The Royal Court is one of the most important decision-making centers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and the Crown Prince: This position is new, having been first established in 2014 during the reign of King Abdullah. The Crown Prince position was introduced as a compromise to transfer power to the second generation.
3. The Council of Ministers is the second official authority in the state hierarchy after the King. It holds both legislative and executive functions, in addition to its important role in political decision-making in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
4. The National Security Council: Also known as the Supreme Defense Council, it has the official responsibility for setting defense policy. The council's members include those who have remained out of sight since its establishment in 1967.
5. The Horn of Africa region holds strategic importance in Saudi foreign policy. This importance stems from several motives that drive the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's interest in this region.

Footnotes

(1) John S. Lincolnson, *The Frontiers of the Arabian Peninsula: The Story of the British Role in Drawing Borders in the Desert*, translated by Magdy Abdel Karim, Madbouly Library (Cairo 1993), p. 18.

(2) The Basic Law of Governance is not called a constitution because Saudi Arabia considers the Holy Quran to be the country's constitution.

- (3)The Basic Law of Governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, issued pursuant to Royal Order No. A/90 dated 8/27/1412 AH/1992 AD, Article 7.
- (4)Muhammad Saeed Idris, *The Regional System of the Arabian Gulf*, Center for Arab Unity Studies, (Beirut 2002), p. 206.
- (5)Alan Gresh and Damonik Fidel, *The Gulf: Keys to Understanding a Declared War*, translated by Ibrahim Al-Wais, Dar Qurtuba (Beirut, 1991), p. 163.
- (6) The Al Sheikh family is estimated to number more than a thousand people, excluding women, and consists of four branches: the descendants of Sheikh Hassan bin Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, the descendants of Sheikh Hussein bin Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, the descendants of Sheikh Ali bin Muhammad Abdul Wahhab, and the descendants of Sheikh Abdullah bin Muhammad Abdul Wahhab. The sons of the Sheikh hold governmental and semi-governmental positions, most of them in the religious establishment. Therefore, the ruling family in the Kingdom pays attention to maintaining strong relations with this large family. For more, see Anwar Abdullah, *The Scholars and the Throne: The Duality of Power in Saudi Arabia*, Al Rafid Foundation for Publishing and Distribution (London 1995), pp. 223-224.
- (7)Gresh and Vidal, previous source, p. 164.
- (8)Abdul Razzaq Khalaf Muhammad Al-Taie, "Saudi-Iranian Relations (1979-2005) A Historical Study," PhD Thesis, College of Arts, (University of Mosul, 2012), p. 10.
- (9)Ali Hussein Nisan, *The Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, PhD Thesis (unpublished), University of Baghdad, College of Political Science, (Baghdad_1997), p. 70.
- (10) This text was included in accordance with the basic instructions issued on August 30, 1926, which included the basic articles of the system of government and administration. See Hassan Ahmed Tawfiq, *Public Administration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Publications of the Arab Organization for Administrative Sciences (Cairo, 1971), p. 7.
- (11)AbdulMutti Assaf, *Administrative Organization in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Dar Al-Ulum for Printing and Publishing (Riyadh_1983), p. 103.
- (12)Ahmed Hassan Dahlan, *A Study of the Domestic Policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Dar Al-Shorouk (Jeddah 1984), pp. 149-150.
- (13) Article 3 of the Basic Law in Ahmed Ali "The Constitution" Dar Al-Haq (Beirut 1993), pp. 52-58.
- (14) Badr Al-Kharif, *The Royal Court, the Source of Power and the Center of Decision-Making*, Asharq Al-Awsat Newspaper, Riyadh, January 24, 2015, Rabi' al-Thani 3, 1436 AH, pp. 1-2.
- (15) The first chief of the Royal Court was Ibrahim bin Muhammad bin Muammar (1926-1933). This position has been held by approximately 14 chiefs of the Royal Court, the last of whom was Fahd bin Muhammad bin Saleh Al-Issa from 2019 until now.
- (16) Royal Court, the unified Saudi national platform. At the link <https://my.gov.sa/wps/portal/snp/agencies/agencyDetails/AC037>
- making Mechanisms in the Saudi Political System: A Study of Official Institutions, Faculty of Law -Elias Mesoum, Decision17(and Political Science, University of Oran, Mohamed Ben Ahmed - PhD, 2018, p. 192.
- (18)Badr Al-Din Mazen Sadiq Nawahda, *Determinants of Foreign Policy in the Era of Prince Mohammed bin Salman*, An-Najah National University, College of Graduate Studies, Master's Thesis (unpublished), Nablus, 2022, p. 45.
- (19)Mansour Al-Marzouqi, *The Constant and the Variable in the Determinants of Saudi Foreign Policy*, (Autumn 2015), Ph.D., p. 115.
- (20)Ahmed Hassan Dahlan, *A Study of the Domestic Policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Dar Al-Shorouk, Jeddah, 1984, p. 118.
- (21) Muhammad Abd al-Mawjud Muhammad, *Legislative Development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Manshaat al-Maarif (Alexandria 1977), pp. 105-206, Ahmad Abdullah Nahi, *The System of Government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: A Study of Political Developments and Future Options*, Master's Thesis (unpublished), University of Baghdad, College of Political Science 1998, p. 93.
- (22) Muhammad bin Saninan, *The Saudi Elites, A Study of Transformations and Failures*, Center for Arab Unity Studies (Beirut 2004), pp. 60-61.
- (23) Basic Law of Governance Articles 57 and 58.
- (24) Ghanem Al-Najjar, *The Reality and Future of the Political Situation in the Gulf States*, Al-Mustaqbal Magazine, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Issue 269, (Beirut 2001), p. 104.
- (25)The same source, p. 174.
- (26)Mithaq Khairallah Jaloud, "Political Decision-Making in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," *Journal of Regional Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 12 (December 31, 2008), pp. 25-26.
- (27)Badr al-Din Mazen Sadiq Nawahda, previous source, p. 56.

- (28)Ministry of Higher Education, Atlas of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Al-Obeikan Library, 2nd ed., (Riyadh-1420 AH 2000 AD), pp. 12, 43.
- (29)Badr bin Adel Al-Faqir, Elements of Power in the Unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, an Analytical Study in Political Geography, King Fahd Library, (Riyadh-1419 AH 1999 AD), pp. 169-176.
- (30)Muhammad Umar Madani, International Maritime Law and its Applications in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Institute of Diplomatic Studies, (Riyadh - 1415 AH / 1995 AD), p. 35.
- Abdul Razzaq Khalaf Muhammad Al-Taie, "Saudi-Iranian Relations 1979-2005: A Historical Study," (31)
.unpublished doctoral dissertation, College of Arts, (University of Mosul, 2012), p. 12
- (32)Majid bin Thamer bin Thunayan bin Muhammad bin Al Saud, Intellectual Dimensions in the Strategic Orientations of the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies, (Riyadh, 1443 AH - 2021 AD), p. 65.
- (33)Abdul Aziz Marbid Al-Bujaidi Al-Anzi, "The Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: The Reign of King Fahd bin Abdulaziz during the Period (1982-2005)," Wadi Al-Nil Journal of Human, Social and Educational Studies and Research, Volume 33, Issue 33 (Economics and Political Science), (Khartoum, January 2022), Part Nine, p. 831.
- (34)Sultan Munir Al-Harthi, "A Saudi Strategic Vision for Red Sea Security," Arab Journal of Security Studies, Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, Volume 3, Issue 34, December 15, 2018, pp. 336-337.
- (35)Badr Al-Din Mazen Sadiq Nawahdeh, Determinants of Saudi Foreign Policy during the Era of Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Master's Thesis (Master's Thesis), An-Najah National University, (Nablus, 2022), p. 56.
- (36)Majid bin Thamer bin Thunayan bin Muhammad Al Saud, previous source, p. 60.
- (37)Jihan Ibrahim Abdul Rahim, Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Consular Administration, Issue (7), (2012, Issue 27), p. 359.
- (38)Mithaq Khairallah Jaloud, "Political Decision-Making in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Regional Studies Journal, Center for Regional Studies, Volume (5), Issue (12), (Mosul, 2008), p. 312.
- (39)Al-Anzi, the previous source, p. 833.
- (40)The importance of the Saudi coast on the Red Sea is discussed in the first section of the study.
- (41)The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has sponsored reconciliations between two conflicting groups in many Arab countries, such as the Lebanese civil war, the reconciliation between the Iraqi parties in 2007, between Hamas and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and between the warring factions in Somalia. This was one of the regional determinants of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For more, see: Moataz Abdul Qader Mohammed Al-Jabouri, The Role of Saudi Diplomacy in Resolving Arab Conflicts, A Case Study (Iraq - Palestine - Lebanon - Yemen), Zain Legal and Literary Publications, (Beirut, 2017), pp. 63-220.
- (42)On the competition between the United States of America and the Soviet Union after the British withdrawal from the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, see: Ismail Sabry Muqalled, Gulf Security and the Challenges of International Conflict: A Study of International Politics in the Gulf since the Seventies, Al-Rubaigan Publishing and Distribution Company (Kuwait, 1984), pp. 13-150.
- (43)The United States wanted to distribute roles between Saudi Arabia and Iran to preserve capitalist interests. Given that Iran was better prepared than Saudi Arabia in all aspects, in addition to the American-Iranian alliance, US President Richard Nixon chose Iran based on his principle that states: "The friends of the United States should assume the responsibility of defending themselves, and that Iran is capable of providing this protection to all the emirates of the Arabian Gulf, including Saudi Arabia." For more, see Abdul Razzaq Khalaf Muhammad, The Emirati-Iranian Dispute Over the Three Arabian Gulf Islands: Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa 1971-2001, Ibn al-Atheer Printing and Publishing House (Mosul, 2009), pp. 49-52.
- (44)Muhammad Saeed Idris, The Regional System of the Arabian Gulf, Arab Unity Studies Center, (Beirut, 2000), p. 319.
- (45)On the extent of military cooperation between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, see: Yassin Sweid, Foreign Military Presence in the Gulf: Reality and Options, Center for Arab Unity Studies, (Beirut, 2004), 90-94.

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2. Abdul Razzaq Khalaf Muhammad Al-Taie, "Saudi-Iranian Relations 1979-2005: A Historical Study," unpublished doctoral dissertation, College of Arts, (University of Mosul, 2012),
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