
REALISM THEORY AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract

International relations have always been an attention drawing topic. Especially, predicting the behaviours of an international actor or its potential international policies has been a desire for many other actors. International relations theories try to serve this need. There are three main international relations theories developed for this purpose: realism, liberalism and constructivism. Realism has been used in this study to see whether it's reflected in the relations between two characteristically totally different countries: the US and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by looking into some important regional developments as case studies. The analyses of the case studies have shown that the findings are in favour of the validity of the international theory of realism in the US-Saudi partnership.

Keywords: USA, Saudi Arabia, realism, relation, international theories

1. Introduction

In time the global world has developed many internationally accepted laws, rules, ethics and diplomatic references to restore or keep peace and order, or to improve the quality of life for people worldwide. It even established very important international organizations. To name some: the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, OSCE, Interpol, and European Court for Human Rights Court are just a few of these established organizations to achieve the set goals internationally.

With such information in hand one would guess that it would be easy to predict states international policies in known cases, because there are international laws, regulations and diplomatic rules in place that shape international policies and actions. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

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2. The encountered challenges and the definitions of the theories

There is no field of practice that does not experience challenges, as it is in the case of relations with other states. It has always been a challenge for those in the field of political science, international relations, security, policy making and government administration to predict behaviours of other states in order to prepare for proper counter policies.

In other words, familiarity with the determinants that shape the states behaviours would be useful for efficient and effective counter actions, but that is a major challenge. Although fewer problems are expected in collaboration between states with similar characteristics, especially the relations between totally different states that don't share common ideals contain more mystery. In such relations, questions such as whether they face more problems compared to states with similar common values; and what kind of criteria they rest on to avoid conflict in their partnership, are important. This study seeks for the opportunity to answer such questions.

The other challenge relevant to the field of international relations has been the development of a widely accepted definition of an international theory which can properly define the characteristics of international relations. The provided theories are often put forth with the goal of analysing past behaviours and throughout the findings of their research, to provide us with a more educated guess on future actions of a state. Eventually, there are three prime theories on international relations and on predicting state behaviours we can refer to: realism, liberalism, and constructivism [J. Cristol, *International Relations Theory*, in *Oxford Bibliographies*]. However, we need to clearly state we do not have the slightest intention to develop a new theory of international relations, but rather test the theory of realism and its assumptions in this work.

Realism is an international relations theory which puts the state actor at the forefront, almost completely ignoring all other actors in the international arena. In realism, the base assumption is that the field of international relations is in a constant state of anarchy, in which each country and state only pursues survival and national interests. In the pursuit of individual benefits, the actors in this system are enticed to increase their own strength and thus increase their chances of survival and expansion. The often-chosen method to accomplish these goals is to develop a nation's military strength; be it through acquiring arms, manpower etc. or forging connections with another actor who can provide them with the needed protection. Thus, as long as conflict exists within the surrounding international system, realism can be used as a viable and accepted method to examine relations among international actors [1].

Though realism can be used to explain a constantly expanding and aggressive international system, it fails to clarify the reasoning behind sustained peace in the international stage. In situations like this the theory of liberalism is brought to light. Liberalism in contrast to realism totally opposes a power based, oppressive international system and puts equality, freedom and cooperation in

relations between countries. Liberalism also values the individual human being actor in the international stage more than its counterpart in realism [1].

Lastly we have constructivism which comes into play in situations like the end of the cold war which cannot be explained through the theories of realism and liberalism. Constructivism takes into equation the individual human actor in the international stage which realism completely ignores. Constructivists also believe that individuals have the ability to affect international actors and thus change the landscape of international relations just like during the end of the cold war [2].

Regarding this work, due to referring to the developments in the region and the close relationship between the US and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as case studies, the international realism theory seems to put itself forward as a more explanatory theory because whatever the development and the countries' contradicting characteristics, they seem to remain in cooperation with each other. Hence, realism seems to define the relations between two characteristically contradicting states like the US and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; because its philosophy is based on profitability, rather than on other rules such as ethics, morality or international laws.

3. Similar studies and relations among the US and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Despite the US being an idealism-based country due to its constitution, freedom of speech and liberal economy, its actions however, are merely based on realism in its foreign policy. Idealism seems more like an utopist theory in international relations in the sense that it argues for reasoning to trump bias and allow for each actor in the system to grow and develop alongside the union of mankind. Idealism strives to suppress the anarchy in the international arena that realism puts forth [3].

Russian and Syrian latest relations too can be used as an example to further support the claim of realism existing in modern day politics. Despite his western educational background and all the hope that US officials had of him being a breath of fresh air for Syria, Bashar al-Assad was anything other than what was acclaimed. Despite the major differences in common values (cultural, economical, system, human rights, freedom) between the two countries Russia's personal benefits in aiding Bashar al-Assad's regime stopped the United Nations from being able to act against and prosecute him due to Russia's veto power. The US and its allies were not able to take individual measures in order to stabilize the region since doing so would damage their relations with Russia. Thus, countries are willing to put aside even the most basic human rights if there is a need to protect their interests [D.R. DePetris, *Syria shows that Realism still dominates Global Politics*, Huffington Post, 2016, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-r-depetris/syria-shows-that-realism-_b_12474334.html].

Another great example fitting the assertions of realism would be the relations between the European Union and Egypt. Not long ago the current President of Egypt, Abdal Fattah El-Sisi, took power in 2014 after a military

coup, in which the first democratically elected President Mohammed Morsi was removed from office. One would expect that the western democratic countries would oppose and reconsider all their relations with a person who took office post a military coup, but that has not been the case. Nevertheless, the EU-Egyptian relations flourished compared to the times when Morsi was in office. Again, realism seems to design such relations. Despite an undemocratic office occupation, as realism asserts, the nowadays win win factor for the survival of both sides in the EU-Egyptian relations plays a predominant role in the relations between characteristically two very different actors. Despite western countries' upholding attitude of globally accepted human rights and democratic values, the empowerment of both sides for survival and worthy economical gains are obviously more important beyond any other acceptable international policy.

As it is with the aforementioned cases the relations between the US and the Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia reflect similar results when analysed through referring to the international theory realism and its assumptions. The relations between the US and the Kingdom are analysed by looking into different regional events and their impacts on US-Saudi relations. Especially we attempt to determine whether these two countries, having almost nothing in common from government types to cultural background can continue their cooperation and alliance for the sake of profit even if it means to experience some conflict in their relations with other states, their own nations' values, ethics and beliefs as assumed by the international theory of realism.

The events used as case studies in the US-Saudi relations are divided into three phases. The first phase covers the first interactions between these countries and their relationship during World War II. The following phase looks at the causes, effects and policies regarding events during the Cold War era which includes the Suez Crisis, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution and lastly the Gulf War. The final phase is mostly about the relations and policies of these subject countries post-September 11, 2001 which also includes the recent Qatar Crisis and the murder case of Saudi reporter Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi who was working for the Washington Post.

3.1. Phase 1 - first contact and WWII

3.1.1. First contact

The US's interest and to strengthening of ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stems from the oil the Kingdom can provide. Thus, it is not a surprise that the beginning of their relationship would be based on the pursuit of economic goals. The US, during WWI, had supplied a major portion of the allies oil needs using Standard Oil of New Jersey. So why would a country which already has enough oil to not only sustain itself but also its allies feel the need to look for another source of said oil? Depletion. The US feared that in the foreseeable future it would not be able to match the increasing demand of oil with their diminishing

supply. That is why they wished to outsource and hence maintain their own resource while using another country as their own oil reserve [4].

King Ibn Saud had wished for a global recognition following the union of his country. The Kingdom had already established strong ties with the British in the past. The US would officially recognize Saudi Arabia during the May of 1931 through the extension of full diplomatic recognition [5]. Soon after, in 1933, King Ibn Saud would also grant a concession to Standard Oil of California in exchange for £35,000 which would allow them to search for oil in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. The finding of oil in 1938, along with the US's oil depletion concerns, transformed the relations between the two countries and entered a state of accelerated growth in the coming years [PBS.org, *Saudi Arabia a chronology of the country's History and key events in the US-Saudi relationship*, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/etc/cron.html>].

3.1.2. World War II

With the start of World War II, the budding relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was in a sense neglected by the US who would come to value the Saudi Kingdoms oil as the war progressed. One event during this period was the Italian bombing of a CASOC oil installation located in Dhahran which would slow down oil production and cause security concerns for the Saudi government. This bombing would have King Ibn Saud seek aid from an external power because the Saudi economy depended on its oil and visits from pilgrims who would come to perform Hajj in Makkah. He was concerned that further attacks on Saudi soil would damage the economy of the Kingdom [5].

From one perspective the protection of Saudi Arabia is the protection of the United States' interests. Hence for almost a century now the US has been valuing the Saudi oil and was ready to be the partner that the Saudi government was looking for its own protection [F. Ozbey, *The problematic nature of Saudi-US relations*, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/analysis-the-problematic-nature-of-saudi-us-relations/1523961>]. On the 14th of February 1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt met with King Ibn Saud aboard the USS Quincy, they spent several days discussing security matters and improving relations between the two countries [5].

After the end of World War II, despite the disagreement of the Saudi citizens, the Saudi Government permitted the US military to remain in Dhahran. The presence of the US military played a fundamental role in the security of the Kingdom. However, the reliance on a western country was a valuable asset of propaganda for internal and regional adversaries. To counteract the discomfort the citizens felt about the US military forces in Dhahran and to not be crucified for his dependence on an external power, King Saud would from time to time increase or decrease the number of personnel requested from the US in accordance with rising or decreasing security concerns [6].

3.2. Phase 2 - Suez crisis, 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Iranian revolution and the Gulf War

3.2.1. The Suez crisis

The Cold War era along with the threat of the Soviets and spread of communism brought with it a change in the Saudi leadership in 1953 when King Saud, son of previous King Abd al-Aziz (Ibn Saud) ascended his fathers' throne. The US at this time would cause concern for the new King with its new anti-Soviet alliance, the Baghdad Pact, within which it harboured Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Britain and Iran. The US had allied itself with the Kingdoms' regional foes, though this alliance was intended to contain the Soviet threat, King Saud did not take kindly to this grouping of regional threats. He would go on to sign a mutual defence pact with Gamal Abdel Nasser, the leader of then pro-Soviet Egypt. The invitation of Egyptian military personnel into Saudi soil was cause for concern for the US [6].

Gamal Abdel Nasser had been an unstable actor in Western eyes and was also a cause for economic concern for the French and British governments. His announcing the nationalization of the Suez Canal on the 26th of July 1956 infuriated the British and French who had major economic ties with the Suez Canal Company; this announcement of nationalization would in turn result in an Israeli-French-British three headed invasion of Egypt. This invasion would be met with opposition throughout the international arena headed by the US, moved mainly by anti-Soviet concerns as stopping their allies would be an easier task compared to halting Soviet aggression and a possible nuclear war. The US's intervention and willingness to oppose its allies, especially Israel, would boost King Saud's trust in the US leadership resulting in the relations between both countries to once again ease up [C. McLaughlin, *The Suez crisis: Security implications for the transatlantic relationship and the shift in global power*, Student Scholarship & Creative Works By Year, 2016, Paper 46].

The Suez crisis is regarded as the event which showed the British governments time of being a super power in the international arena had come to an end. This realization would later on lead to the British withdrawing itself from the Gulf region. The regions view of the US government changed with the actions it had taken in the Suez Crisis. The Saudi government would renew the US's lease of the Dhahran military base in the following year. However, the unification of Syria and Egypt in combination with the revolution in Iraq, the former Egyptian ally would become an un-ignorable power in the region. The Saudi regime would go on to minimize ties with the US, announcing that the re-leasing of the Dhahran Airfield would not happen [7].

The Kingdom would need US assistance not long after re-allying itself with Egypt when in 1962 the Egyptian government began staging attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through the use of bases in Yemen. The reason for the attacks was the anti-revolutionary propaganda the Saudi Kingdom was spreading during the North Yemen Civil war in 1962. The US government would agree to

send assistance to the Saudi government in the form of a US Air force training mission in Dhahran. The Saudi Kingdom had requested the military forces to be located in Jidda, closer to the Yemen border to act as a deterrent but the US did not want needless friction with Egyptian leader Abdel Nasser who was now being viewed as a possible alternative to the Soviet influence [6]. This would damage the US's reputation in the Saudi regimes eyes as the US was openly declaring the fact that this partnership was based solely on personal benefit and for that US, the Saudi regime was an interchangeable component of their Middle Eastern policies.

While touching on the US's Middle Eastern policies, as mentioned before, after the suppressed invasion of Egypt during the Suez crisis, the United Kingdom would begin to withdraw from the Gulf region during the 1960s and throughout the 1970s. The US would also issue the Nixon doctrine and declare it could no longer fully defend its allies and that these allies would now have to maintain their own safety, the US would continue economic and military aid but no longer provide military assistance through the use of soldiers. The US also expected their allies to police US interests in their respective regions. For the Middle East, the US implemented a Twin Pillar Strategy involving the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran [8].

3.2.2. 1973 Arab-Israeli war

King Faisal would ascend his brother Saud, in the November of 1964 as the head of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The relations between the US and the Saudi government would remain the same up until the 1973 Arab-Israeli war (Yom Kippur War). The defeat suffered by the Arab countries during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, also known as the Six-Day war, which resulted in Israel capturing and occupying the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt alongside the Golan Heights from Syria. The relations between the US and Saudi Arabia would take a massive blow when during the 1973 war the Arabian countries would impose an oil embargo on the US for supporting Israel, causing an energy crisis and damaging the US economy. Saudi Arabia would join this embargo mainly due to the fear of being alienated by its Arabian neighbours [D. T. Buckwalter, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War*, 2012, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/navy/pmi/1973.pdf>].

Despite the embargo and strained relations, the US was not arrogant enough to maintain this status, having established a system in which a decent portion of their oil came from the Gulf region itself. In order to appease the Arab countries, the US pressed Israel for the negotiations of the Golan Heights which resulted in the lifting of the embargo. Washington and Riyadh would resume their partnership; they would go on to sign \$2 Billion worth in arms deals including Saudi Arabia receiving several dozen fighter jets [9]. With relations between the two countries on the rise, the Saudi government would also argue to keep OPEC prices on oil lower than what Iran and Iraq would desire to benefit American interests, which would lead to strenuous relations between the Gulf neighbors. The Saudi government along with keeping the oil prices affordable for the US

would also increase its own oil production to help battle communism across the globe, further strengthening the US-Saudi partnership [10].

3.2.3. Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979

The US was in a very profitable situation despite the Cold War raging on. The United Kingdom had begun to withdraw from the region, so it no longer needed to invest as heavily into the Middle East. The US was able to maintain its presence and have American interests protected through its twin pillars, Saudi Arabia and Iran. However, this present situation would be greatly changed following the Iranian revolution in 1979, which resulted in the toppling of the US-backed Shah and his place being filled by the US-opposing Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Khomeini was very open with his opposition of both the US and Saudi Arabia. With the United States losing its pillar and Saudi Arabia now facing a larger regional threat in Iran, relations between the US and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia grew closer [D.A. Brandis, *The 1979 Iranian Revolution: The Revolutionary Revolution*, unpublished thesis, University of Arizona, 2009, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ce1b/579cdd42dcf474213c5760833937868828e7.pdf>]. Once again, Saudi Arabia's need for security for survival and the United States's desire for growing economically and politically stronger in the region, the safety of Saudi Arabia became the driving factor for these two countries to continue supporting each other.

3.2.4. The Gulf War (21 August 1990 - 28 February 1991)

The US interests in the region were almost jeopardized by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait which resulted with the Gulf War on August 2nd, 1990. However, the emerged threat empowered the US-Saudi Arabia relationship based on security-oil. As a result of Iraq's invasion the United States would launch operations Desert Shield (7 August 1990) and Desert Storm (17 January 1991). Operation Desert Shield would see over 500,000 US soldiers on Saudi Arabia, followed up by operation Desert Storm in which the US sent even more military personnel for an attack on the Iraqi army. Iraq experienced defeat only days after the commencement of Operation Desert Storm [11]. Also the Gulf war proved that the US had great interest in keeping safe its ally in the Middle East, considering the fact that Saudi Arabia continued its economical support to the US and its existence in the Middle East.

3.3. Phase 3 - September 11, 2001 attacks on the Twin Towers and recent events

3.3.1. September 11, 2001 attacks on the Twin Towers

The terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in the US on September 11, 2001 almost destroyed the relations between the US and Saudi Arabia. 15 of the 19 plane hijackers had Saudi passports on them. Osama bin Laden, leader of Al-

Qaeda, the terrorist organization who claimed responsibility for these attacks was also a former Saudi citizen. Osama bin Laden had a personal fortune handed down to him through his inheritance from his billionaire father. Bin Laden's citizenship was stripped in 1994 by King Fahd despite his massive wealth; the US also urged King Fahd to do so because Osama bin Laden had been openly criticizing the Kingdom's alliance with the United States throughout the Gulf war [D. Ackman, *The Cost of Being Osama Bin Laden*, 2001, <https://www.forbes.com/2001/09/14/0914ladenmoney.html#1a707a5b32a3>].

The United States would need to reconsider its security for oil relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The US would try to pressure the Saudi government to shut down charities funding al-Qaeda and needless to say the US media and officials would try their best to win over the American population during this time period. Be it from nightly news to senate hearings, the United States' relationship with Saudi Arabia got thoroughly questioned and Saudi Arabia was constantly condemned at every opportunity. This backlash led the Saudi population to support Bin Laden and his cause during the time frame shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001. This support also stemmed from the US supporting Israel despite strong ties with the Kingdom in the past. However, after several terrorist attacks on US compounds inside Saudi Arabia that took place along with attacks on the Saudi ministry of interior and other places, this support would die down. These attacks would open way for the US to work with the Saudi government in order to re-establish the Saudi security forces and provide them with anti-terrorism education and skills [E. Sciolino, *Don't Weaken Arafat, Saudi Warns Bush*, 2002, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/27/world/don-t-weaken-arafat-saudi-warns-bush.html>].

Despite the US population harboring anger towards the Kingdom and the Saudi citizens resenting the US, relations between the two countries would re-establish themselves, as officials from both countries would constantly ensure each other that their governments did not entirely share the viewpoint of their populations [6].

3.3.2. Recent events

After 9/11 Saudi and US relations had once again managed to recover despite being nearly terminated. The two countries would further mend their relations under the presidency of Barack Hussein Obama. President Obama also declared in 2015 that the US will provide logistical support and intelligence to the Saudi government in their military intervention of Yemen to re-establish the Hadi government [W. Strobel, *Exclusive: As Saudis bombed Yemen, U.S. worried about legal blowback*, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-saudi-yemen/exclusive-as-saudis-bombed-yemen-u-s-worried-about-legal-blowback-idUSKCN12A0BQJ>].

The diplomatic crisis of Qatar is a recent event which began in the June of 2017 when the Saudi led coalition of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, Djibouti, Senegal, the Maldives, the Comoros, Jordan, Libya, Yemen and the United Arab

Emirates severed diplomatic ties with Qatar and blocking all air and sea travel to and from Qatar. This cutting of ties stems from Qatar's supposed support to groups such as Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood and also its' stance during the revolutionary Arab Spring in the Middle Eastern region in 2011 which had Qatar standing opposite of Saudi Arabia on several matters [Al Jazeera, *Qatar-Gulf Crisis: Your Questions Answered*, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/qatar-gulf-crisis-questions-answered-170606103033599.html>].

As for the role the US plays in this crisis: the US President Donald Trump took part in the Riyadh Summit of 2017 alongside other world leaders. At the summit, President Trump openly supported Saudi Arabia's dedication in combating the Muslim Brotherhood and other groups associated with Iran [A. Barnard and D.D. Kirkpatrick, *5 Arab Nations Move to Isolate Qatar, Putting the U.S. in a Bind*, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/05/world/middle-east/qatar-saudi-arabia-egypt-bahrain-united-arab-emirates.html>]. This support played a large part in the Saudi-led cutting of ties with Qatar. The United States' alliance with Qatar was the main deterrence for nonaggressive relations between Qatar and other Gulf countries [B. Lendon, *Qatar hosts largest US military base in Mideast*, 2017, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/06/05/middleeast/qatar-us-largest-base-in-mideast/index.html>]. Why would the US jeopardize their relations with Qatar by siding with Saudi Arabia during this crisis? The answer is actually quite simple. Despite having the largest US air base in the Middle East in Qatar, ties with Saudi Arabia were much more valuable for the US. Instead of mediating a peaceful resolution, president Trump showed us once more that the US in its foreign policy is a realism driven state which will not shy away from endangering relations in other regions if it serves US interests in a better way.

Most recently, the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi has put the largest strain on US-Saudi relations. Jamal Khashoggi had openly criticized the Saudi government and Crown Prince Muhammed bin Selman in his writings at the Washington Post and at press conferences many times. He had visited the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on the 28th of September but got rescheduled for another visit on the 2nd of October. He was killed on the 2nd of October 2018 during his rescheduled visit to the consulate. The Saudi government at first denied any knowledge of the case but with Turkey providing solid evidence through photographs and sound recordings, the Saudi regime began giving out conflicting answers. On the 15th of November the Saudi public prosecutor explained that Jamal Khashoggi was given a lethal injection and murdered inside the consulate [BBC, *Jamal Khashoggi: All you need to know about Saudi journalist's death*, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45812399>].

However, on 29 September 2019 Prince Mohammed bin Salman appeared on the *60 minutes* program aired at the American CBS Channel. At the interview he stated that, since he is a leader in Saudi Arabia, he takes full responsibility of the murder of Jamal Khashoggi because the murder was committed by employees of the Saudi government, and defined the murder as a '...heinous crime'.

The murder of Jamal Khashoggi has been condemned in the international arena and caused tensions to rise between Saudi Arabia and its western allies. However, US President Donald Trump refuses to cut ties or put sanctions on Saudi Arabia simply due to the fact that Saudi Arabia is a valuable trading partner for the United States and the kingdom serves a purpose for the American economy. This approach followed by the US has also been recently solidified by US President Donald Trump. In his bold and open statement to the press, President Trump stated that: “the United States intends to remain a steadfast partner of Saudi Arabia to ensure the interests of our country, Israel and all other partners in the region” [A. Ward, *Why the US won't break up with Saudi Arabia over Jamal Khashoggi's murder*, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/2018/10/18/17990546/trump-jamal-khashoggi-saudi-arabia-history-murder>], yet again proving that profitability is a bigger priority than ethics, international customs and rules.

4. Conclusions

As stated throughout this study, the relations between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are a perfect example of the dominance the international theory of realism displays in the foreign policies of both countries. Despite having very different governments, one being a constitutional republic, upholder of the rule of law and which supposedly aims to spread democracy and prosperity to the world and the other being an absolute monarchy in which the King is above all; the two countries are able to maintain a consistent relationship. The basis of this relationship relies almost entirely on the mutual benefits both countries stand to gain for survival and empowerment by partnering with each other.

Revisiting the case studies mentioned earlier, shows that the international theory of realism proves to be true in the international relations between the US and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To start with, while the United States addresses its concern of the depletion of its own oil reserves, the Saudi kingdom is able to partner itself with a strong ally and fulfil its security needs. The Saudi regime could have chosen any other country to partner itself with in order to buy more technologically advanced weapons and arms for cheaper but no other country would be able to provide the same sense of security the United States could.

The Suez crisis which saw the United States opposing (especially Israel) the invasion of Egypt opened way for US-Saudi relations to grow closer after concerns caused by Saudi Arabia's alliance with the pro-Soviet Egyptian regime. However, the US did not simply oppose the invasion for Saudi Arabia's benefits but also for the purpose of keeping the Soviets at bay after their threats of nuclear intervention, something the US did not want. Again we spot a gain and existence of realism in the foreign policies of both actors.

The 1973 Arab-Israeli war and following oil embargo is another example of realism existence in the US's foreign policy. Despite Saudi Arabia being part of the Arabian group warring against Israel, the US showed that they are willing to go against a supposed ally if it contradicts their state agenda.

The Iranian revolution saw the US losing one of its pillars in the region and led to the increase of arms sales and strengthening of relations with the Saudi government. This increase was to ensure the safety of the remaining pillar (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and export of oil from the Middle East. The Gulf war is another case in which the US would value the protection of Saudi Arabia as seen through operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The US would not have intervened in this war, if its regional ally, Saudi Arabia, had not been put at risk.

As we can see, the US despite many of the details in the sample cases were contradicting with the values of the American people or the international arena, (i.e. the case of 9/11, the murder of Jamal Khashoggi) the US disregarded the source country of the problem and viewed the matters as faulty behaviours of individuals and sought to improve its strategic relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the sole purpose of state gains. This approach was also confirmed by US President Trump in his statement saying that he will remain partners despite some regional disputes with others to secure the interests of the US, Israel and the other partners in the region.

As a second example emphasizing that realism is heavily reflected in the US foreign policy is another statement made by President Trump in the oval office when he was addressing the press regarding the Khashoggi murder in which he said that the murder took place in Turkey and Jamal Khashoggi was not a US citizen and that it would not be acceptable of him to stop a huge amount of money from pouring into the country, referring to the selling of \$110 billion worth of arms to the Saudi Government [A. Ward, *Why the US won't break up with Saudi Arabia over Jamal Khashoggi's murder*]. As this case revealed; despite a shocking murder of an internationally known journalist and the pressure of the international actors on this matter and the American community, did not withhold the US President to drift away from acting in order to preserve the US ties with the Kingdom. That again proves that realism is the dominant predictor in the US and Saudi relations.

In conclusion, as the international theory of realism puts forth that the state actor pursues only profitability and gain in place of ethics and morals, the US in its' relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia does the same exact thing. It pursues a relationship with the Kingdom purely for the sake of mass economic benefits; it has supported the Kingdom in several instances such as the Suez Crisis, the Gulf war and during the Iranian Islamic Revolution but it has also placed itself opposite of the Saudi government during 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Thus, profitability comes first.

The international realism theory also argues that the state is the main actor and the individual aspect of humans are ignored, this can be especially seen in the post 9/11 era and the Khashoggi murder case in which the people of both governments harboured some negative feelings for each other but the states still

continued to keep relations open and worked to redevelop them. This intent of redevelopment was fuelled yet again by the Saudi security concerns and the US's oil needs and the potential trade among them mainly on arms sold from the US to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The cases analysed have shown us multiple times that the US will stand by Saudi Arabia as long as they have something to gain from the partnership.

Likewise, as explained earlier, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has chosen to stand aside the US regardless of the possible sanctions it could evoke from the region. The sole reason for the partnership is the Kingdom receiving a high level of security from the US that no other country can provide.

Throughout their relationship, the international theory of realism has been able to define the foreign policy agendas of the US and Saudi Arabia. The US, despite having a conflicting identity compared with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has been open to communication and cooperation as long as it can maintain a favourable situation for itself. However, then the question of how long this type of partnership, which apparently is very costly for Saudi Arabia, will last appears as an important question.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, in an environment where conflict and the conditions of mutual benefit remain constant between the two states, and if any of them cannot be replaced by another actor with a similar or better profitability, *through referring to realism* one can predict future actions between the subject countries.

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