

# *Between Passive and Active: The Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy Towards Israel*

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**"Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise." (32:1)**

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# Abstract

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The Saudi foreign policy towards Israel is often misunderstood. The discourse surrounding Saudi-Israeli relations have either emphasized the strong animosity between them, or, have suggested a kind of 'alliance' resulting from Saudi-Israeli shared animosity towards Iran. This project argues against both accounts. Instead, it will argue that Saudi foreign policy towards Israel balances between promoting significant security interests, while maintaining its conservative identity. As a result, I conceptualise both concepts of cooperation and communication to explain how Saudi Arabia has achieved this balance. Passive cooperation is a concept where actors reach mutual goals, but not engage openly or publically with each other, nor explicit coordination. Accordingly, Saudi Arabian foreign policy achieves mutual goals with Israel, while navigating around domestic and external constraints.

The Saudi ruling elite have also communicated their willingness of having active cooperation, if certain conditions are met. Although they have communicated the potentiality of active cooperation, they have not done this in an explicit way, rather, in a passive way. In brief, passive communication achieves a 'communicative balance' where actors balance between different audiences and their own identity. The nature of the language used by Saudi statesmen and diplomats is contingent, and therefore enables simultaneous different meanings to be communicated to different actors, and can also allow the perception of Israel to change according to each context. Finally, the project examines the passive foreign policy that Saudi Arabia has towards Israel, a foreign policy that delicately balances between not being too close, and not being too far.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction.

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Can Saudi Arabia and Israel really be cooperating? Could they be really communicating? A simple yes or no answer will not suffice. Before we can answer these questions, we need to better understand what is meant by cooperation? What is meant by communication? Growing security concerns in the region as well as commonalities of interests necessitates that these questions to be taken more seriously. The Saudi foreign policy towards Israel has been traditionally mentioned as one fuelled by animosity and antagonism (Fawcett, 2014), especially within both contexts of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The literature on Middle East Politics has focused on the role of Saudi Arabia orchestrating the oil embargo in 1973, its critical rhetoric and stance towards Israel in the Palestinian Israeli context. In fact, Saudi Arabia almost changed its strategic choices with the United States of America in protest of Israeli actions towards the Palestinians. Additionally, other literature will show how Saudi Arabia sent its military forces in support of the Syrian forces to defend against Israel in the 1973 Arab-Israel war. Such instances are undisputedly true and cannot be denied- Saudi foreign policy towards Israel has certainly been adversarial at times.

Conversely, not much of the literature mentions Saudi Arabia's pragmatism and restraint in dealing with Israel. It is not often mentioned that Saudi Arabia ordered its forces to *not* engage with Israel during the 1973 war (Branson. 2006). Nor does it mention much about how Saudi Arabia was still secretly fuelling the USA forces in Vietnam during the oil embargo. The previous two examples illustrate a specific and substantially unstudied shade of Saudi foreign policy towards Israel, and suggest that Saudi pragmatism towards Israel is a severely neglected topic in the literature. Due to the rapid change of the International Relations of the Middle East, and its ever so apparent zero-sum regional nature, reports of 'active cooperation'(which will be discussed an elaborated on in far greater detail in chapter 2) between Saudi Arabia and Israel have increased. It is clear for any observer that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the most obvious commonality that both Saudi

Arabia and Israel have. Iran's expansionist ideology and gradual increasing influence in the region have only added more speculation to the reports that there may be Saudi-Israeli active cooperation.

Not only have some of the media reports claimed that "Saudi officials" have been meeting with Israeli officials and coordinating exercises together, but they claim that there is a Saudi-Israeli 'alliance'. A recent BBC article was titled, "Israel and Saudi Arabia: What's shaping the covert 'alliance'" (Marcus, 2017). What fuels this ambiguity of the Saudi-Israeli rapprochement is that media reports on this matter are often politically motivated. Such claims of Saudi-Israeli cooperation are often used as a demonising strategy due to the unpopularity of Israel in the region, and any link to it will always attract negative attention in the eyes of many people in the region. This can be seen in an Al-Jazeera headline that asks "What is behind the covert Israeli-Saudi relations?" (Alsaafin, 2017). Other Western media reports may not be as politically motivated as regional media outlets, but describe the Saudi-Israeli alliance as an attention grabbing headline. It is striking how little evidence these reports have. These reports have not been able to reference any names or precise positions of any Saudi officials. Building such a narrative based on "an official" is not credible enough in trying to understand such understudied and opaque topic. Though it is possible that these instances of cooperation and meetings have happened, thus far it is impossible to prove at this time.

The saying "there's no smoke without fire" is helpful to illustrate this point. These reports do seem to suggest that there is some smoke, but, as of now it is hard to guess where the fire is. Said differently, they see the commonalities between Saudi Arabia and Israel, but they then posit instances of cooperation with flimsy evidence. My philosophy is that I certainly do see the smoke, but I cannot see where the fire is. Therefore, I would rather analyse the smoke since it is undisputedly there. In other words, I see the commonalities between Saudi Arabia and Israel, and I also see the very unique and pragmatic Saudi policy towards Israel, but I claim that there is no clear cut evidence of an "alliance" taking place. Hence, I would rather analyse the clear and undisputed material: such as the Saudi lead peace initiatives, the Saudi religious rulings/fatwas on active

cooperation with Israel, the fact that both Saudi Arabia and Israel have Iran as their main threat in the region. The smoke is there, it will just be a matter of how one tries to understand and explain the smoke-explain the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel which can be as elusive as smoke.

There is very little debate in the academic literature pertaining to Saudi-Israeli cooperation, let alone the notion of Saudi passive cooperation and communication towards it. There has been neither debate nor any competition over claims of who puts a better case of explaining Saudi-Israeli cooperation, or the lack of it. Nevertheless, there are instances in the literature that are very similar to the news articles mentioned earlier. In Davidson's (2013) section "unholy alliance", he does argue that there have been instances of active Saudi-Israeli active cooperation between a Saudi and Israeli investment group. There are two issues with such claims. Firstly, such investment opportunities conducted by private entities have been exaggerated and framed as an "alliance". It is the like of such exaggeration that clouds our understanding of the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel. Secondly the four page long section revolved around allegations of Israeli cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a whole, so not only was it assumptions based on questionable evidence. The commonality and potential of active Saudi-Israeli cooperation have been mentioned only briefly and sporadically throughout the literature.

But in recent years, there have been good and comprehensive attempts to highlight the Saudi pragmatism towards Israel, but not necessarily cooperation. Rieger (2017), Patrick (2017) and Patrick (2018) are examples of authors who appreciate the complexity of the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel. They too reject the notion of 'alliance', and the notion of a Saudi policy that is dedicated to the destruction of the Jewish state. What they have in common is that they highlight the pragmatic and complex nature of the enigmatic Saudi-Israeli case.

For example, Rieger (2017) has a section that is titled "Saudi Arabia and Israel: No cooperation despite shared interests". This is a Constructivist explanation to the Saudi-Israeli relations, and puts forth that "Saudi Arabia and Israel both wish to contain Iranian influence in the Arab world but direct

Saudi-Israeli cooperation towards this end is highly unlikely” (Patrick, 2017. P, 158). Rieger (2017) also offers a good examination of how Saudi Arabia played a role of peace mediator in the Arab – Israeli conflict. Although, he provided a good and comprehensive attempt at explaining the Saudi policy towards Israel, he examined the Saudi role as a peace mediator rather than a Saudi Arabia reaching mutual goals with Israel. Both Rieger (2017) and Patrick (2017) should be praised for their careful attempt at examining such pragmatic Saudi stances towards Israel. Nevertheless, there is far greater room for conceptualisation of both cooperation and communication, which is what the project will do.

Although there have been few debates in the literature regarding the empirical case of cooperation and communication between Saudi Arabia and Israel, there is certainly debate in how to approach and theorize the International Relations of the Middle East. For example, the Realist approach of the Middle East views states as individual actors that produce relationships and alliances to achieve their self-interested goals and maximize their power (Donnelly, 2000). Although Realism is not incorrect in that respect, it does negate normative values that plays a role in IR of the Middle East, and does not put these norms and identity factors in enough consideration.

Walt’s (1987) work in “The Origins of Alliances” is a sublime example of the limitation of a Realist approach to the study of the Middle East. Due to the theories of Balance of Power and Balance of Threat, and Bandwagoning theories originating in Western Europe, the alliance pattern of the Middle East was a valid and interesting region to test such theories. The book looked at the history of the Middle East and described the states’ motives in forming alliances from a rationalist perspective, but it also demonstrated the expected limitation of the Realist approach by the admittance of Walt himself. Walt (1987) concedes to this limitation and methodological weakness by admitting that he lacks in the” specialized training and a knowledge of unique cultural factors that I cannot claim”(Walt, 1987. P, 14).

Thankfully, this is something this project can tackle. Not only am I a student that has studied the Middle East in different approaches, but I also am from the Middle East. I do have the normative and cultural background that can play a major role in giving ample consideration to the normative values that play a role in the IR of the Middle East. Also, I have a strong understanding in the over-exaggeration of some normative aspects. The result of my understanding of the Arabic language will be beneficial and visible in chapter 6 when I argue against certain texts that have mistranslated primary sources such as verses from the Holy Quran.

If Saudi Arabia were to cooperate actively with Israel while negating the normative constraints that it faces, Realism would have been a suitable approach to explain this phenomenon. But that is not what is happening between Saudi Arabia and Israel; hence Realism is very limited in its theoretical approach in explaining the pragmatic policy towards Israel. What the Realist approach lacks in appreciation for normative reasons and explanations for either cooperation or discords Constructivism provides.

Constructivism has been used significantly in the International Relations of the Middle East. Due to the prevalence and emphasis on ethnic, religious and sectarian identities, Constructivism has been proven to be a useful approach. Furthermore, the Constructivist approach has been very fitting with the Pan-Arab ideology that has the liberation of the Palestinian territory and the demonization of Israel at the heart of its discourse. However, Constructivists, such as Telhami and Barnett (2002), give a prime example of how Constructivism is also a limited approach to the IR of the Middle East. In their book "Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East", they dismiss material gains and necessities such as security almost instantly from their approach, because they wanted to see the full effect of identity on states' foreign policies. But that also oversimplifies some of the relations in the Middle East because it does not allow room for pragmatic balancing between real interests and viewing goals in a rational sense while adhering to the identity of the states. The Constructive approach does display the limitations of not providing adequate consideration about the material

loss and gains. “[I]f realism ignores values and ideas, constructivism and its outriders run the risk of ignoring interests and material factors”(Halliday, 2005. P, 32).

Both approaches are considered limited in appreciating the entirety of both identity and material gains. To have an approach that will be used to explain Saudi foreign policy towards Israel either the logic of identity or the logic of material interests will negate the Saudi pragmatism towards Israel. The Saudi foreign policy towards Israel has highlighted a theoretical deficit in the literature.

It will be difficult to dispute that both Saudi Arabia and Israeli do not find Iran as a major security threat. It will also be difficult to dispute that there have not been any Saudi peace proposals towards Israel, nor the Saudi fatwas given by leaders of the Saudi religious establishment in regards to legitimising cooperation with Israel. These instances that were just mentioned are just like smoke-one can see it but yet it is elusive. Therefore, there needs to be a certain kind of approach that can provide a better understanding of the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel.

In order to give meaning to this pragmatic Saudi policy towards Israel, there needs to be a suitable theoretical and conceptual approach that would allow us to have a better understanding of the passive and active Saudi foreign policy towards Israel. The mainstream International Relations literature on its own cannot explain the complexities and nuances of the Saudi policy towards Israel. To appreciate the nuances and subtleties of cooperative behaviour and implicit communication, a conceptualisation of both cooperation and communication is necessary. As a result, the project will have two themes: a theme of cooperation, and theme of communication. There are two questions that will guide the project as a whole. First research question is how can Saudi Arabia cooperate with Israel while avoiding external and domestic constraints? The second question is how Saudi Arabia can communicate to Israel while avoiding external and domestic constraints? The scheme of answering the two questions is in the paragraphs below.

The outline of the project will be as the following. Chapter 2 of the project attempts to define passive cooperation and has three main sections. The first section examines the main characteristics of cooperation in general, then divides cooperation into two general forms: active cooperation, and the concept I produced - passive cooperation. Moreover, the chapter will also look at the costs and benefits of passive cooperation compared to active cooperation. It will look at benefits such as plausible deniability while active cooperation (alliances in particular) has a more of an obligatory nature that passive cooperation does not have ect.

Chapter 3 will revolve around the notion of passive communication and how the Saudi discourse towards Israel enables there to be a “communicative balance” between Israel and other constraints. Its aim is to provide a theoretical and methodological chapter which draws from literature from Speech Act Theory, Diplomatic ambiguities and Discourse Analyses. The mentioned literatures proved to be useful in contributing to creating a lens that will enable us to see the nuances and mechanisms of very implicit communication that takes place. It will help provide conceptual tools that can flesh out what can future relations and active cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel can entail. For the notion of communicative balance to be considered, one must use a post-structuralist approach due to its belief that meanings are contingent and can evolve. The chapter is then followed by a methodology section that gives a brief guide have how the author negotiated around certain methodological obstacles, as well as, explaining why the author chose the sources they did.

Chapter 4, is the first case study of the project. It will apply the concept of passive cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel in two cases. The first case will be Iraq, and this case is particularly relevant because there have different two kinds of passive cooperation that ensued during Desert Shield/Storm (1990-1991). It is also relevant as it is considered that it was when Saudi-Israeli passive cooperation first ensued. What is interesting about this case is that it will display that passive cooperation is a form of cooperation that does require activity towards each other. Rather, their

intentional harmonious active efforts were towards their mutual focal point at the time-Iraq. It also shows how close passive cooperation can transform into active cooperation. And therefore suggest the cooperative spirit that passive cooperation has

The second case will be Iran, and this is extremely interesting because it too has more than one instant of passive cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel. But this case or focal point is important because the Iranian case is currently the main focal point that both Saudi Arabia and Israel share today. What is as of equal importance is that this study aims to offer to offer an alternative to the over-simplifications of the Saudi-Israeli cooperation reports that are prominent in the media today.

The concepts and communicative mechanisms such tones and contingency of communicative meanings which were explained in chapter 3, will then be used in chapter 5. It will predominantly focus on four main peace initiatives that were declared to Israel. They are the Fahd plan (1981), Fez plan (1982), Abdullah plan (2002) and the Arab Peace Initiative (2002). The aim of the chapter is to highlight what is Saudi Arabia communicating, or have communicated to Israel via three tones: tone of demand, tone of promise and tone of request. It is the requesting tones that the literature does not cover at all. This tone communicates a kind of flexibility and willingness of negotiations. The chapter will highlight important events and the Saudi policies towards Israel before and after the peace initiatives. It will display how language enabled Saudi legitimacy by balancing between communicating to Israel while avoiding regional constraints.

Chapter 6 will look at the domestic dimension of the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel. The core theme of the chapter revolves around Islam or 'Sharia' as a tool of legitimisation and de-legitimisation. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section is about the domestic constraints, and how known terrorists such as Osama Bin Laden and Abdulaziz al Mqrin have tried to recruit potential Saudi terrorists to their cause. Analyses of the mentioned terrorists' rhetoric - and fatwas are crucial because it gives a very good prediction of what kind of reaction would an active

bilateral Saudi-Israeli cooperation look like. My prediction is based on the fact that the aforementioned terrorists claim that there are Israeli forces on Saudi territory- which means they claim that there is Saudi-Israeli active cooperation. This only strengthens the need to examine their rhetoric and discourse. The second section of the chapter will examine how the Saudi ruling elite used religion to legitimise unpopular foreign policy decisions in the past. Within that section, there are two kinds of efforts, a security-religious approach (such as the utilisation of the religious police), and the Saudi religious establishments' discourse and fatwas regarding the legitimisation of relations between Muslim and non-Muslim states-including Israel. After looking at chapter 6, one can see how Saudi Arabia not only balanced between different audiences, but more importantly, balanced its image to the different audiences.

My findings: there is no active cooperation, Saudi Arabia is willing to have an active cooperation upon certain conditions, the main constraint is going to be an external constraint.

Subsequently, the project will then be deduced three major findings. The first, the nature of the proven cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel has *not* been in an active form, but in a passive form, and therefore negating the notion that there has been an "alliance" as suggested by Davidson (2013). The second major find, or major deduction, is that the main constraint to an active Saudi-Israeli cooperation. Chapter 6 has argued that the Saudi ruling elite can legitimise an active cooperation through its religious fatwas amongst other avenues of incentivisation such as renterism.

In sum, this project aims at explaining Saudi foreign policy towards Israel that has *not* been developed in the literature. A policy of pragmatism through passivity towards Israel highlights the nature of the Saudi foreign policy. Saudi Arabia, through the years, has always had to balance between religious and tribal conservatism, regional and global interests, severe security concerns and its legitimacy. Since Saudi Arabia has been able to maintain its legitimacy and its interests, Saudi Arabia can deal with relations towards Israel. This project will look at how Saudi Arabia has balanced between reaching mutual goals with Israel, and communicating incentives to normalise relations

while maintaining its legitimacy. This study argues that Saudi Arabia is able to maintain this through a passive form of foreign policy

# Chapter 2

## Theoretical framework: *What is Passive Cooperation?*

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### 2.1 Introduction:

What is passive cooperation? How can states cooperate without explicitly coordinating with each other? Understanding why states cooperate in the way they do is difficult without understanding the context that states find themselves in. In some circumstances, arguably states cooperate without explicitly coordinating with each other. Here, such behaviour could be described as ‘passive cooperation’. Yet understanding why states cooperate in this particular way is difficult without understanding the context that states find themselves in. It is also important to distinguish this kind of behaviour from the situation where states are really unwilling to cooperate, but end up making strategic choices ‘as if’ they are cooperating because of the existence of obvious focal points. The main purpose of this chapter was to explain why states prefer to cooperate in a very tacit and passive way, which might seem illogical in some cases. Conversely, it will also argue that in some cases it is the only way. This chapter is divided in three main sections.

The first section is dedicated to reviewing the literature about what has been said about cooperation. It will look at how authors such as Arglye (1991), Keohane (1984) and Giovannetti and Piga (2017) and their attempts at defining cooperation. One must look at what the general concept of cooperation is before examining what passive cooperation is. Once highlighting what the literature says about key characteristics of cooperation, I will argue my understanding of passive cooperation and its forms. In short, passive cooperation can be considered as actors achieving their mutual goals without any policy adjustment or policy accommodation. This can be done in two forms of passive cooperation: intentional harmony of interests, or through a silent passive

cooperation. More detail on the actual mechanism of cooperation and assistance will be examined later in the chapter.

The second section examines the costs and benefits of passive cooperation. It will look at key aspects such as *deniability*, which is a major benefit of passive cooperation. The section will also look at alliances as a particular form of cooperation. One of the main reasons why alliances are chosen is because it exemplifies the weaknesses of passive cooperation. On the other hand, there is a more important reason why an examination of alliances needs to be addressed further. As was mentioned in the introduction, Davidson (2013) argued that there is an “unholy alliance” occurring between the Gulf States and Israel. In his the four-page section, he sporadically mentions instances of alleged cooperation between Gulf States. Towards the end of the “unholy alliance” section, Davidson (2013) mentions the Saudi-Israeli relations, and says that there are “frequent and strong rumours circulating that the two powers are co-operating, mostly as a result of Saudi Arabia’s stance on Iran and the existence of a mutual enemy”(p,179). Davidson (2013) does not indicate where this information is obtained from, and does not investigate the validity of such rumours. That being said, Davidson (2013), himself is regarded as scholarly authority on Gulf affairs, and therefore, the categorisation of Saudi-Israeli mutual perception of Iran as an alliance, with such superficiality, only creates more confusion on the already opaque Saudi-Israeli relations. It is to this end that we need pay diligent attention, and allocate enough effort to the notion of alliances, and argue what alliances are, and why the Saudi-Israeli cooperation is *not* in the form of an alliance

The third section will look at the conditions of when passive cooperation takes place. It will look at how there needs not be explicit or direct communication between states when they share a focal point (Schelling, 1966). In addition, passive cooperation will be the obvious choice when states face domestic and external constraints of active cooperation. Passive cooperation therefore is arguably only relevant in a relatively restricted set of cases. In particular, I will argue in this thesis that passive cooperation is a concept that explains and gives more meaning to what is the Saudi foreign policy

towards Israel. It may indeed prove to be a unique concept, but the case between Saudi Arabia and Israel is just as unique. Therefore, passive cooperation will provide the conceptual tool to understand and explain how Saudi Arabia reaches mutual goals with Israel while maintaining its legitimacy.

## **2.2 What is passive cooperation?**

There are few generally accepted definitions of cooperation, let alone passive cooperation. However, there are some useful definitions that can enable us to have a better understanding of what passive cooperation is. Cooperation is a concept that is not exclusive to just International Relations; therefore, examining the literature other than the International Relations literature is fruitful. Some crucial definition will be examined below.

Definitions of cooperation have varied from very basic ones to some that are much more encompassing. An example of the former is that “[C]ooperation can be defined drily, as an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter”(Sennett, 2012. P, 5). In order to have an example of the latter, one can refer to the work of Argyle (1991). His book “Cooperation: the basis of sociability” is crucial, because it not only examines the notion and concept of cooperation, but Argyle (1991) also asks the same questions as I, namely, what is cooperation? Hence our aims overlap to a large extent.

In addition, he critiques the attempts of defining cooperation and claims that “cooperation has been used too narrowly in the past”. He puts forth a definition and claims that “ [c]ooperation: acting together, in a coordinated way at work, leisure, or in a social relationship, in the pursuit of shared goals, the enjoyment of the joint activity, or simple furthering the relationship”(Argyle, 1991. P, 32).

His work is extensive and engages with aspects of conditions of cooperation and the numbers of participants ect. On the other hand, there are two main aspects that can be taken from his work. Firstly, he provides a very substantial and encompassing definition of what cooperation is. Secondly,

although he examines the concept of cooperation extensively, he does not focus on other forms of cooperation such as tacit or implicit cooperation.

At the same time, the tacitness of cooperation is not ruled out in his work, since Argyle describes harmonious social relations as “cooperative” (P, 29). Therefore, he gives a good foundation of what cooperation is and what are its limits. Such as, coordination, joint activity and the perception of mutual goals.

Other scholars have provided useful work on what tacit cooperation can be. In other words, tacit is opposed to official forms of cooperation such as alliances(which will be looked at in more detail later on in the chapter). Sevidem (2013) argues that tacit cooperation can take place with no explicit communication or an agreement. Others such as Simmons and Steinberg (2007) have added that

[G]enuine tacit cooperation involves something more. It is based on shared expectations(...) what distinguishes cooperation whether tacit or explicit, are the subtle forms of mutual reliance(Simmons, and Steinberg, 2007. P, 298).

The previous paragraph helps elucidate certain characteristics of tacit cooperation. Firstly, it does not have to involve an explicit agreement such alliance were agreements are contractual and obligatory. Secondly, tacit cooperation is more about mutual understanding of the goals, rather than explicit agreement on what the goals are. On the other hand, such definitions and descriptions provide important characteristics of the various forms of tacit cooperation, but they are still active forms of cooperation due to the policy adjustment (this will be explained in more detail in the next paragraphs), yet, it does not provide what passive cooperation is. In order to have a better understanding of passive cooperation, the work of both Keohane (1984) and Giovannetti and Piga (2017) are considered to be crucial and must be examined further.

In “After Hegemony”, Kehone (1984) significantly contributes to our understanding of what cooperation is as well as harmony and thus subsequently what passive cooperation could be. The aim of his work revolved around the concept of cooperation and the role of a hegemonic force facilitating cooperation. In his endeavour to understand the concept of cooperation, he

acknowledges that “cooperation is elusive enough, and its sources sufficiently multifaceted and intertwined, that it constitutes a difficult subject to study”(Keohane, 1984. P, 10).

The quote above reaffirms two aspects. The first, it reaffirms that cooperation is indeed a vast subject. With that said, it allows the discussion of what kind of forms cooperation it may take. Secondly, it reaffirms that the concept of cooperation is a difficult concept to nail down and define. This means passive cooperation would be more challenging and therefore certainly a unique concept to develop.

He defines cooperation as a process “when the policies actually followed by one government are regarded by its partners as facilitating realization of their own objectives, as the result of a process of policy coordination (Keohane, 1984. pp, 51-52). His attempt for defining cooperation is very beneficial for understanding what passive cooperation is. One of his aims at defining cooperation was to distinguish it from harmony, since he argues that both harmony and cooperation have been used too closely in the literature and therefore clouds and confuses the understanding of both (this will be crucial to the understanding of passive cooperation). He states the following,

Cooperation must be distinguished from harmony. Harmony refers to a situation in which actors' policies (pursued in their own self-interest without regard for others) automatically facilitate the attainment of others' goals. The classic example of harmony is the hypothetical competitive-market world of the classical economists, in which the Invisible Hand ensures that the pursuit of self-interest by each contributes to the interest of all (Keohane, 1984. P, 51)

The concept of passive cooperation is still very scarce in the literature in general let alone the International Relations literature. It is mentioned occasionally throughout the literature, but then mostly without much very much attention to its meaning. For example, it has been mentioned that people were passively assisting the rebels while in order to hurt the fleeing refugees, but not what does it means. Giovanetti and Piga (2017) however provide a very timely article provides with a definition and a conceptualization of passive cooperation.

In the work of Giovannetti and Piga (2017) titled “The Contrasting Effects of Active and Passive Cooperation on Innovation and Productivity: Evidence from British Local Innovation Networks” attempt to define and conceptualize what passive cooperation is. In their paper, they certainly engage with the concept of passive cooperation. Conversely, after examining their work, one can gather what they mean by passive cooperation. It is certainly helpful to highlight the characteristics of their understanding of passive cooperation.

Firstly, they believe that “cooperation is passive through spill overs through innovative activities” (P, 103). In addition, they also claim that “cooperation can be either explicit (active) as discussed above, or implicit (passive) due to spill overs in innovative activities. Spill overs was first discussed in Marshal (1890) as arising from agglomeration” (Giovannetti, and Piga, 2017. P, 103).

There are several aspects that the previous quotes can indicate about their understanding of passive cooperation. Firstly, the notion of “spill over” is very much akin to and connected to the notion of harmony of interests. The harmony of interest revolves around an overall benefit which is a result of actors pursuing their own individual goals. Secondly, rather than arguing what passive cooperation means, they focused more on the role that it plays. In fact, their understanding of passive cooperation does not deviate away too much from the conceptual understanding of “spill over” that they demonstrated in their extensive review on the literature of spill over.

As a result, their notion of passive cooperation implies that it is very much connected, or a result of, an active cooperation. This claim is inspired by their claim that the “modality of cooperation, i.e. whether cooperation is the result of an explicit decision, linked to profit seeking behaviour, or the passive consequence of the presence of spillovers.”(Giovannetti, and Piga, 2017. P, 104).

The most significant aspect that can be obtained from the work of Giovannetti and Piga (2017) is their attempt to differentiate between what is active and what is passive cooperation. Although I put forth a different understanding and definition of passive cooperation then Giovannetti and Piga

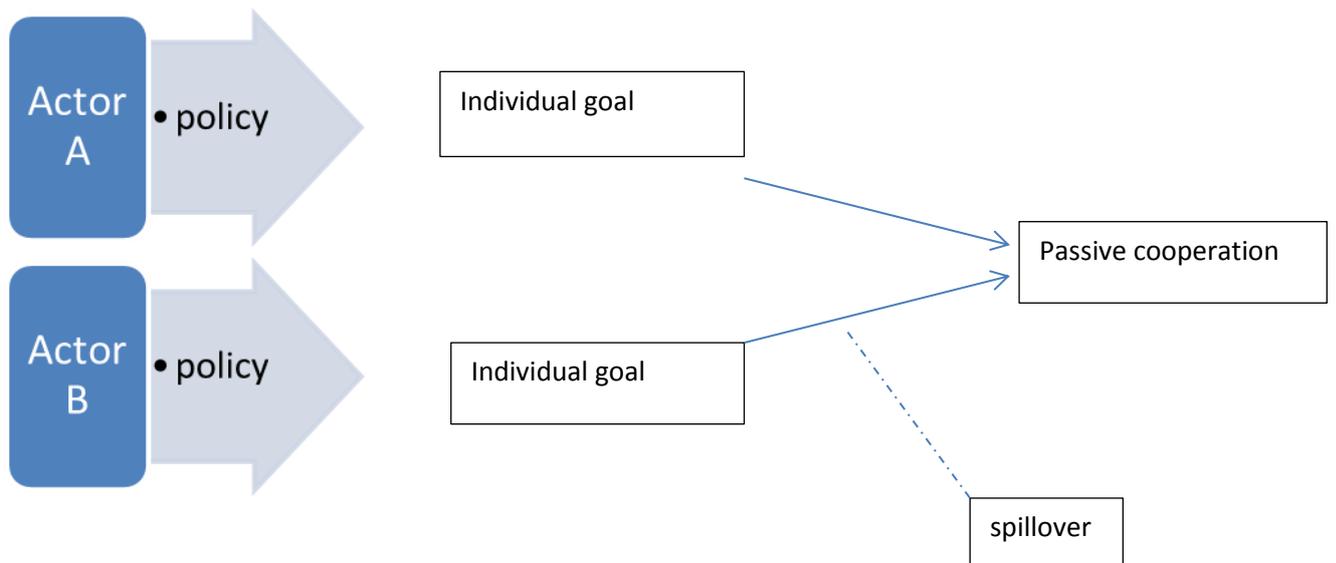
(2017), nevertheless, their work provides the opportunity to engage in a debate within passive cooperation, rather than a debate within that vast concept of cooperation. In other words, their work helps to narrow the scope of passive cooperation, and subsequently, helps refine the concept. The next section will focus on the meaning of passive cooperation that in the political arena.

### **2.2.1 Intentional harmony of interest**

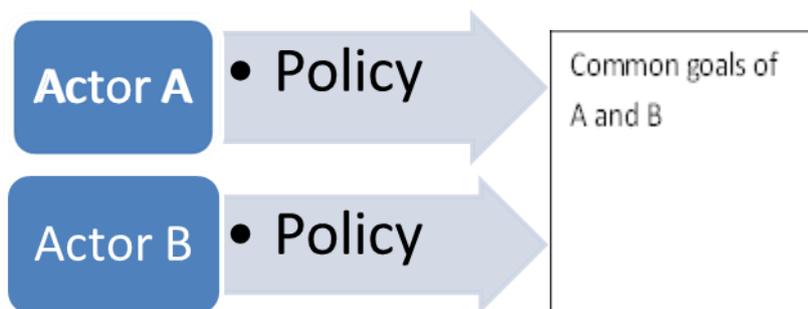
Passive cooperation can take different forms, including certain intentional harmonies of interests. It is regarded in the International Relations literature that harmony of interest is not cooperation. Authors such as Keohane made a very fruitful attempt to separate the understanding of cooperation and harmony. I am not assuming that the harmony of interest is explicit cooperation, but I do argue, that an intentional or desired harmony of interest is more cooperative in the passive sense, and there is a difference between the harmony of interest that has been mentioned by Keohane (1984) as well as the notion of spillover by Giovannetti and Piga (2017).

One of the main differences between the harmony of interest in the literature as well as spillover in the previous section and the Intentional harmony of Interest is the nature of the goal. In referring to the harmony of interest Keohane (1984), or in their understanding of the spillover/passive cooperation in the Giovannetti and Piga (2017) analyse the situation that have more than one goal. They believed that goals are very separate and not shared with the other actors. Keohane (1984) writes that “[H]armony refers to a situation in which actors’ policies (pursued in their own self-interest without regard for others) automatically facilitate the attainment of other’s goals” (Keohane, 1984. P, 51).

**Figure 2.1 between the spill over and passive cooperation.**



**Figure 2.2 passive cooperation and the intentional harmony of interest.**



The goals are more mutual in the Intentional Harmony of Interest. As a result, the spillover of achieving separate individual goals is not there. However, the mutual goal in an intentional harmony of interest is more of a general goal – rather than a specific, separate and individual goal. For example, the goal in an intentional harmony of interest can be considered something like a regional threat. The general nature of this goal is what increases the potential of passive cooperation due to the lack of the need for explicit coordination. This means that the result of achieving that goal is simultaneous with the other actor's/state's goal.

Therefore, this makes the individual policies of the states involved in the intentional harmony of interest cooperative and assistive. The role of *intentionality* here is what makes this form of passive cooperation helpful in two ways. First, it is the intention to not adjust each towards each other's policy or accommodate each other's policy in order to reach the mutual goal (as that would turn the harmony into active cooperation). The second aspect of the intentionality is that the actors involved do not make their policy deviate away from the mutual goal. Such an intentional harmony of interest makes the involved actors' policies (Saudi Arabia and Israel in this project) in a desired and intended distance. Their policies are therefore not too far, which enables them to passively assist each other, and not too close, avoiding constraints (the benefits of passive cooperation will be examined in greater detail later in the chapter).

The aspect of intentionality leads to another difference between Keohane's (1984) understanding of harmony, and what the intentional harmony is. Keohane(1984) claims that harmony requires no political effort, and that "[h]armony is apolitical. No communication is necessary" (Keohane, R. 1984. P, 52). If there is anything that can symbolize political competence, masterful diplomacy and pragmatism to a high standard, it would be the intentional harmony of interest that is being argued in this chapter. There must be a conscious effort to maintain a specific and intended policy that was mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The establishment and maintenance of a certain distance, that is not too close but not too far, cannot be done without an intentional and concise political effort to maintain such a passive form of cooperation. Hence the 'intentional' in the intentional harmony of interests which is clearly separate from both the harmony in Keohane (1984) and the spill over effect/passive cooperation in Goivennetti and Piga (2017). The element of consciousness in passively cooperating is crucial in the 'silent passive cooperation'-which is the other form of passive cooperation.

### **2.2.2 Silent passive cooperation.**

Actors can passively cooperate by being silent. There is coordinated silence and the uncoordinated form of silent assistance. Both have the same mechanism of assisting, but tell a very different story about the nature of the cooperation. The main difference between the coordinated and uncoordinated form of silent assisting will be the level of communication beforehand. Parties can communicate how and why it would be assisting to stay silent by using diplomatic channels or even through third party communication that the request of silence is relayed by.

On the other hand, uncoordinated silence, is very different in terms of the actors' relations with one another due to the lack of communication between the actors. This is where the context and the intentionality of the silent actor to remain silent determines whether it is assisting or not. Further examples will illustrate this point further. There needs to be certain condition for silent passive cooperation to occur. Firstly, as was mentioned above, the actor choosing to be silent is intentionally and consciously staying silent. Secondly, the passively silent state is allowing the other actor that it is passively assisting, by not becoming an obstacle in their pursuit of their mutual goal.

The passively cooperative policy of Israel during Desert Storm is a prime example of this (this example will be examined and analysed in much more detail in chapter 4). The situation was that Israel was very close to joining the Arab and international coalition, or at least, joining their military effort in expelling Iraq from Kuwait. However, if it did attack Iraq with the coalition, the coalition would have lost its legitimacy. Israel chose to be passive and allow the Arab and international coalition to continue their policy. In other words, Israel removed itself from being an obstacle and therefore passively cooperates with the Saudi and American led coalition.

### **2.2.3 A Comparison and contrasting of the two forms of passive cooperation.**

A brief comparison between the different forms of passive cooperation will help highlight their key features. Both forms of passive cooperation share two main commonalities. The first is in the consciousness and intentionality. Actors that want to be involved in any of the two forms of passive

cooperation must be consciously aware that their passive policy is cooperative towards their mutual goal. The second commonality is the level of communication and building the consensus between the involved actors. It should be clear by now that there is no explicit communication between the states involved in a passive form of cooperation. Conversely, this does not mean there is not communication. The communication in a passive form of cooperation is very general, implicit and abstract in nature. It is very similar to the nature of the goal in a passive cooperation-general. What is meant by general is that communication is done in the way of statements that do not have to be direct towards each other.

A perfect example of such was the Israeli Prime Minister's speech to the UN in November of 2013. He focused on how the international community should keep the pressure on the Iranian nuclear program, and how it would cause security concerns and the survivability of Israel. During his speech, he sent a very implicit and subtle message to the Arab states to join the anti-Iranian bandwagon. Although the Israeli prime minister addressed the "moderate Arab" states, the aim was to build a consensus between them rather expect a reply from any other the Gulf states who do not recognize Israel diplomatically. As result, such implicit abstract and general statements contribute in building a consensus about what their mutual goal is, in order to, to either maintain the harmony between them or encourage a passive policy of cooperation.

On the other hand, the difference between them is in the way they are assisting. In particular, the level of activity between the involved actors. The silent passive cooperation in this regard is simple. The main effort in becoming passively cooperating is in not becoming an obstacle- in other words, being static which will enable the other actor to pursue the common goal. The intentional harmony of interest however involves activity from both actors towards their mutual goal. In other words, their needs to be an active effort towards the mutual goal, but also an active effort in not accommodating each other's policy and transforming it into an active form of assistance.

The previous section attempted to answer the question of what is meant by passive cooperation. It can be deduced that the literature in regards to what cooperation is indicates the complexity of such a concept. But what can also be deduced from the previous section is what is meant by passive cooperation and the different forms of intentional harmony of interest and a silent passive cooperation. The next section will explore what are the costs and benefits of passive cooperation.

## **2.3 Costs and benefits of passive cooperation**

In this section, the cost and benefits of both passive cooperation as well as alliances will be examined. A comparison will contribute to having a better understanding of what passive cooperation is, as well as, why would states prefer to choose a passive policy of cooperating. There are specific reasons why alliances are being examined in this section. Firstly, the concept of cooperation as was mentioned in the previous section is vast. Alliances are therefore a particular form of 'active' cooperation which is very relevant in the literature of International Relations. It is also considered as an undisputed form of active cooperation due alliances' contractual nature (which will be examined in the following paragraphs).

### **2.3.1 Contractual nature of passive cooperation:**

Passive cooperation is not formed on a contractual basis. Its obligatory nature is also extremely limited. The lack of policy adjustment is what distinguishes passive assistance from any other form of active assistance and alliances in particular. Passive cooperation allows the states involved to act in the way it wants to act. There are no restrictions on how to behave due to a contract and hence passive assistance offers a tremendous amount of flexibility for a state's behaviour. What a lack of a contract provides is that it gives a state more options. "[F]oreclosure of options is one of the costs of alliance making" (Snyder, 1997. P, 146).

The lack of obligation and public display of an alliance has its benefits. The benefit is that threatening states will not have a clear idea of what the passively assisting state will do and what its intentions

are because its options are open and therefore not constrained by a certain alliance. This can allow a threatening state to be confused and can be to a certain extent a form of deterrence. The reason is because this state is causing the other threatening state to hesitate because its options will be increased. Once a threatening state knows that a certain state is in an alliance, that alliance will be very telling about the nature of the state, and also to a large extent how the state will behave. In other words, passive cooperation is very discreet about states' intentions. It is also discreet about intelligence and no obligation to share sensitive information with other state that can then be used against it in the future.

In addition, the lack of a contractual obligation in passive assistance allows a state to assess whether or not a state that it is passively cooperating is growing in strength which can harm the state as a result of this passive assistance. In this case, a state can then stop the harmonious policies in order to stop the other state from gaining too much unwanted influence. The way it does this is by stopping the contribution to the mutual goal that it has with the other state.

The main benefits of this is that since there is no policy accommodation which is tied by a contract, stopping passive assistance is very easy and can be done very subtly. In other words, not contributing to the common goal in passive assistance is not an act of aggression. Also, not contributing or assisting passively towards the goal cannot be labelled or considered officially as uncooperative behaviour because the way this form of assisting is not official. There is no document that allows other states to measure or gauge the expected level of cooperation that it does with a signed contract by the state stating what its obligations are. Therefore, the lack of a contractual form of cooperation is what separates passive assistance to alliances

The contractual status in alliances is generally obligatory, but the contract itself can depend on many variables of the alliance. As any contract, the contract can be changed, amended and updated. The reason why the alliances are generally obligatory is because there have been different scholars who argue that there are different levels to the commitment within alliances.

In Small and Singer (1966) work "Formal Alliances: 1816-1965" they highlight that there is not just one kind of alliance, but three. They are defence pacts, neutrality and non- aggression pacts, and finally ententes. Their classification to these different types is based on the nature of the commitment within these three types. In the defence pact, the commitment and obligation was to assist militarily. While in the non-aggression pact, the obligation was to become neutral in any scenario, and the only obligation in an entente was to consult.

In the defence pact (Class I), the signatories obligated themselves to intervene militarily on behalf of one another if either were attacked. In the neutrality pact (Class II), the commitment was to remain militarily neutral if the partner were attacked. And in the entente (Class III), the only obligation was to consult with, or cooperate, in such a military contingency (Small and Singer, 1966. P, 261).

There can be two different factors that can be deduced from the previous quote. Firstly, Small and Singer highlight alliances does not have to be an obligation to assist military. The three classifications clearly highlight levels of commitment, but their nature of commitment is different. The second deduction is that there is a difference between the first class of alliance which are defence pacts, compared to the second class (non-aggression pacts) and third class (ententes). In defence pacts they wrote that the signatory "obligated" themselves to a commitment. While in the non-aggression pact and ententes, they did not write they obligated themselves.

Arguably, the term "obligated themselves" has an ambiguous meaning. Is it a signed contract, rather than a commitment which can be non-contractual? What adds to this curiosity is that Small and Singer (1966) meant a signed contract in a defence alliance compared to a relaxed commitment is the nature of obligation. In defence pacts, there is a clear difference in the intensity of scale of the commitment which is assisting each other military, compared to a commitment of being neutral and one of consultation. However, it is not clear whether they intended to highlight this difference of official contractual obligation, or just a tacit obligation.

Other writers such as Weitsman (2004) support this flexible level of commitment of an alliance. Weitsman claims that "alliances are formed when two or more states conclude an agreement to

advance their mutual security via an implicit or explicit agreement to come to the other's aid or to maintain benevolent neutrality in the event of war"(Weitsman, 2004. P, 34). Weitsman clearly gives more explanation of the different levels of commitment.

On the other hand, Robert Kann provides a different perspective in his work "Alliances versus Ententes". It is clear from his title that his argument from the outset is that ententes are not even a form of alliance. In addition, Kann (1976) argues that ententes and non-aggression pacts are different than alliances because they are "flexible associations between states" (Kann, 1976. P, 612) rather than alliances. Kann's (1976) work then provides detailed comparison between alliances and ententes. He also argues that the contractual nature of alliances enables it to reach the common goals because the level of commitment in an entente is not as obligatory because there is no formal contract.

Other writers have indeed acknowledged this difficulty in understanding the obligatory nature of alliances. Interestingly, Berridge (1989) refers back to both Small and Singer's work, and Kann's work. He also supports the claim of Kann's (1976) which alliances are different to ententes because of its contractual obligation. He then expands on the concept of ententes and praises Kann (1976) for his work because it maintained the concept of ententes as a separate one rather than it being an underdeveloped concept within the literature of alliances. It is imperative to understand that the element that separated alliances from other flexible forms of state association was its contractual obligatory nature. Therefore, the main characteristic in alliances which separates it from any form of active assistance and passive assistance is its contracting nature.

It is this obligation of assistance that can be very reassuring for states. On the other hand, this element of obligation can be a burden for other states. In addition, the contractual nature and longevity depends on internal and external factors. At the core of the internal factor are the negotiation and the agreement on what these states are contracted to do. In alliances, states will try to maximize its benefits while trying to reduce its costs. This negotiation over what the obligations of

the state are also depends on other internal factors such as shared values and capabilities of the allies.

States that have an alliance based on shared values will have a stronger level of commitment (Yomomato, 1992). When there is a stronger level of commitment the sense of obligation and the reinforcement of the alliance will be stronger. If however, the alliance is based on common interests and states that do not have the same values, or possibly extremely different values, then the obligation and level of commitment can be limited. In theory, states will fulfil their obligations in an alliance no matter what the differences may be. Conversely, the reality of states fulfilling their complete obligations will vary from one alliance to another. Whether these values are the same or not, it in theory should fulfil their commitment because that is what they have been contracted to do.

Other dimensions that externally affect the contractual nature of the alliances are the capabilities of the states involved in the alliance. States create an alliance because there is a specific goal and desire that it wants to reach. The different capabilities of the states can affect the nature of the contract. For example, a militarily weak state creates an alliance with another weak state. That alliance would not be logical if they wanted military assistance from each other. Logically, a militarily weak state would look to create an alliance with a more powerful state that can fulfil its needs. The United States and Saudi Arabia during desert storm is a prime example of this. Saudi Arabia knew that it cannot be a match for the powerful Iraqi army and it also knew that any alliance from the Arab world would not satisfy Saudi Arabia's need to protect itself from Iraq. However, the United States was not the only state that Saudi Arabia aligned itself with. Its alliance within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab League gave Saudi Arabia the legitimacy to allow the United States forces to be present in Saudi Arabia.

If the two examples are compared, it will be clear that Saudi's alliance with the United States was very different from its alliance with the GCC. The external elements of alliances can be very different,

but not different in importance. Some states form alliances for military needs, while others form alliances for legitimizing action. Whatever these values and reasons for alliances are, they can have an effect on the formation and duration of the alliance.

### **2.3.2 Plausible deniability**

One of the most difficult things in international relations is trying to figure out whether an actor is being truthful or not. Deniability is a common trend in international relations. In some cases states will deny something because they are telling the truth, or sometimes they will deny something in order to hide the truth. States have used the deniability strategy for so long that it even has become a tactic referring as plausible deniability

If we look at what Lamb's definition of plausible deniability we see that he claims it is "a legal concept. It refers to lack of evidence proving an allegation... the allegation even though maybe true" (Lamb, 2013. P, 28). Furthermore, it is a very well used tactic used by the US during its action in the Cold War. It also very clear why a state would want to deny something it alleged to be connected with.

A state would want to deny an action or its involvement of anything for a number of reasons. The state might be involved with illegal activities that the state itself claims is illegal. If that is the case, then the officials or the administration that has committed those illegal actions will lose tremendous amount of credibility and would rightfully be labelled as hypocrites or anything of the like, and therefore "the consequences of disclosure [of the truth] is to be the most grave "(Mitrovich, 2000. P,21). Those governments will possibly face the prosecution of certain officials, and perhaps loose an election campaign in a democracy. If the state is a non-democratic government and was alleged to be involved in something illegal or unpopular by their population then the legitimacy of the governing body will be hindered and questioned, and possibly be demanded to change. That is why states would deny something.

Passive assistance does allow a similar kind of benefit for a state. Plausible deniability is a policy that knowingly denies a state's involvement about something. Yes there is a deniability that passive assistance and plausible deniability share, but it is in what they deny that makes a difference between them. Plausible deniability or at least the literature indicates that it denies a certain active assistance such as the Iran-contra situation or collaborating with illegal terrorist groups.

If we look at the examples that have been used in the literature, it is clear that the examples that have been used were of denying active assistance. The states denied doing something illegal or a connection with an illegal group. On the other hand, passive cooperation denies two things. Firstly, it can deny any active assistance between the states. In other words, it is confirming the status and relationship inactive cooperation between the two states. Secondly, it can also deny the level of connection and cooperative behaviour that might cause a certain un-satisfaction amongst its population. Said differently, if there was an investigation of how harmonious states are, then it can easily downplay the closeness and harmonious policies with the unpopular state or actor.

Furthermore, what passive cooperation allows or avoids is the obligation to elaborate. A state that uses passive assistance as its method of achieving a common goal with another is not obliged to confess something when there is no policy adjustment nor policy accommodation regarding the matter of passive assistance to the other state. If we examine the drawing, the point of satisfaction is the point of policy adjustment. When there is an intentional harmony such as the drawing on the right, the deniability is much more simple to achieve and much more convincing. What also contributes to the lack of obligation to admit to the public of an on-going situation is that there is no legal or contractual obligation towards the other state which is the opposite of an alliance.

If the relationship towards the other state was public and contractual such as an alliance, then there can be grounds to at least allege some plausible allegations towards them. Since there is no actual contractual and obligatory relationship, deniability which involves these two states is much easier to

do and an allegation of such loses momentum easily. Deniability is a prime reason why states would want to cooperate passively, as opposed to an active form of cooperation such an alliance.

For example, we can see this happen with the Saudi and Israeli phenomenon. Both states do not have any diplomatic recognition. Conversely, both states have been allegedly cooperating over security and political matters over Iran. As a result, there have been growing rumours of cooperation between the two states. When Saudi officials have been asked is there any cooperation between Saudi and Israel, the Saudi officials replied and denied this allegation with much ease, and no real elaboration because there is no proven cooperation or policy adjustment between Saudi Arabia and Israel and said that “[t]here are no relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel”(Al-Jubair, 2017).

The question that was asked to the Saudi official enquired whether there is any kind of alliance, in other words active assistance between them. The Saudi official did not lie at all, and his answer was completely true and legitimate, but also limited. The official focused on something that they can easily deny because it is clear to everybody that there are no diplomatic or official relations between them. The official did not indicate the potential of an alliance or a reason to have an understanding between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The answer was enough to satisfy any potential hazards of declaring there is any cooperation in addition to doing it legitimately. This is how and why deniability in passive assistance can be beneficial in certain acute cases as opposed to alliances.

### **2.3.3 Deterrence**

Alliances may however provide a stronger deterrent effect. Deterrence is the effect of a certain action that was intended, but stopped due to fear of a negative undesired effect. Snyder (1997) says that “[D]etterrence is the effect of an alliance in reducing the possibility of an attack” (Snyder, 1997. P, 56). The literature of alliance and deterrence is between two camps. The first believe that alliance does deter aggression, and the other believes that alliance causes an escalation of war because “not every alliance affects behaviour in the same way” (Smith, 1995. P, 410). They may disagree on the

result that an alliance will lead to, but is widely agreed upon that alliance does display some kind of commitment. Whether an alliance causes deterrence or not, nevertheless, alliances are signals of intentions of certain actions. However, rarely is there any work by a scholar that argues the value of deterrence of an alliance without mentioning how it can provoke war any kind of provocation to war.

The previous paragraphs explained briefly what is deterrence and if alliances does deter, but what is the actual deterrence or deterring factors in an alliance? The alliance can deter for different reasons. Benson (2012) in his book “Constructing International Security: Alliances, Deterrence, And Moral Hazards” highlights four reasons why alliances can be deterring. He claims that “deterrence and restraint on four main factors; the defender’s power relative to the protégé and adversary; the defenders preference for the protégé’s security; the defenders preference for disputes involving its protégés are settled; and the observability of the actions leading to war between the protégé and the adversary” (Benson, 2012. P, 10).

What can be obtained from the previous quote is that the factors of deterrence that Benson claims is concentrated on the defender, which is clearly a description of a more powerful state. Conversely, a defender’s capability is not the only factor that deters, but the defender’s track record can be a source of deterrence. When aggressors know that a target of theirs have committed allies that are not hesitant on taking action in their favour, the aggressors will be less likely to attack. The main variable of deterrence in this case is the historic track record of the ally, and not its power.

However, a defender or a single ally is not the only factor that causes deterrence in an alliance. The collective commitment and cooperation within the alliance is another factor that can cause deterrence. The number of allied members is also a source of deterrence. If there is an alliance of two weak states, an alliance can be limited. If the alliance is made up of 10 weak states, the deterrence is more because there is a numerical element that can be a deterring factor. More importantly, if the alliance itself and the members within it have a strong sense of commitment to each other and have proved to work together collectively, then that can be the source of deterrence.

In this case, the collective effort of the alliance has been tested and not just a single defender like what Benson (2012) emphasized on.

#### **2.3.4 Lack of obligation**

According to the definition of passive cooperation that was provided in the introduction, we can see that there is no policy accommodation in passive cooperation. What policy accommodation offers is a certain amount of control, or at least, a say in the behaviour of the state(s) that they are cooperating with. A state would be incentivised to affect, or, control the other states' actions because the actions and policies can be harmful to another state in an alliance. This dilemma will be avoided by good coordination and communication. Something cooperation is limited in

Maintaining passive cooperation and an intentional harmony of interest requires a tacit understanding between the two states. This understanding might be there, but another state could have its own agenda which reduces the level of understanding between the two states. Or if they do have an understanding, it will be unwise if states base policies or plans on whether or not the state which it is passively assisting will act in its favour. There is no solid foundation to base any plan jointly and therefore actions might not be harmonious when passive cooperation is in effect.

Even if they did act, what will the actions be? The lack of control or significant effect of the other state in passive cooperation can also be detrimental because the outcomes can be very uncertain. In other words, passively cooperating with a state can be passively harming a state because there is no explicit obligation by both states to assist each other as opposed to alliances. Passive cooperation can cause an imbalance of power because once both states eliminate their common threat or achieve their tacit goal, one of these state can easily gain too much power which results in it becoming a threat to the other passively assisting state.

Secondly, even if the two passively assisting states have no intention of harming each other than their un-accommodated individual policies can still be a detriment to each other. Another example is

if both states have passively assisted each other, there can be collateral damage that can result in becoming a detriment such as influx of refugees to the other passively assisting state or creating a failed state next to the other passively assisting state. These collateral effects are very common after military action. These negative results and outcomes are something that passive assistance and alliances can share. However, what is the separating factor between them is that there is an obligation to manage these negative outcomes in alliances, which passive assistance does not have. Hence, negative outcomes can lead to states not acting unilaterally in an alliance because it can be harmful to an ally, but this option does not exist in passive assistance. The un-obligatory nature of passive assistance is therefore a weakness in this unique form of assistance.

It was mentioned in the part regarding the contractual status of alliances that some states will find the contractual obligation to assist in an alliance to be either reassuring or a burden. In passive cooperation, a lack of obligation can be very detrimental to a state. Especially, if a state is a militarily weak state with low levels of agency. Passive assistance in this regard is very limited if states depend on deterrence of an alliance with another state. Therefore, states that passively assist can be considered to be vulnerable and susceptible to other aggressors, because the potential aggressors will know that there is no commitment that another state has to protect the vulnerable state.

### **2.3.5 Entrapment and Counter-Alliances**

Being bullied by other states and them having power over your sovereignty as well as your action. The severity of the over-empowerment can vary from semi-sever to sever. Bullying any state within an alliance would be considered problematic. However, some writers such as Snyder do not agree. Furthermore, he believes that having power and influence, in other words bullying another state is one of the benefits of an alliance. Snyder claims one “[t]he most important benefits of alliances maybe listed as follows (...) increased control or influence over the allied state”(Snyder, 1997. P, 43).

It is very understandable to see why there are arguments that consider overpowering a state within an alliance is a benefit. Obviously, the overpowering state is the one that will benefit by using its weaker allies for its own interest. The powerful state might consider other weaker members of an alliance as buffers between itself and the source of danger. On the other hand, how is it beneficial for the weaker and dictated state within the alliance? Although its security needs might be met collectively, there is a tremendous probability that weaker states can be considered as sacrificial lambs due to their lack of bargaining power within an alliance.

Since the publicity is strength which can lead to deterrence, it can also provide weaknesses that passive assistance can avoid. Public alliances can make an actor vulnerable in two ways. First, publicizing the strength of an alliance displays how other actors can focus on harming that particular strength. When others undermine the strength of anything, and in this case it is an alliance, it makes a state vulnerable.

For example, in Clausewitz's book *On War*, he mentioned the centre of gravity of a state is the aspect that leads to its fall once being hit or targeted. He usually mentioned it as a military machine but he also included alliances. So, if an aggressor knew that one state's alliance is the fundamental strength, then that alliance will be a centre of gravity will lead to serious vulnerability once targeted and destroyed." [A]mong alliances, it [the centre of gravity] lies in the community of interest" (Kinross, 2008. P, 141). In hindsight, passive assistance is unpredictable, and is very spontaneous in its nature. That is strength because other actors will find it difficult to identify that a state is passively assisting or when it intends to.

Secondly, alliances can cause counter alliances. In other words, an alliance can amplify the threatening actors' strength by causing them to have an alliance of their own, because sometimes "its adversaries have no other option to balance it by forming a coalition against it" (Ghosh, 2013 P, 84). Once the balance of the adversaries is met, a number of undesirable issues can appear in an alliance. Like creating uncertainties or hesitation within an alliance and the very obvious increase in

strength and agency of the threat. Hence, forming alliances can provide potential hazards if not managed carefully. Something passive assistance avoids.

### **2.3.6 Commitment, effective training and communication as benefit of alliances**

Commitment in an alliance reassures the state that its security needs would be met. This allows the state to stop hunting for another alliance somewhere else. After the reassurance, the state can then allocate its concentrations on other strategic priorities after the security one has been met (Snyder, 1997). What makes alliances more reassuring for states is that there is a clear “casus foederis”. This being the catalyst that forces the signatories of the allies to behave in the contracted way. Furthermore, after securing an alliance, the state can focus on developing the alliance. For example, the state can then plan how to develop the alliance by the training together and creating a more effective working relationship. The understanding of each other’s tactics, doctrines and strategies that will make the alliance a more cohesive relationship will therefore increase the level of commitment and deterrence.

Cost sharing can also be a benefit resulting from commitment in an alliance. When there is a commitment there is an inevitable sharing of costs and burdens. Cost sharing is usually mentioned in the literature in a negative side-effect of alliances. It is clear why this can be negative side-effect, because states according to Kann, they usually try to minimize their obligations in an alliance because it will minimize the burden they have to endure. However, this is from the powerful states’ perspective. In an asymmetrical alliance where there is a massive difference in capabilities between the members, cost sharing should be a fundamental reason why a weaker state will be in an alliance with a powerful state.

Snyder( 1997) lists six benefits of alliances. The second one on the list is the enhanced capability for deterrence. However, Snyder splits the second reason into two and believes alliances are beneficial because it gives “[g]reater probability of aid from the allied state” (Snyder, 1997. P, 43). The cost

that weaker states will share can be military and economic burdens. Military equipment as well as soldiers will be a greater sacrifice for more powerful states to endure because there can be a sense of leadership and therefore a powerful state can spearhead the collective effort of an alliance. Which means the weaker state has less costs and ultimately benefits from sharing the costs with a powerful state.

Economic aid can be received from a more powerful state. This allows the weaker state to not only boost its military towards the goal of the alliance, but also, it can develop the weaker state in development in many ways. This can be developed by mutual training exercises that happens between states. These exercises not only create cohesion between allies, but given the opportunity for the weaker state to learn from the more powerful state.

Powerful states in alliances can also benefit economically in an asymmetrical alliance. What it can also provide is a platform for economic development in the powerful state. For example, the Saudi and American alliance generated a significant amount of money that boosted the economy. Arms manufacturers in the United States championed the American government to boost its alliance with Saudi because they can then make a significant profit which will cause the creation of more jobs and boost the economy much further. A state cannot develop that in passive assistance because there is no platform to build on. In other words, the commitment in alliances or active assistance provides collateral benefits other than just military benefits. Something passive cooperation cannot provide.

## **2.4 Conditions of when passive cooperation ensue.**

Both active cooperation (alliances in particular) and passive cooperation have their benefits and costs. It is indeed the conditions and the context that dictate when would it be preferred to cooperate passive or actively. All states have similarities in terms of their desires and needs, but all states are unique in their own ways. The context and situation that states find themselves in, shape who to cooperate with, when to cooperate and how to cooperate. Therefore, this part of the

chapter will explain when states would find it suitable to cooperate actively and in the form of alliances and passively in the form of an intentional harmony of interest.

#### 2.4.1 Focal point

Focal point is a concept that was first coined by Schelling (1966). He explains in his book “The Strategy of Conflict” how actors can use a focal point when coordination is absent. He does not provide a definition of what a focal point is. Rather, he uses certain scenarios and examples of what actors will do if they had no coordination between them and why they would choose this option. One of the characteristics that can be deduced from his examples using focal points is that mutual expectation contributes significantly to producing a focal point. “ [T]he coordination of expectation is analogous to the coordination of behaviour when communication is cut off(...) they both involve nothing more nor less than intuitively perceived mutual expectations”(Schelling, 1966. P, 71).

Not only is the mutual expectation important, but the *perception* of this point is equally as important in producing a focal point. Schelling also mentions that when there are two parties and “communication is absent; it [focal point] must be perceptible” (Schelling, 1980. P, 72). The intention of this part of the chapter will look at what makes a focal point perceptible and obvious for states to focus their efforts on when passive assistance is in effect and with no explicit coordination between them.

The focal point that passively cooperating states will share in this context is a threatening state. So what makes this threatening state a focal point, in other words a tacit common goal? There are two main factors that will be examined in making a point focal and a tacit common goal. They are the behaviour of this state, and the rhetoric of the state.

A threatening state can behave in certain ways either directly or indirectly to become a clear focal point. Threatening states can directly use their military as a tool to intimidate. It’s the way this military is used and how it has been formed which indicates to the passively assisting states whether

this focal point is a mutual concern for them or not. For example, a threatening military state can mobilize its forces on to the border of a state. It forms its military into a formation in which is clearly an attacking formation. Such actions will only solidify the mutual perception of this threatening state and therefore makes this state an obvious target between passively assisting states who do not have any coordination between them.

Just like the actions of Jamal Abdul-Nasser's Egypt when he requested that the UN peace keeping force to leave the Sinai Peninsula and Saddam Hussein's forces' formation when they according to CIA satellite images showing the intention to invade Saudi Arabia (Fawcett, 2009). These two examples are clear focal points due their behaviour. Hence, in a passive assistance context, such examples will clearly indicate what is the common goal and focal point of both passively assisting states.

A threatening focal point in passive cooperation, or in other words, a threatening state can have a track record of meddling in other states' affairs creating a certain amount of destabilization. Furthermore, it can then create either alliances or even placing its forces in other state which can then become threatening. In the previous paragraph, a threatening state became a focal point because of its military. In this instance, it's a threatening focal point since its hostile influence over other states and its track record of such behaviour which contributes to it being a focal point.

The second factor which can highlight a clear focal point between passively cooperating states is the threatening state's rhetoric. What they say publicly and their stance very much indicates who they are threatening. This can be explicit in terms of publicly naming the state(s) it wants to threaten, or implicitly describing characteristics of that state. In a way, rhetoric can be used as a reverse focal point between passively assisting states. Observing what the focal point of the other threatening state is will clearly create a natural focal point between passively assisting states. If the threatening state is constantly criticizing two states, putting them in the same category and waging a propaganda war on them, then there is less necessity to coordinate between passively assisting

states because their perception of who or what is the common threat and the focal point will most likely be the same

#### **2.4.2 More than one goal**

Active cooperation and alliances are useful and a preferred form of assisting if there is more than one goal, in other words an unclear focal point. The main reason being is that there needs to be coordination as to which goal both actors must attend to. Or, there needs to be substantial coordination if the allies need to achieve the different goals simultaneously. Also, alliances are preferred when there is a clear understanding and the states that are in the alliance know that the goal that will be achieved will require a lot of coordination to maintain it and its subsequent outcomes.

When there is more than one option, passive assistance will be a limited way of assisting. Mainly, because there can be different perceptions of what is the common goal. When there are more options there are more clues, when there are more clues there are more expectations and therefore more factors to consider what the other state might do if you were in their position. Not only is this time consuming, but the probability of making the states' policies harmonious intentionally (which is what passive assistance is) becomes very difficult. Therefore, alliances in this instance become the preferred option.

It is clear that passive assistance is limited when it comes to achieving more than one goal. When there is more than one goal there are more obstacles and more factors that can hinder the joint effort. It will be too optimistic to assume that every plan goes according to plan. Mistakes and confusion is inevitable, especially if we use the example of war. Clausewitz produced the concept "Fog of War". He uses the word fog to describe the state of uncertainty and confusion or to some extent unclear vision of the objective. He believed that the FOW "degraded successful battle decisions and effective military action".

Furthermore, Clausewitz argued that the bigger the force the bigger the fog. Therefore, if there is more than one focal point and states choose to assist passively and with no coordination, the overall objective will be difficult to achieve. Not only that, but with the FOW and no coordination, policies can be possibly affect each other negatively which was mentioned briefly in the previous section as a cost of passive assistance. Therefore, alliances or at least any form of active assistance which permits coordination is the logical option rather than passive assistance when there more than a goal to achieve. Or, when there is no overtly clear focal point that passively assisting states will intuitively and tacitly agree on as their common objective.

As was mentioned previously, passive cooperating is also limited compared to alliances when it comes to cost and burden sharing of achieving more than one goal. Whether cost sharing is a benefit or detriment of alliance is not the point here. The main point is that if states have a desire to share costs weather it is economic, political or militarily, alliances have a clear advantage of this rather than passive assistance. Maintaining and managing these costs are also advantages that alliances have. The allocation of war prisoners or coordinating the logistics after a conflict, coordinating what the terms of conditions for surrender is unforeseen to be done without explicit coordination. Also, if these goals are achieved, it is not certain that there are no other subsequent goals that must be attended to afterwards.

For example, President Gorge W Bush declared the beginning of the use of military force on Iraq on the 19th of March 2003. Soon after, in May 1st 2003 aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln he said “my fellow Americans, major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed” (Bush, 2003). However, the United States forces did not leave until the 18th of December 2011, and a war that coasted over a trillion dollars (Penhaul et al, 2003). It will be easily argued that the commitment and coordination that was required between May,1st 2003 and December 2011 would have been impossible to achieve if the states involved in this effort were cooperating in the passive way rather than an alliance. What can be deduced from the

previous example is that it will never be certain what the result of action can lead to. Furthermore, this example displays how beneficial it is to have alliances because the coalition was obligated to stay in Iraq till the overall mission was achieved. If there would have been passive assistance or any form flexible association between states such as ententes, the likelihood of coast sharing, obligation and overall commitment in the war would have mostly likely gradually deteriorated. Therefore, alliances are more beneficial than passive cooperation due to the contractual nature of it which was explained in the first part of this chapter.

Another example where alliances are more preferred as an option to cooperate was the NATO coalition in Afghanistan that clearly displays the importance of coordination after war. According to the ISAF mandate, ISAF's main objective was to "assist the Afghan government in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas". Furthermore, this operation needed to be coordinated properly due to the scale of the operation. According to the ISAF strategic flight coordination centre it had to coordinate the flight of 52,500 soldiers. There was an average of 65 flights per day but it reached 200 flights per day during peak times. This movement of soldiers, advisors and civilian contractors would have been impossible to do if there was anything other than an alliance between them.

There needed to be a hands-on active assistance to facilitate the logistics of their mission and overall strategic objective. The previous two example were explained in detail to highlight the magnitude of certain operation whether they are military are political. Either way, they emphasize the importance benefits that alliances provide therefore, there needs to be coordination which is allowed by alliances due to the duration of these goals being achieved

### **2.4.3 Domestic constraints**

It is clear that domestic constraints do play a fundamental role in foreign policy decision making because "[I]eaders almost always face domestic constrains on foreign policy making (...) they also

must be acceptable at home” (Breuning, 2007. P, 116). The actual domestic constraints that leaders face are numerous. Putnam does clearly highlight what may these constraints consist of, but not much elaboration was added after highlighting it. He highlighted them as “party and parliamentary figures, spokespersons for domestic agencies, representatives of key interest groups” (Putnam, 1988. P, 434).

Other writers in the literature have also spotted this slight limitation. Lantis (1997) in his book praises Putnam’s work for bringing more structure to this debate. Conversely, he highlights the limitation and claims that “Putnam and his supporters have suggested that domestic political factors are important... they have not identified important domestic political factors. Putnam only generally referred to domestic political pressure”(Lantis, 1997. P, 5).

The major domestic constraint that this part of the chapter will focus on is the domestic public opinion and how passive assistance can be more effective than alliances in avoiding such a constraint. Passive assistance will overcome domestic constraints because there is no formal point that the protesters or institutions can complain about. If however, there was a peace treaty with another state or an arms sale to another state that was made public, domestic legitimacy constraints would be clear. In other words, passive assistance avoids domestic backlash and protest because there is no policy adjusted in order to accommodate the interest of the other state or any policy that resulted in an unfavourable outcome.

If the consensus of the governed is not compatible with the foreign policy decision, then there will be a likely clash between the consensus of the people and the action of the state. Passive assistance and cooperation negates that threat and constraint. Loyalty and legitimacy of the ruling elite and especially in monarchies is maintained by maintaining distant relations with other states that can hinder both the legitimacy and the loyalty of the population. “[L]eaders in such societies do seek to understand their public, if only because this helps them stay in power” (Breuning, 2007. P, 121)

Breuning (2007) also claims that it is very difficult how non democratic regimes to gage the understanding of the feeling of the people to a foreign policy constraint due to the lack of freedom of speech and censorship in the media. I do not disagree with him, however, I argue that the control of the media can be used to measure or gage the people's opinion.

Firstly, there are unlawful or secret ways of them gaining information. They can spy and have informants amongst the people between them, but this chapter does not focus on this. The media can be used by the state to gage what the opinion and the pulse of the people are like. Said differently, the state will do the complete opposite of censorship. For example, the state can release statements which might not be true or hypothetical in order see what the reactions are from the population.

The reason why it can be useful is to see how the people's reactions will be if the state decides to increase cooperation from passive cooperation into active and explicit form of cooperation. If the state has reason to believe that the people are not in favour of this decision, then the state will maintain its passive behaviour. For example, in 2014 the Saudi oil minister said in an OPEC conference in Vienna about how Saudi Arabia does not mind selling oil to Israel he explained how "[H]is Majesty King Abdullah has always been a model for good relations between Saudi Arabia and other states - and the Jewish state [Israel] is no exception." (Niimi, 2014)

Moreover, if the state decides to upgrade its cooperation from the passive sense into the active form, it can do so gradually. The state then can gradually introduce the concept or the idea of a particular foreign policy decision into the public. This will enable the state to have a better understanding of how to manage the unpopularity of the decision. The state can find out what is it the people are unhappy with. Furthermore, the state can make the people more familiar with this foreign policy idea decision.

It cannot be sure what exactly the true motive for saying this statement was. There was no significant protest that indicated the level of unpopularity of this statement and could lead to possible rapprochement, if that is what the state wanted. In hindsight, if the state believes that there is potential by the people to accept or at least accept reluctantly, or even believe they have the ability to manage the people's dissatisfaction, then the state can proceed with its active cooperation.

#### **2.4.4 External constraints**

If we go back to Putnam's two-level game metaphor, external foreign constraints can be added to his work. On the other hand, other writers such as Mintz and Derouen (2010) who authored the book " Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making" do mention that there are external constraints as well as domestic ones to foreign policy. They claim that "[f]oreign policy decisions are typically made in a strategic setting. Thus, behaviour of adversaries and allies affects foreign policy decisions is in an interactive sequential setting" (Mintz, and Deouen, 2010. P, 121). What is very clear from the previous quote was the view that the external constraints are very much in a Realist state-centric form. They are either difficulties in forming a desired alliance, or being intimidated or wary to act in a certain way or achieve a certain goal due to other states' alliances.

What is very much not covered in the literature is the normative aspect of how external public opinion does matter and how it does affects the foreign policy. The reason for the lack of focus on this issue could be that the domestic public opinion is more relevant and important to a state, which is not argued against here. After all, voters vote presidents in office, and the population is the most import source of legitimacy to a leader of any kind of government.

However, external public opinion can be a constraint for different reasons. A certain foreign policy decision can discourage potential investors in a state or foreign direct investment. This unpopular foreign policy decision will have a severe economic impact on the state. Passively assisting will still

maintain the reason why these external investors' because they will not be informed of any kind passive assistance going on between states. Also, there can be a certain expectations and identity factors that would not be rational for a state to choose to not publicize its cooperation.

We can clearly see this when it came to the Egyptian peace with Israel in 1979. A prime example that can illustrate the significance of external public opinion and how passive assistance can avoid it as a constraint is the Egypt-Israeli peace treaty that was ratified in 1979. There is no need to go into the detail of the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict. However, what is significant is the cease fire and peace negotiation was meant to be an Arab collective front for piece, and not a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli one. During this time, Saudi Arabia would be a key funder and the main guarantor for Egypt. It depended very much on Saudi Arabia, and the Saudi support for the Camp David accord was vital for Egypt. When Egypt publicly accepted the deal and ratified it in 1979, Saudi Arabia on the contrary to many sources was divided and not sure what action to take. For example, King Fahd wanted a more non-dogmatic temperate response to Egyptian- Israel peace deal (Bronson, 2006). However, Saudi Arabia assessed the situation and believed that it had no other choice but to join the Arab consensus which was absolutely against this peace treaty.

In regards to Egypt, Saudi Arabia's support was vital, but Saudi Arabia's main constraint in displaying its support was Saudi's domestic constraint. Saudi Arabia could not afford to display support to such an unpopular policy. If it did support the peace treaty that Egypt really needed the "public opinion at home and through the Muslim world would swing against the [Saudi] royal family. Therefore, the ruling family acted on the idea that Saudi Arabia security interests were best served by expressing support by the Arab consensus"(Qasim, 2015. P, 84).

Now, it is clear that the policy adjustment, coordination and policy accommodation between Israel and Egypt severely hindered Egypt's legitimacy, its place in the Arab world and important economic aid from the Arab world and mostly Saudi Arabia. If policies between Egypt and Israel were harmonious and have never accommodate each other, Egypt arguably could have saved itself from

the sever backlash that it received from the Arab and Muslim world. Even if the dealings were secret, this could have minimized a backlash (to a certain extent). What the people did not like ,and therefore, what the states such as Saudi Arabia could not support, was the public support for this piece treaty. If Egypt decided to have a more passive approach, Saudi Arabia would not have stopped 200-700 million dollars' worth of military grants, or the 500 million dollars of economic aid, and would have liquidated the 1 billion dollar arms manufacturing consortium based in Egypt (Bronson, 2006). Ergo, the Saudi Arabian public opinion has proved to be a significant external public constraint for Egypt's foreign policy and could have been severely reduced by passive cooperation.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Cooperation is a vast concept that can often be used too lightly. Such use can lead to confusion or even generalization of how actors cooperate. Therefore, the aim of this chapter was to narrow the concept of cooperation, and conceptualize the nature of passive cooperation. The first section looked at the different literature in regards to what cooperation is. It was crucial looking at the diverse literature, as it provided a foundation to what the core characteristics of what cooperation is, such as: joint activity, coordination and the perception of a common goal. Subsequently, it examined what the literature of implicit cooperation and the work of Keohane (1984) and Giovannetti and Piga (2017) were examined and used for two main reasons. Firstly, their descriptions of cooperation, harmony and passive cooperation created a debate within passive cooperation as opposed to debate within cooperation in general. Secondly, they used such harmonious, cooperative behaviour in an economic sense- which is different from the passive cooperation that I have argued in this chapter. Both intentional harmony of interest and silent passive cooperation have different mechanism of reaching mutual goals. The two main distinctions from the two passive cooperation argued in this chapter and that happens between Saudi Arabia and Israel is the nature of the goal (goals are more general and therefore become a focal point), and the level of politicalness involved in passive cooperation. Passive cooperation can be considered as a policy of not being too close, but

not being too far. The Saudi-Israeli passive cooperation will be examined in far greater in chapter 4. The next chapter will provide a theoretical grounding for the role of language and the Saudi discourse of peace and cooperation towards Israel.

# Chapter 3

## Theoretical Framework: *Passive Communication and the Communicative Balance*

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### 3.1 Introduction

Communication, discourse and foreign policy are extremely large and complex concepts that all have one thing in common- namely a focus on language. Communication is a term that is used with such frequency that often readers and researcher alike underestimate its complexity. Is Saudi Arabia communicating its willingness to have active military cooperation with Israel? I would argue it is indeed communicating such willingness, but it has never stated this explicitly. How can states communicate something without stating something? I put forth that one ways of doing such is through passive communication. Passive communication is a process where an actor communicates implicitly in order to avoid domestic and external constraints. At the heart of passive communication is the notion of “communicative balance”. This is where states communicate to different actors in such a way that will enable them to maintain their legitimacy and level of appropriateness, while simultaneously communicating incentives and willingness to actively cooperate to another party. Or, it can be a way to discursively balance an image of an actor between constraints.

There is a need to complexfy the process of communication in order to appreciate the uniqueness and accuracy of the Saudi position towards Israel. That is why there needs to be more critical methods that can facilitate the examination and the understanding of the different shades of meanings of speeches, statements and words in the Saudi discourse towards Israel. Once there is an understanding of how words can mean different things, it becomes clearer what sentences, can mean, statements can mean, and peace initiatives can mean. This also helps to understand what a policies are possible, and eventually, what active cooperation can be. The aim of this chapter is to

explain how communication happens in a passive and balanced way which will then provide a theoretical foundation to chapters 5 and 6 which will rely on the different concepts explained in this chapter. The chapter will have three main sections. The first will engage with the literature on Speech Act Theory. This literature has been extremely helpful to understand and decode the Saudi communication to Israel as it provides explanations to meanings of the tones of promises, demands, and most importantly requests, in addition to their functions within a process of communication. The second section engages with the literature of diplomatic ambiguities. The main aim of this section is to illustrate the belief that words can have different meanings to different audiences at the same time, or, simultaneity of meaning. In hindsight, the “ambiguation” that the diplomacy literature provides does have certain limitations as Pehar (2001) mentions. It is in the third section that I develop Pehar (2001) arguments by means of introducing a more critical literature in regards to simultaneous meanings, a key contribution of Pehar (2001). The third section engages with the theoretically dense concepts of ‘empty signifiers’ and ‘nodal points’ as both concepts provide the necessary complexification that can offer a deeper understanding to how a communicative balance can occur.

### **3.2 Tones**

The literature of Speech Act theory draws the attention of researchers to how communication happens. It is fair to say that it revolved around the subtleties of communication and how it may be interpreted by other recipients, and therefore communication require a certain amount of ability, skill and competence. “Communicative competence” was first coined by Hymes (1967) which revolves around how communicators within a given context can relay and communicate their meanings effectively. Other Speech Act theorists such as Stalker (1989) and Gumperz (1982) argue that communicative competence “involves knowing (...) what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately, in any given situation” (Kaburise, 2011. P, 3).

The quote above indicates how important context is in terms of communication, but also in terms of what can be communicated. As a result, and in order for it to be a competent way of communicating, it must be done appropriately and in an acceptable fashion within a certain context that can navigate around certain constraints. However, the above-mentioned scholars of Speech Acts, and the literature of speech act in general have so far examined primarily inter-personal communication- in other words, communication between people. Yet, there is no reason why Speech Act Theory cannot be applied and become useful when looking at inter-state communication. Especially, when there is a unique context with normative communicative constraints. In such a case, communicative competence must be practised by diplomats and statesmen in order to avoid domestic and foreign backlash.

One way to examine how a state can produce a communicative balance is by examining the grammatical tones in their communication. Once looking at the fine details of such, a clearer picture of what and how Saudi Arabia has communicated to Israel can be understood. Arguably, moods or tones play a crucial role in achieving a communicative balance, but more precision is needed to establish what kind of tone and what kind of moods there are exactly.

Leclerc (2001), among others, highlights how we cannot ignore the role of verbal moods in the process of creating meaning. He states that we “ cannot ignore or neglect well-formed sentences with different sentence and verbal moods, which are commonly used in any linguistic community to make not only assertions, but also promises, requests, or to give an order [Demand]” (Leclerc, 2001. P, 63). The previous quote mentions three different moods: order/demand, promise and request. Notably, these are the same tones will be used to examine the Saudi peace initiatives towards Israel in chapter 5.

But are moods or tones indeed important? I argue that mood/tones are crucial because the “primacy of mood [and tones] seems to point to a closer relationship with the intentionality of the speaker” (Leclerc, 2001. P, 63). This is one of the main reasons why Speech Act Theory is extremely

useful because it offers concepts that help increase our understanding of what and how Saudi Arabia communicates to Israel. What is more, it is used to flesh out what the communication can be between actors when there are no direct and exchangeable forms of communication such as the in Saudi-Israeli case. It is now time to further examine what can different moods/tones means, and how can it contributes to the communicative balance.

Portner and Rubinstein (2012) offer a good elaboration of moods of demand and promise. Obviously, demand and promise are different, but interestingly Portner and Rubinstein (2012) argue that both are similar in their way of communicating. Both forms of communicative moods of demand and promise revolve around obligation. “ [P]romise reports an event where the subject places an obligation on herself, while demand/order describes an event where the subject to place an obligation on the object” (Portner, and Rubinstein, 2012. P, 461). They expand on this by claiming that another difference between the promise and demand moods is that promises rely on both parties finding what is promised preferable and desired. For example, it will not be considered a promise if Saudi Arabia promises Israel use force, as that will be considered a threat since Israel would not find that proposition desirable. In fact, what Saudi Arabia has promised Israel repeatedly is to have “normal relations” (more on this later and much more extensively in chapter 5).

Clearly, the demand might not be fulfilled and therefore this tone or mood is potentially antagonistic. However, what matters here is not how realistic a demand or promise. Rather, such tones and moods, with scarce and limited opportunities highlights, fleshes out, or at least, explicates the conditions of what a state wants to communicate. Said differently, it explicates the red-lines and the initial non-negotiable aspects between states-especially in peace initiatives. It is not difficult to argue that tones of demand and promise or also very direct in nature. If a text or statement that consists of only demands and promises, such communication is very simple and can be considered dogmatic. Here, it is important to ask how a process of communicative balance can be like with only both tones of demand and promise. To assume there could be no balance with both mentioned

tones will be incorrect. There can be a communicative balance, but it will be a limited one. The reason being is that both tones will be dictating. For example, in the Saudi-Israeli case, if a peace initiative or statement towards Israel would only consist of two tones of demand and promise, a balance might look like the following : Saudi Arabia can simply communicate to Israel what it is willing to provide, and what it demands. Conversely, and arguably more importantly, this will also show a lack of willingness to compromise and could potentially communicate a disingenuous effort at conflict resolution.

On the other hand, what if there is a tone that can soften a communication and communicate a sense of willingness, nuance and pragmatism? The tone of request does just that. If one can think of tones of demand and promise as black and white (which actually they are not always), then the requesting tone is the grey area of communication. In this respect, Forges (1998) work is very helpful in regards to the notion of tones of request. It also offers a very good understanding of the complexity and dynamics the tone of request offers within communication and the communicative balance.

Forges (1998) mentions that the requesting tone is not simple, and that tone of request depends on their level of “politeness”. Interestingly, balancing is part of the fabric of what requesting is, which something that the other tones do not have in their very nature. As a result, requesting is a core ingredient to the communicative balance of Saudi Arabia towards Israel because it negates dogmatism and offers a sense of willingness to compromise. The quote below will explain further:

The everyday use of requests is thus dominated by one overriding pragmatic constraint: they should be formulated so as to allow participants to present and maintain an appropriate face or social persona (Giles & Powesland, 1975; Goffman, 1974). To achieve this, requests need to be sufficiently polite so as not to give offense yet be sufficiently direct to maximize compliance (Bavelas, 1985; Clark, 1989; Forgas, 1983, 1985). Requesting is thus an inherently risky enterprise in which the instrumental objectives (obtaining compliance) need to be carefully balanced against interpersonal considerations (avoiding causing upset) (Forges. 1998. P, 851).

The quote above does offer more insight into the nature of a request tone and why it is important in the Saudi-Israeli context. The notion of maintaining “face” and “social persona” strongly suggest that

request, or requesting, is a relevant variable to focus on. Also, this clearly suggests that request is a crucial tone of communication while facing normative constraints that states may face. Especially in a region where symbolism, or 'face' (as Forges put it) motivates state policy, requests can be considered as necessary for the process of the communicative balance if actors want to maintain the "appropriate face and social persona". This delicate balance must be practiced while facing normative constraints; otherwise, if it is ignored, it can hinder the legitimacy of the identity of the state, or, can be too dogmatic in what it communicates.

There is another dynamic that the requesting tone possess that promises and demands lack. It has been mentioned earlier that both demand and promise moods/tones are important because they highlight initially what the red-lines and non-negotiable aspects of their communication may be. This is not the case in the tone of request. Instead, "[m]astering the art of requesting is also a critical skill in many everyday situations, including negotiation and bargaining encounters (Pruitt and Carnevale,1993).

Deploying the tone of request communicates a negotiable element which is vital in a process of communicative balance between two different audiences- especially if it is balancing between two or more belligerent parties. The request tone is crucial in a more holistic way of combining these different tones and moods in a single statement, speech, peace initiatives and a general discourse emanating from a state. As a result, the requesting tone then becomes the beacon of contingency that allows meaning to take different shades and different potentialities.

Leclerc (2001), Portner and Rubinstein (2012) , Forges (1998) and Pruitt and Carnevale (1993) provide useful details of how such tones can be communicated between states. Yet, the literature lacks an understanding of what happens when all moods and tones are combined in an articulation or a process of inter-state communication. Since it has been established that a requesting tone communicates a meaning of negotiation, one can strongly argue that this element can then spill over into the other tones. This makes the tones of promise and demands negotiable. In other words, the

use of request tones becomes a source of contingency of meanings due to its pragmatic nature. Of course, this is not to suggest that the use of requests tones radically changes meanings. Rather, it offers room for interpretation of what can be demanded and promised, and therefore increases the potential for a communicative balance to be successful. It is a combination of these tones that create certain communicative meanings that are within a communicator's hands, and in this case Saudi Arabia's hand towards Israel.

### **3.3 Diplomatic Ambiguities**

Communication in the diplomacy literature has generally revolved around the practicalities of diplomatic missions, so it cannot be much of use in the Saudi-Israeli case. On the other hand, there has been some work that emphasises on the role of language in diplomacy. Not only has it been helpful, but it is a core element that contributes to the communicative balance by utilizing and instrumentalizing ambiguities.

The edited work of Slavivi and Kurbalija(2001) "Language and Diplomacy" do provide helpful insights into the notion ambiguity. There are different definitions provided within the book, but the work of Pehar (2001) really stands out due to the simultaneity of communicative meanings. Pehar's (2001) work "Ambiguities in Peace agreements" is extremely helpful as chapter 5 will examine what the peace initiatives declared by Saudi were to Israel. He firstly uses Munson's (1976) definition of ambiguity. He claims that "[a]n expression is ambiguous when it has more than one meaning and it is used in a situation or context in which it can be understood in at least two different ways" (Munson, 1976. P, 73).

On the other hand, Pehar (2001) tries to develop it further. He writes that "I believe that one could and should amend this definition to make it more precise. In order to qualify as an ambiguity an expression must generate not only 'at least two different meanings', but also two incompatible and unrelated meanings" (Pehar, 2001. P, 164).

The former definition can be considered a low-scale ambiguity because meanings can be interpreted differently but while remaining implicitly compatible, while the latter can be considered a high-range form of ambiguity due to the potential contradiction of meanings. Either way, both forms of ambiguity can play crucial roles in the communicative balance due to the simultaneousness of meaning. In addition, he argues that “[a]mbiguity can emerge at any level” (Pehar, 2001. P, 165) and introduces three different levels: referential ambiguity, syntactical ambiguity and cross-textual ambiguity. In short, referential ambiguity is considered the simplest kind of ambiguity because it is just a particular word that is ambiguous. Syntactical ambiguity is more than just an ambiguous word in a sentence; rather, the ambiguity is based on how the words in a sentence are related to one another. Or, in a peace initiative similar to what will be examined in the next chapter, it will be a clause that is the source of ambiguity. Thirdly, Pehar (2001) puts forth that cross-textual ambiguity “do not have to be contained within a single sentence, but may be dispersed across a text” (Pehar, 2001. P, 166).

What Pehar (2001) is adumbrating here can also be conceptualized as a ‘web of ambiguity’ that has contingent element throughout a text, statement or initiative. Interestingly, Pehar’s (2001) argument of the benefits of ambiguities highlights similarities with the tone of request mentioned in the above paragraphs . Ambiguities help create a sense of nuance and pragmatism. He also described ambiguities the same way as I described the function of request. It is clear to see that there is overlapping of characteristics between the tones of request and the nature of ambiguities. Where they also overlap that is the element of contingency of communicative meanings, or willingness for negotiation and its benefits. The nature to “ambiguities” negates the notion of a radical transformation of identities between two parties, and claims that ambiguities and the struggle to clarify ambiguous language between the belligerent parties causes them to know more about each other. He states that

There is no such a thing as a peace agreement, which, as it is usually defined, resolves a conflict and turns hostile relations between former adversaries into a straightforward

relationship of peace, cooperation and understanding. Instead, there are shades of grey and the process of conflict transformation slowly takes root. The erstwhile enemies gradually learn to cope with their enemies gradually learn to cope with their differences (Pehar, 2001. P, 192).

But why is ambiguity helpful? It is indeed helpful to the communicative balance because meanings within an ambiguous word, context or text are inherently contingent - a lack of fixity<sup>1</sup> is embedded with ambiguities. As a result of such, this enables a state to use language with simultaneous meanings that enables a communicative balance to function. Ambiguities and simultaneity of meaning is what balances either between Israel and others, or, balance the Saudi image between Israel and other constraints that Saudi Arabia faces. But Pehar (2001) does not mention the notion of contingency of meaning. This then begs the question what do ambiguities fundamentally rely on?

Although Pehar (2001) makes a good and convincing argument about the benefits that the use of ambiguities has and its contribution towards passive communication and communicative balance such as the simultaneity of meanings, I would argue that there are still limitations to his work. What Pehar (2001) does not mention is how ambiguities relies on contingency of meanings. To put it simply, if there is no contingency of meanings, if words are not flexible in what they can mean, there can never be ambiguity, and subsequently communicative balance will be extremely limited.

Moreover, he admits himself that there are shortcomings and even highlights where the areas of improvement can be. The two aspects that can be further explained are the mental or psychological domain that revolves around<sup>2</sup> ambiguation, and the "disambiguation". The latter suggest a mechanical downfall of his explanation of ambiguation . It suggest that when ambiguities are intended (whether is a statement, speech or peace initiative), ambiguation is almost out of control. Put another way, the communicator has no control over the contingency of the ambiguation. Such a shortcoming can negatively affect the communicative balance because there is no control over what can be explicated and what is left ambiguous and therefore too open for interpretation. I will argue

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<sup>1</sup> Fixity refers to the flexibility of meaning in which a word/phrase can have. For example, the more fixity increases, the less flexibility of meaning

<sup>2</sup> This refers to the process and intention of making language ambiguous

below that by introducing the notion of communicate balance in Discourse Analysis; I can provide conceptual solutions to both the psychological element and the disambiguation.

### 3.4 Discourse Analysis

Where there is language, there is communication. Every utterance and linguistic combination has a communicative objective. Much of the Discourse Analysis approach has revolved around of power or power struggle- this is particular true for the Essex School of Discourse Analysis. Conversely, I will engage with the concepts of 'empty signifiers' and 'nodal points' in a way that can help shed light on not just Saudi communication, but also how these concepts contribute to the communicative balance, and most importantly what the Saudi foreign policy is towards Israel.

Before going into the details of the concepts that can contribute to the communicative balance, we first have to discuss whether Discourse Analysis is a useful approach to further our understanding of state communication, and more specifically, Saudi communication to Israel? Jørgensen and Phillips (1992) claims that Discourse Analysis can be used to study and understand communication, but does not specify what kind of communication.

However, since Jorgensen's claims, there has been work that focused on Discourse Analysis as an approach to understand and explain the foreign policies of states. Larsen 's( 1997) " Foreign policy and Discourse Analysis" is sublime example of such. He claims that other International Relations approaches do not account much for the role of language and therefore Discourse Analysis is a helpful approach that helps " explicate foreign policies of states"(Larsen, 1997. P,1). Hence, Discourse Analysis is indeed a useful approach to examine the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel. To better understand the role of Discourse Analysis in the communicative balance between states, it is important to explain the concepts of 'empty signifiers' and 'nodal points'. Before mentioning how the empty signifiers and nodal points contribute to the communicative balance, it is worth looking common notions that the empty signifiers has with the diplomacy literature and speech act theory

such as contingency, intentionality of ambiguous meanings, implicate willingness for negotiations and simultaneity of meanings. After which, I will highlight what the additional notions the empty signifier has which the other literature mention above lack.

It must be noted that the first commonality that the empty signifiers has with Speech Act theory and the concept of diplomatic ambiguities is that there is an intentional and conscious effort in using language with contingent meanings. The empty signifiers come from the post-structuralist (Howarth, 2013) tradition which already believes that words have contingent meanings. What is more, contingency of meaning is the prerequisite for the empty signifier's multifunction such as simultaneity of meaning and universality. It is important to clearly define what is an empty signifier? Laclau has coined the concept and notes that "[a]n empty signifier is, strictly speaking, a signifier without a signified" (Laclau, 1996. P, 66). Put differently, it is a word or a phrase that has no precise, particular or exact meaning. However, it is not simply an ambiguous word/phrase that can encompass different meanings. Rather, its elusive and fluid nature has many functions that are used in different contexts of social-political relations and struggles. Traditionally examples of empty signifiers are phrases or words like "the community" or "the people" which allowed the unification of different identities with different struggles against an antagonistic "other" (Griggs et al, 2017; Howarth, 2013). The purpose of my engagement with the empty signifier is because the mechanisms it has in uniting demands can be very useful in achieving a communicative balance (more on this element of universality later on in the chapter). That being said, an important question needs to be asked- can empty signifiers be used in a process of interstate communication?

Howarth (2004) provides great insight into answering this question. He claims that the empty signifiers can result from "the presence of strategically placed agents who can construct and deploy empty signifiers to advance their projects" (Howarth, 2004. P, 742). In other words, certain actors, institutions and states can use empty signifiers to create and shape a discourse. Here, it matters that actors have an intention of using such language: it is clearly important that such a passive form of

communication is intended and not solely speculation of observers. The interesting choice of words that Howarth (2004) uses strengthens this point. He describes deploying an empty signifier as “strategically placed” which indicates that for the agent (actor, institute or state) empty signifiers are pragmatic tools with a particular purpose to the multifaceted empty signifier. More importantly, Howarth’s (2004) contribution provides the license to use the empty signifier in explaining the Saudi communication towards Israel.

The second mechanism that empty signifiers have in common with the diplomatic ambiguities literature is simultaneity of meaning. Simultaneity is something that is crucial to the communicative balance. Other scholars such as Martilla (2013) adumbrate and slightly hint at this notion. They note that empty signifiers have “two mutually inseparable functions of differentiation and representation” (Martillia, 2013. P, 45). Although the previous quote hints to how the empty signifier creates different meanings, it remains an open question how empty signifier can have different *yet* simultaneous meanings? Howarth and Glynos (2007) give more insight into this mechanism. It important to note that in their description of the empty signifier they describe it as two things: it is firstly a very “enigmatic” and secondly they remind us that empty signifier is inspired by, or an extension of Lacan’s notion of the “master-signifier”. They state “the master signifier simultaneously promises a meaning, and yet with holds it” (Howarth and Glynos, 2007. P, 131). This is yet another reminder that simultaneity of meaning is a key feature of the Saudi communication towards Israel because the empty signifier as well as the diplomatic ambiguities inspire this crucial mechanism within the communicative balance.

The paragraphs above have mentioned the commonalities that the Discourse Analysis approach has with other literature such as implicate intention of vague language to enable simultaneous meanings. But the empty signifier does have other functions. The empty signifier does also suggest that it communicates a sense of rapprochement if used by a state such as Saudi Arabia. Universality is a key ingredient to the empty signifier, and it is crucial because it does not just focus on identity, but the

compatibility of identities. What is more, it illustrates the contingency of identity and a certain endeavour to find a common ground between different actors- different states-different “others”.

Universality is a key feature that allows the concept of communicative balance to happen because it builds a sense of consensus between different identities, or states with different identities. “It is against the backdrop of the pre-supposed universal character of an empty signifier that it becomes possible to conceive of the shared commonality of particular institutions, practices and social identities”(Martillia, 2013. P, 55). In the more common way, the empty signifier was used to unify demands while creating a common identity against an “other”. Its precise function of reaching a common ground with different identities that makes it a contributing factor towards the communicative balance.

However, this begs a question, can the universal unite an antagonistic other into a compatible other?

In the context of International Relations the questions become whether the perception of a state that is belligerent can be transformed into an ally, a very strong adversary into an ally, a former ally into a demon. Or, highlighting a greater demon in order to legitimise active cooperation with a lesser but necessary demon? (These themes and identities will be examined in greater detail in chapter 6).

The empty signifier does not mention this explicitly, but according to Gasche (2004), there is no reason not to. In addition Laclau notes the universal:

[I]s absolutely essential for any kind of political interaction, for if the latter [political] took place without the universal reference, there would be no political interaction at all: we would only have a complementarity of differences which would be totally non-antagonistic, or a totally antagonistic one, one where difference entirely lack any commensurability, and whose only possible resolution mutual destruction of the adversaries (Laclau, 1996. P, 61)

What can be deduced from the quote above is an important contribution to the communicative balance. Not only does it reject a binary form of identities between totally antagonistic and non-antagonistic, but it shows that the concept of the universality also implicitly communicates a process of negotiation between identities- similar to the requesting tone mentioned earlier in the chapter.

Therefore, the identity of an antagonistic other is never fixed.

I argue that the empty signifier and the element of universality within the empty signifier contributes to establishing an antagonistic other into a compatible other. For this project, the concept of empty signifiers can lead to the transformation of making Israel from an antagonistic, problematic demon, to a compatible 'other'- even a potential ally. Universality precisely provides the overlooking of differences of identities by creating a compatible yet different identity with a shared goal. As Martillia (2013) explains, "[a]n empty signifier provides a positive symbolic image of the discourse, at the same time, installs a common identity for the particular discursive entities" ( P, 45).

An example of this can be the "normal relations" in the Saudi led peace initiative causes certain questions to be asked. What would it mean if Saudi Arabia and Israel had "normal relation"? Is Israel a compatible 'other' with Saudi Arabia in facing their Iranian common threat? Or is Israel a necessary 'other' for Saudi Arabia in facing the Iranian threat? The empty signifier facilitates the overcoming of the incompatibility of Israel as potential partner. One of the explanations of such potentiality of meanings and the transformation of identities is due to the 'lack' of permanently fixed meanings within a discourse-within the communication towards Israel

[P]ost-structuralist thus problematize of a fully present subject communicating with a fully present listener by employing a fully transparent medium of communication. The subject is also marked by a lack which only its identifications can fill, even then, the process of filling is never complete (Howarth, 2013. P, 159)

The notion of ' lack' shall be expanded upon further. Lack is connected to notion of desire in the psychoanalysis tradition. This open-endedness has benefits and contribution to the process of the communicative balance. Empty signifier indicates that there is a vacuum of meaning which increases the potentiality of different communicative meanings. "[I]n discourse theory the social field can never be closed, and political practices attempt to 'fill' this lack of closer" (Howarth et al, 2000. P, 8). It is helpful to think of the 'lack' as an empty space or an empty terrain in which (or where) the other actors between which Saudi Arabia is trying to balance between try to 'fill' this vacuum.

Since there is a positing in the post-structuralist tradition that actors will always have a lack of communicating the absolute meaning because of each actors' identity, experiences and identity will different. Therefore, the lens in which they use to interpret communication will inevitably be different- no matter how explicit and direct the communication can be, there will always be a 'lack'. As a result, there is more 'lack' in passive communication than explicit communication which means that the space/terrain in which a communicative balance can function is far greater- with far more room for inferring and interpretation. I posit that the lack is one of the reasons why Saudi Arabia has been able to maintain a communicative balance between mainly because other actors are the ones who play a larger role in producing what is communicated from Saudi. The filling process is therefore considered a process of identification with the potentiality of meanings from the vague language. In other words, they extract what is desired from this vague and intentionally ambiguous form of communication. Due to the lack of specificity, and only a partial fixity of meanings, different actors will desire or derive different meanings. This is precisely what a lack offers to production of meanings that can take place in a passive form of communication. Contexts within the Middle East and the political landscape are not only susceptible to just change, but drastic change. Hence, desires and the identities of actors evolve with it.

Moreover, in the post-structuralist tradition, a "lack is (...) revealed when identities are questioned" (Howarth, 2013. P, 161). It is easily argued that Identity to the study of the Middle East is like what books are to libraries- one is extremely attached to the other. In the Saudi case specifically, the need for a communicative balance and a very passive form of communication with such language is ultimately down the nature of the identities involved. Saudi Arabia cannot explicitly communicate to Israel its contempt to have active cooperation with Israel because its identity dictates it is not appropriate to cooperate with an Israel whose identity in the Arab and Muslim world is extremely negative. The lack of fixed meaning due to the subjectivity of the actors combined with the lack of explicit language allowed Saudi Arabia to avoid external and domestic constraints.

### 3.4.1 Nodal point, fixity and disambiguation

The previous sections have revolved around how the empty signifiers contains have mechanisms within it enabling them to increase the potentiality of communicative meanings and explicate what future relations can be. However, what happens if there is a need to clarify something, or, if there is a need to provide more explicit and precise language to an audience? In other words, can there be a concept that decreases the flow of contingency of potential meanings? Laclau's work also is useful in this regard by his contribution of the "nodal point". The concept of "nodal point" was first used by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) in their work "Hegemony and the Socialist Strategy". Although the empty signifier which mentioned above is an extension of the nodal, I argue that Laclau emphasised and highlighted different functions in his endeavour of trying to develop a certain signifier with universal function

The primary and main function of the nodal point is to provide fixity of meaning in a certain communication and in the Saudi-Israeli case- provides certain fixity in a process of communication. In addition, the nodal point carries on what was said about the missing element, or area for improvement in the diplomatic literature about disambiguation. The nodal point contributes to disambiguating very vague and ambiguous meanings by both partially fixing the flow contingency. Or, as Laclau and Mouffe put that can "arresting" the flow of meaning.

[W]e will call this privileged discursive point of this partial fixation, nodal points. (Lacan has insisted on these partial fixations through his concept of point de captan, that is, of privileged signifiers that fix a meaning of a signifying chain. This limitation of productivity of the signifying chain- establishes the positions that make predictions possible- a discourse incapable of generating any fixity of meaning is a discourse of the psychotic (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001. P, 112).

Two aspects deserve more attention in regards to the communicative balance from the quote above: "partial fixation", and the "discourse of the psychotic". What would a discourse of the psychotic look in a situation of interstate communication? It will be communicating something that is unrealistic. Or, it can indicate a communication that is too ambiguous. The communicative balance

in this instance is hindered because there is an over balance with too many potential meanings, and the nature of the language used is too flexible.

There is another way in which the nodal point contributes to the communicative balance. The way it fixes meaning (although partially) is through a process of eliminating of other potential meanings that signifiers have. Carrying on to what the sources mentioned above, the crystallisation of meaning is done through process exclusion (Philips and Jorgenson, 2002). However, as a result of the process of exclusion of other potential meaning, it simultaneously and significantly explicates other meanings in relation to the nodal point. To put it simply, the nodal point endows meaning to other words and clause that can be scattered in a statement, a clause in a peace initiative, an entire peace initiative and even a general communication between states. Conversely, the nodal was also introduced as a privileged point that has a universal function, and does produce simultaneous meaning as well. This must be mentioned as this highlights the crucial role of simultaneous meanings for the communicative balance. Simultaneous meaning is present and a function of the nodal point, just not explicit

On the other hand, there are examples of how Saudi Arabia was able to control the flow of contingency and disambiguate language. Just after the declaration of the Arab Peace initiative in 2002, the Saudi foreign minister at the time was addressing the media alongside other Arab officials. Although it was in English, the audience at the time were the Arab states, the Arab population and the Arab streets. One can see what normal relations would entail, or at least what the purpose for normal relations with Israel would be. He stated that “[i]f Israel wants security and peace, this is the way [accepting the peace initiative]. Israel cannot keep the land and demand security. If it wants security, it must withdraw and give the legitimate rights of the Palestinians” (Saud Al-Faisal, 2002).

One can see many benefits to passive communication and the communicative balance in the previous statement. In this case, Saudi Arabia was not criticised for rapprochement with Israel, because economic and security relations were not negated in any of the subsequent statements to

the media, such as the one mentioned above. However, “normal relations” in this instant was meant as helping and standing for the Palestinian people and striving to stop the “bloodshed”. Theoretically speaking, what the quote illustrates is that the late Saudi foreign minister fixed the meaning of what “normal relations”, but only partially in order to adhere to the demands of the Arab audience. Nevertheless, economic and security cooperation was still on the table, but not explicitly. Now it is time to compare what normal relations meant in a different context and different audience.

When the current Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman visited the USA in March 2018., he had an interview with the editor in chief of the Atlantic, Jeffery Goldberge, asked about the major transformation that Saudi Arabia is going through currently. Goldberg asked the following question about Israel: “[d]o you think Iran is bringing you and Israel together? Without Iran, could you imagine a situation in which you had other interests in common with Israel?” Phrased differently, what would normal relations entail between Saudi Arabia and Israel?

It is important to note that the Saudi peace initiative has never been off the table, which means; the meaning of “normal relations” is still always open for “filling” it with different meanings as the context evolves in the Middle East. The Crown Prince replied by saying that: “Israel is a big economy compared to their size and it’s a growing economy, and of course there are a lot of interests we [Saudi Arabia] share with Israel and if there is peace, there would be a lot of interest between Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and countries like Egypt and Jordan” (Mohamad bin Salman, 2018). I posit that this is a balance of what “normal relations” means because the description of the kind of relations with Israel came after “if” in the above statements of the Saudi officials. This is a strong argument as “normal relations” will ensue “if” Israel accepts the peace.

One can deduce what a number of aspects in the quote above. It highlights the benefit that such notions of empty signifiers and nodal points can provide in understanding this very unique kind of communication towards Israel. What it more importantly shows, is that the nodal point can explain how Saudi Arabia can control the partial fixation of meanings in order to maintain a communicative

balance between Israel and any other party that is involved (whether that Arab states, Arab populations or its own domestic population).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The chapter has attempted to look at how passive communication ensues. The first aim is to provide a methodological and theoretical background to the role of language in the subsequent chapters of 5 and 6. The second aim is to display that Saudi Arabia conducts its communication as a passive communication to Israel (at least in the cases that I examine in the following chapters) and achieves a communicative balance. The first was Speech act Theory literature which looked at how communicators communicate what they want, and the way they want. The Speech Act literature also provided the concept of a communicative competence and the use of three tones of promise demand, and the ever so important request. The communicative balance can be conducted by both tones of demand and request but that would make a communication of binary and simple in nature. That section argued how important the element of request was because it was the source of contingency amongst the tones.

The second section engaged with the notion of ambiguities in diplomacy. It provided good ideas and starting points that suggests that language can have different meanings simultaneously. It also touched upon the degree of ambiguities that actors can use. After analysing the literature of diplomatic ambiguities, I concluded that ambiguities can be of a low scale or high scale. Low scale denotes an ambiguous word within a text, while high-scale ambiguity is when ambiguous language is scattered around a text. Although the engagement with the diplomatic literature did provide helpful concepts, it was still limited as it lacked a deeper explanation on how simultaneous meanings can be created, and how to control ambiguity. This is when the literature of discourse analyses comes in.

The Discourse Analyses literature is a very broad approach that is conceptually diverse. I have used concepts such as the empty signifier and nodal point. Both of the dense concepts have provided a

very useful mechanism within them that facilitated a communicative balance and passive communication. I started the section with an explanation of where the empty signifier overlaps with the diplomacy literature such as intention of the use of ambiguous language and, but then introduces additional functions such as universality, lack and fixity. The chapter has highlighted different themes or ingredients such as: Pragmatism, duality of meanings, willingness of negotiation, universality and the endeavour to find a common identity and the intention of the use of flexible passive language. However, all the mentioned elements have something in common-contingency. It is safe to say that contingency is the core ingredient that allows Saudi Arabia to maintain its legitimacy while communicating to Israel. The subsequent chapters 5 and 6 will look at the primary texts in far greater detail. It is important to remind the reader that the language used in the subsequent chapters will have elements of all the mentioned ingredients. One can now have a better idea of not just the Saudi communication towards Israel, but most importantly, the role of language in the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel and how Saudi Arabia is using passive communication to communicate potential active cooperation.

# Chapter 4

## Method of Enquiry

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### 4.1 Introduction

The project will be examined and approached in a qualitative way. One of the reasons for such an approach, is the lack of sufficient resources that provide solid evidence which can be quantified. Even then, the quantification of supposed facts can face obstacles due to the few sources in the literature. In addition, the speculative nature of the discourse surrounding the Saudi-Israeli relations do not lend itself to have such a discourse quantified. Therefore, a qualitative approach is better suited to address the nature of the existing information. A qualitative approach can help shed more light on the potential meanings of ambiguous language, and the different shades of the Saudi-Israeli cooperation

### 4.2 Primary sources

The project had a significant emphasis on primary sources. Due to the lack of academic work aimed at investigating the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel, a vacuum was created for more investigation, and, reanalysis of the primary sources. The primary sources included: the four Saudi peace initiatives (which will be examined in chapter 5); numerous fatwas of the Saudi Grand Mufti; the Iranian constitution, the will of the Iranian Supreme Leader (Khomeini), and the ever so important sporadic statements from Saudi, Israeli and Iranian officials.

The idea of considering statements as primary sources deserves more elaboration. The statements can be divided into two: statements within news articles, and statements within secondary sources. The former, is straight forward, and need no further complexification, as it is unforeseeable that an official government statement cannot be reported by media outlets, or, governments not using media outlets to release their statements. Therefore, government news agencies were a good

source to obtain valuable government statements that can only enrich the quality of the analysis, and depict a more accurate policy of governments.

On the other hand, the intention of engagement and utilization of the statements within secondary sources needs to be clarified further. Although these statements were obtained from secondary sources, I find that particular secondary sources useful for providing a statement that could not be obtained in other sources such as media outlets. A prime example of this is (Petre, 1992), which provided a quotation of then King Fahd, and was actually a source that was the corner stone of the concept I put forth-passive cooperation.

It is important to mention that I did not use the analysis of these sources, and that is principally why I consider some of the statements that were mentioned in secondary so

Chapter 7 has, to a certain extent, posed a methodological challenge. Due to not having the chance to conduct a survey that can shed more light on how Israel is perceived in the Saudi streets, a critical analysis of the primary documents had to be used. The primary sources that were used were: The Holy Quran; the Hadeeth; the fatwas of Bin Laden; the fatwas of the Saudi grand Mufti. The main aim of using discourse analyses was to extract very implicit characteristics of the potential domestic constraints that the known constraints were trying to recruit. In addition, Discourse Analyses was also used to dissect the fatwas of the Saudi mufti, and elucidate key signifiers that can be used to legitimise an active Saudi cooperation with Israel.

### **4.3 Secondary sources**

The secondary sources played a crucial role in this project. One of the main secondary sources the project relied on was Bronson's (2006) work "Thicker than Oil". The book gave a historical perspective on the USA-Saudi relations, and how such relations have evolved over time. The book was crucial, as it provide so much indirect information about Saudi-Israeli relations. It provided quotes, statements, and incredibly telling historical documents that shed more light on the Saudi

policy towards Israel. On the other hand, the book displayed an immeasurable benefit by creating a sort of blueprint of how the Saudi ruling elite managed unpopular foreign policy decisions, and how it navigated around both domestic and external constraints. The implicit blueprint, as well as valuable primary sources it had within the book, made Bronson (2006) a constant source that was referred to throughout the duration of the project.

The information needed to establish both theories of passive cooperation and passive communication heavily relied on secondary sources. As was adumbrated earlier, the definitions of the concept of cooperation in the International Relations Theory literature was scarce. This led me to examine other literature for their understanding and conceptualisation of cooperation. After such, it became apparent that cooperation revolved around three major components: coordination, common goal and mutual assistance. In addition, other neighbouring disciplines such as Counter-Terrorism and Security Studies supplemented the concept of Passive Cooperation with notions such as Political Centres of Gravity amongst other which will be discussed later on in the project.

It is important to explain the role of chapter 3 more thoroughly. The chapter provided a conceptual framework for how language played a role in the Saudi discourse towards Israel, but also, how it established a 'communicative balance'. It is safe to say that it was a theoretically/conceptually dense chapter, but the methodological explanation was implicit throughout the chapter. The chapter did focus on conceptualising the role of language, but Discourse Analysis is not just a discipline that conceptualises language/discourse, but it is a method as well. It should not be surprising that DA has been chosen as a method since there was a need to focus on primary sources.

Secondary sources also played a crucial role in proving concepts. For example, the Saudi perception of Iran and the notion of Iranian expansionism was generally obtained from secondary sources. Moreover, chapter 6 relied significantly on secondary sources that shed more light on which the domestic constraints might be for a Saudi-Israeli active cooperation.

As was mentioned earlier, the definitions of the concept of cooperation in the International Relations Theory literature were scarce. This led me to examine other literature for their understanding and conceptualisation of cooperation. After such, it became apparent that cooperation revolved around three major components: coordination, common goal and mutual assistance. In addition, other neighbouring disciplines such as Counter-Terrorism and Security Studies supplemented the concept of Passive Cooperation with notions such as Political Centres of Gravity amongst other which will be discussed later on in the project

#### **4.4 Media reports**

One of the difficulties in writing this project was dealing with news article. Out of all the complexities of dealing with the literature that was used for the project, media reports posed the most methodological dilemma. Although news articles reflected up-to-date perceptions of Saudi Arabia and Israel, they were not very accurate on the whole. After examining the content within the articles, I decided to exclude the analyses of the articles due to two major aspects: the extent of the biased within the articles' analyses, and the lack of solid and concert sources in which the analyses and general reporting is based on. I excluded using any news articles including the articles that supported my argument of a lack of active Saudi-Israeli cooperation. However, there was one crucial thing that news articles provided-quotes. I therefore considered quotes as primary sources, since I was not able to conduct interviews or surveys.

# Chapter 5

## The Saudi and Israeli Focal Points

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### 5.1 Introduction

The saying the enemy of my enemy is my friend is a very logical reason to cooperate with others. The danger of using this logic is that it ignores many problematic reasons why not to cooperate with others such identities that effect state behaviour. Therefore, the enemy of enemy is my friend might be a logical reason for cooperating, but it does not mean that it a pragmatic way of cooperating, and is no different for the Saudi-Israeli situation. They both historically have had mutual security threats, but this does not mean that they have cooperated actively. This chapter is dedicated to explaining the two main security threats that Saudi Arabia and Israel have faced and still face today: Iraq (Desert Storm 1990-1991) and Iran. But more importantly, it will explain how Saudi Arabia and Israel maintained policies that were complementary to the other without actively cooperating. This chapter will be structured as the following.

The first section will look at why Iraq in 1990-91 was a focal point (Schelling, 1966), and how both policies of Saudi Arabia and Israel were towards each other in facing this common focal point. The first section will look at Iraq during Desert Storm (1990-1991). The reason for choosing Iraq is because it is the first case where passive cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel ensued. Hence, examining the policies of both Saudi Arabia and Israel towards each other during the Iraqi focal point will shed light and the pragmatic nature of the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel.

The second section will look at why and how Iran is a focal point. In doing so, it will also examine the Saudi-Israeli policies towards each other in facing their mutual threat of Iran. This section will be more extensive then the former section because the duration of the Saudi-Israeli focal point of Iran is far greater than that of Iraq. Iraq was indeed a focal point, but it *was* a focal point for a short period of time, while Iran *is* currently a Saudi-Israeli focal point. The third and last section will be

dedicated to comparing both cases in order to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of passive cooperation. Finally, this chapter will conclude that passive cooperation is sufficient when states have mutual goals and significant constraints.

## **5.2 Focal point: Iraq**

There are key reasons why Iraq become a clear Saudi-Israeli focal point. There are three reasons that lead to such significant commonality between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The first is the system of governance in Iraq at that time. Secondly, the capabilities that Iraq had at the time are a key reason that contributed to it being a focal point. Thirdly, the actions and rhetoric from Saddam Hussein at the time is another key contributing factor in having a clear focal point.

### **5.2.1 System of governance of Saddam Hussein**

One of the factors that lead to Iraq being a focal to both Saudi Arabia and Israel was due to Iraq's leadership. Saddam Hussein arguably ruled Iraq's domestic and foreign affairs single-handedly. There was no real system that would have checked his decisions if he desired to do something. Nor was there any kind of system that would have held him responsible for his actions. This resulted in a ticking time bomb for both Saudi Arabia and Israel (Ezrow and Frantz, 2011).

There was this misconception that Saddam Hussein was an irrational leader (Mearsheimer and Walt 2003). Or even a person that who was psychotic and made uncalculated decisions. This however is not the case. Post (2010) who is a political psychologist argued this very point. Saddam Hussein was a rational leader, but it was the system that he created which made his rationality very limited. One of the core reasons why Saddam Hussein's leadership contributed to it becoming a focal point was due to the system of advisors around him. It was his ruthless rule that intimidated his advisors from doing their jobs effectively. They told Saddam Hussein what he wanted to hear and not what he needed to know. Hence, a combination of a weak and intimidated system of advisers with an arrogant

ego that was detached from political reality are factors that lead to establishing the Saudi-Israeli focal point of Iraq/ Saddam Hussein.

### **5.2.2 Iraqi rhetoric and actions.**

Saddam Hussein's public and private comments were a serious concern to both Saudi Arabia and Israel. In April 1990 Saddam Hussein publically declared that he will burn half of Israel if it decides to attack Iraq. The Israelis were not very surprised to hear such comments. However, such rhetoric helps Israel boost its military capabilities and receive more military aid from the United States.

Privately, Saudi Arabia found some of his remarks very concerning. The random nature of such comments made by Saddam Hussein to the Saudi ambassador alarmed Saudi Arabia very much. He shared with the Saudi ambassador at the time that he did not want them to believe the western media about him attacking the Gulf States. Saudi officials found that very suspicious, and started to pay attention to him closely (Simpson, 2006).

After the invasion of Kuwait on August, 2<sup>nd</sup> 1990, Saddam Hussein declared a "Holy War against Israel and the United States, claiming that by their actions the Saudis surrendered as hostages to those countries [USA and Israel]" (Simpson, 2006. P, 209). What is more, Saddam Hussein went on to accuse Saudi Arabia and Israel of actively cooperating against him. He claimed that the King Fahd at the time was a "[t]raitor the betrayer of the two mosques (...) oil rulers have participated as conspirators against Iraq, led by the agent sheiks of Kuwait and the Saudi rulers (...) the face of the aggression exposing the weakness of some of the Arabs vis-a-vis the aggression of Zionism and the ambitions of the Americans" (Hussein, 1990)

It was not only Saddam Hussein's rhetoric that made him a focal point. His actions spoke louder than his words. His actions during the Gulf War were a pivotal time in Saudi- Israeli relations. The simultaneous missile attacks on Riyadh and Tel Aviv meant that for the first time in modern Arab

history, an Arab state had treated Saudi Arabia and Israel equally. In layman's terms, Iraq forced Saudi Arabia and Israel to be in the same boat because they were both receiving missile from Iraq.

### **5.2.3 Iraq's conventional and unconventional capabilities**

Before looking at what the threatening capabilities were, one must ask what constitutes a threat to a state. The answer would be that each state will perceive threats differently. For examples, is a threat a conventional one (Army, Navy, Air-force) or an unconventional one (guerrilla tactics, militias ect.). Buzan (2007) conceptualises the notion of threat and highlight its complexities. He states that “ [t]he question of when a threat becomes a national security issue depends on not just what type of threat it is, and how the recipient state receives it but also on the intensity in which the threats operates” (Buzan, 2007. P, 119). Moreover, he mentions that special factors as well as proximity contribute to the perception of what is a threat.

The capabilities that Saddam Hussein had at his disposal, and only his is a significant reason why Iraq was a focal point. The size of the Iraqi military was very large. It was at the time the fourth largest army in the world. So there was a significant numerical advantage that Iraq had over Saudi Arabia and Israel. What also boosted its military capabilities was the support that Iraq had from the Gulf States and the United States during the Iran – Iraq war of 1980-1988. The weapons that it received from the United States as well as the finances that it received from the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia in particular highlighted Iraq as being a clear focal point.

Moreover, it had ambitions to become a nuclear power. Their efforts of a nuclear power received a major setback when Israel attacked a nuclear power plant near Baghdad in 1981. Nevertheless, Iraq had weapons of mass destruction that clearly made it a threatening power to anybody in the region. What increased the WMD threat that Saddam Hussein had was the fact that he used them in 1984 during the Iran-Iraq war. In the Iraq-Iraq war, Iraq was able to develop its delivery system that could make its missiles reach up to a range of 2000KM. according the satellite maps; Iraq can reach most

of the major cities in Saudi Arabia. The distance between Baghdad and Riyadh is under 1400Km. The distance from Bagdad to Tel Aviv is just under 1000Km. Clearly, most of the missiles that Iraq had been in rang of both Israel and Saudi Arabia (Cordesman, 2003).

#### **5.2.4 Saudi Intentional harmony of interest**

Saudi Arabia's official stance was still in the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli context. Nevertheless, the behaviour of Saudi Arabia towards Israel during Desert Storm was one of pragmatism and not of pan Arab emotion. It still viewed Israel as a state that occupied Arab land and was very pro-Palestinian (even though Saudi Arabia supported the Palestinian cause, they were extremely angry at Yasser Arafat for supporting Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War. Moreover, Saudi Arabia did not include Yasser Arafat in the Madrid conference in 1991 to show their dissatisfaction with him).

In the region, at the time, Iraq was the largest and the most imminent threat. However, Iraq was not threatening enough to force Saudi Arabia to cooperate actively with Israel. Instead, Saudi Arabia was willing to have an intentionally harmonious policy with Israel regarding Iraq. Israel was constantly a problematic factor in building the Arab coalition. The building and creation of the coalition itself was very difficult and therefore it was a very fragile one. If Israel would have retaliated against Saddam Hussein, it would then have transformed the war from and Arab-Arab war to an Arab-Israel war. Saudi Arabia could not afford to be siding with Israel because of the domestic and foreign constraints that it would have faced will. Two events will be used to help illustrate Saudi policy towards Israel.

The first event was when the US Secretary of State met with King Fahd and the second was the scud missile firing at both Saudi Arabia and Israel. A quote from the commander of the coalition's General Schwarzkopf's biography reveals a pragmatic, delicate and rational policy towards Israel.

Baker<sup>3</sup> had to ask a potentially explosive question: suppose Israel became involved as the result of an Iraqi attack? King Fahd gave a long explanation of the difficulties this would

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<sup>3</sup> John Baker was the American Secretary of State from 1989-1992

cause in the Arab world. It would be better for everyone, he said if Israel stayed out; under no circumstances would Arab forces allow themselves to be perceived as allied with Israelis. But then, to Baker's and Freeman's amazement, King Fahad added that he could not expect Israel to stand idly by if attacked. If Israel were to defend itself, he said, the Saudi armed forces would still fight by our side (Schwarzkopf and Petre, 1992. PP. 372-373).

If the text is analysed further, it reaffirms how problematic the Israeli issue was. Interestingly, although Saudi Arabia did not support an Israeli attack on Iraq, it intended to keep from fighting against Iraq, even if Israel did join the conflict militarily. This indicates that Saudi Arabia was willing to have an intentional harmony of interest with Israel because their policies would have reached the same goal in attacking Iraq. Then King Fahd acknowledged that the Israeli action will be a defensive one which hints to a certain legitimacy of the Israeli action. In addition, Israel would be defending itself against the same source of threat that Saudi Arabia is defending itself. More importantly, the quote indicated that Saudi Arabia would not have obstructed the Israeli policy of defending itself. Therefore, the Saudi Arabian and Israeli policy towards Iraq would have been an passively assisting in the form of intentional harmony of interest, if Israel would have defended itself.

The second incident which helps to explain Saudi policy towards Israel was the Scud crisis. The reason why it was a crisis is because Iraq was intentionally fired scuds in order to break up the fragile coalition. The Israelis at the time became very impatient when they like Saudi Arabia were attacked by scud missiles. As a result, "Powell reported that prince Bandar, at Washington's request, had called King Fahad to ask about the possibility of an over flight rights for the Israeli strike. The King had swiftly replied with the Arabic equivalent of no way"( Schwarzkopf and Petre. 1992. P, 417)

The quote above demonstrates the other side of Saudi policy towards Israel during Desert Storm. It was mentioned earlier in the section that Saudi Arabia intended to reach the mutual goal with Israel even if Israel did join the conflict, but the previous paragraph shows the conscious effort and intention of Saudi Arabia to not transform a potential intentional harmony of interest with Israel into an active cooperation. Allowing air space would still be considered a form of active assistance

actively because it would Saudi Arabia would have been purposely giving permission. Theoretically, Saudi Arabia did not want to adjust its policy towards the Israelis policy in this case.

The decision by the Saudi ruling elite was certainly beneficial. Saudi Arabia's policies of a potential passive cooperation would have reduced domestic and foreign constraints. The main domestic constraint that Saudi Arabia would have avoided was the legitimacy of its ruling elite. When the Saudi King disclosed to the Secretary of State Baker that he will still fight with the United States if Israel would have joined the war, he also disclosed that nobody can afford to be even be perceived to be allied with Israel (Schwarzkopf and Petre 1992).

The decision to even invite the United States at the time was also controversial let alone actively cooperating with Israel. "[K]ing Fahd's decision to welcome American troops ignited an internal battle with religious extremists that continues today"(Bronson, 2006. P, 195). There were many complaints that Saudi Arabia sacrificed its sovereignty to the United States and was Islamically not consistent (this will be looked at in chapter 7). Many of such inaccurate assumptions were fuelled by a lack of understanding the threat and the religious principles. Domestic fears were fuelled by clerics and conservatives who did not look at the United States favourably.

Whatever the reasons were, the legal and necessary invitation by the Saudi government of the United States was contentious - even though the United States was a clear Saudi ally at the time with full diplomatic and political, military relations. Asking the Saudi people to accept that Israel has to join the war because it was in the interest of Saudi's common goals would have been too much to ask.

The willingness by Saudi Arabia to have an intentional harmony of interest and not having an active cooperation with Israel would have avoided external constraints. The clear obstacle that the passive cooperation avoided was getting most of the Arab League to legitimise the American presence on the Saudi territory. Building the coalition was one of the main significant themes of the 1990-91 Gulf

War. The Arab League debate was centred on whether or not there would be an intra-Arab solution, or and international one that involved the west with the leadership of the United States. Saudi Arabia used its diplomacy to convince a majority in the Arab League to allow an international coalition to be present in Saudi Arabia, but without Israel. If Israel would have been involved in any way in the coalition building, the Arab League would have not accepted any involvement of Israel and would not have supported Saudi Arabia to invite the western coalition. If there is any hint of any potential active cooperation with Israel, Saudi Arabia would have faced two major constraints: the lack of the Arab League support, and the loss of the prestige as a leading Arab and Muslim state (especially then as their role as the leader of the Arab and Muslim world is gradually subsiding).

The second external constraint that passive cooperation would have avoided was the emboldening of Saddam Hussein. It was illustrated previously that one of the reasons why Saddam Hussein was a clear Saudi-Israeli focal point was his threatening and hostile rhetoric towards both states. He accused the Gulf States and in this case Saudi Arabia of fully cooperating with Israel against him- in other words, actively cooperating (Simpson, 2006)-Saddam Hussein could only hope for such a thing. The reason is because it would have justified his illegal invasion of Kuwait (at least in the eyes of many Arab people and also other Arab states that supported Saddam Hussein). The other reason was because it would have diverted the attention from his illegal invasion of Kuwait.

One of the main reasons why Saudi Arabia would have avoided significant external and domestic constraints is because it can honestly deny any active cooperation with Israel. Recall, King Fahad's statement that "no Arab country can afford to even be perceived to be aligned with Israel" hence deniability is of the utmost importance for Saudi legitimacy.

I will now assess and display the value of deniability in three scenarios of cooperation. The first is the Israeli silent passive cooperation, the second is the potential Saudi-Israeli intentional harmony of interest, and the third is a hypothetical scenario of an active Saudi-Israeli active cooperation towards Iraq.. The first scenario is very straightforward and clear. It is clear that Israel's passive policy

towards the conflict and its passive cooperation has not resulted in any kind of connection or allegation of cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel. This passive cooperation by Israel helped maintain both states' goal of the use of force against Iraq

What about the second scenario of the willingness of an intentional harmony of interest with Israel? The deniability in this scenario would have depended on the Israeli action. Two things need to be noted here. The first, as was mentioned previously that King Fahd was willing to have an intentional harmony of interest with Israel. The second, Saudi Arabia did not allow Israel to use its air space to retaliate against Iraq. This means that Israel would have flown over another state in order for it to use force against Iraq. The Israelis publicly stated that they will stop any Jordanian attempts to stop the Israeli jets if it flew over Jordan (Shlaim, 1994).

The other alternative that Israel had was flying around Jordan using Syrian or Turkish airspace to attack Iraq. If Israel did join the attack on Iraq, and an intentional harmony of interest between Saudi Arabia and Israel took place, Saudi Arabia would not have been involved at all with actively assisting Israeli jets that would have contributed to the same goal as the Saudi jets. Hence, there would be any active cooperation between Saudi and Israel, and therefore Saudi Arabia can honestly deny any active cooperation with Israel.

Another aspect that helps to honestly deny active cooperation is the nature of the goal. If the goal was very precise and specific, then the accusation of coordination would be more difficult to deny. But the Saudi-Israeli focal point of Iraq was not only shared by them which means that the deniability of explicit coordination becomes is almost effortless. If an intentional harmony of interest took between Saudi Arabia and Israel, the connection that both states would have had would be low due to Iraq being an obvious focal point to states other than Saudi Arabia and Israel. Hence, the deniability of a Saudi –Israeli intentional harmony of interest would be very convincing.

On the other hand, what would have happened if Saudi Arabia did allow Israel to fly over its airspace (which is the third scenario)? This made Saudi-Israeli policy towards each other transform from a passive one to an active one. Saudi Arabia would find the active cooperation with Israel difficult to deny for two reasons. The first reason, it will be difficult for Saudi Arabia to avoid active cooperation with Israel due to other actors potentially disclosing such information. It is obvious that Saudi Arabia would keep any active cooperation with Israel a secret and not publicize such information. But can Saudi Arabia trust other actors in doing so? That is a risk that Saudi Arabia cannot afford to take. If Saudi Arabia did decide to actively cooperate with Israel and allow them to fly over its airspace at least two states would know about such active cooperation. The United States can easily disclose such information because they would have been the ones to coordinate the channel that Israel requested (Schwarzkopf and Petre 1992).

A perfect example of this is General Schwarzkopf (who was the commander of the allied forces assembled in Saudi Arabia at the time). His biography was published in 1992, so just a year after the Desert Storm. Therefore, any active cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel would have been leaked by another party because there is no obligation in keeping it a secret. Ergo, active assistance between Saudi Arabia and Israel would have been difficult to deny by Saudi Arabia, and can severely hinder the Saudi legitimacy in the future. Ultimately, there was never any clear cut evidence that Saudi Arabia and Israel actively cooperated during Desert Storm. I argue that in such a dynamic context that both Saudi Arabia and Israel found themselves in, Israeli silent passive cooperation with Saudi Arabia was enough to reach their mutual goal, and the potential intentional Saudi harmony of interest would have been enough for Saudi Arabia to reach its mutual goal with Israel while avoiding constraints.

### **5.2.5 Israeli silent passive cooperation**

The Israeli policy towards Saudi Arabia was one of silent passivity. Other writers such as Shelby (1994) write that it was a policy of “non-intervention” and “inaction”. Some Israeli officials called for Israel

to act against the Iraqi threat because it knew that it had a qualitative advantage over Iraq. However, not all members of the Israeli government agreed to such a stance. Nevertheless, the coalition would be less legitimate in the eyes of most Arabs (though totally not broken) if Israel decided to attack Iraq and defend itself. Rashid and Shaheen (1992) also believe that if Israel would have retaliated against Iraq, the coalition would not have broken down because Iraq was just too much of a threat to Saudi Arabia to not just Saudi Arabia, but to many countries- and especially Israel. Rashid and Shaheen (1992) do indicate that the nature of the Iraqi focal point between Saudi Arabia and Israel was a general one. A common goal that allows passive cooperation to ensue due to its encompassing nature (as was mentioned in chapter 2).

But did Israel intend to passively cooperate with Saudi Arabia? I argue that Israel did indeed intend to passively cooperate with Saudi Arabia because Israel did not want Saddam Hussein to change the theme of the conflict from an Arab-Arab conflict to an Arab-Israeli conflict. It was widely believed that Israel maintained this passive stance because of pressure from the United States. Instead, Israel maintained this passive policy because it believed that it would be in the strategic and its overall interest for Israel if the coalition maintained its path. This is not to say that Israel did not want to play an active role in Desert Storm. That was clear from the requests that it made to fly over Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, I base this assumption on the fact that Israel does not submit to the United States' requests all the time. For example, the USA requested numerous times that Israel must stop building illegal settlements on the Palestinian territories, and all of these requests have been ignored. I argue that Israel believed that it would be better for its strategic interest if the allied Arab forces led by Saudi Arabia along with the United States pursued their policy towards Iraq. Therefore, Israel silently and passively assisted Saudi Arabia by not obstructing the Saudi policy towards Iraq.

### **5.3 Focal point: Iran**

I argue that Iran is both a political and military focal point. It is beyond doubt the biggest commonality that Saudi Arabia and Israel have. Therefore, an extensive explanation of the reasons

why Iran is a Saudi-Israeli focal point is imperative. It will examine the Iranian power structure, Iranian rhetoric and perceptions of both Saudi Arabia and Israel, and the Iranian conventional and unconventional military capabilities.

### **5.3.1 Iran's political structure.**

This system is a focal point to Saudi Arabia and Israel because of two main reasons. Iran labels Israel as the “cancer” of the Middle East because of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while it views Saudi Arabia as the “traitor of the holy Muslim sites”. Nevertheless, it is still a threat to both of them due to its offensive expansionist values and tendencies. This fundamentally contributes to producing a focal point between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

### **5.3.2 Exporting the revolution.**

The notion of expansionism is a contentious topic. At this point, we need to complexify the notion of “exporting the revolution”- a term that is very prominent in the international relations of Saudi-Iranian relations. The Saudi perspective claims that Iran's overall goal in the region, is to “export the revolution”, and also argues that this is enshrined in the Iranian constitution. At this point, the questions that must be asked are: is it really enshrined? if not- what is enshrined in the constitution, and how does it perpetuate an exportation of a revolution? It should be said from the outset that the term “exporting the revolution” is not explicitly mentioned in the constitution. However, what is mentioned under the heading of ‘Ideological Army’ is the following:

[T]he Army of the Islamic Republic and the Islamic Pasdaran Revolutionary Corps are formed in accordance with the aforementioned objective. They will undertake the responsibility of not only guarding and protecting the borders, but also the weight of ideological mission, i.e. striving ( jehād) on the path of God and struggle on the path of expanding the sovereignty of the law of God in the world”

There are numerous aspects that the previous extract raises. Firstly, Khomeini's perception of himself, and the role of the Pasdaran, in other words, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The “expanding of sovereignty of the law of God” can be considered as the source of the

problematic relations, and the source of suspicion for Saudi Arabia. Although the constitution does not explicitly say “ exporting the revolution”, but the ‘expanding of God’s sovereignty can be considered extortive of the revolution for two reason. The first, is how Khomeini self-perception, and how he was perceived by his followers. Ayatollah Khomeini saw himself as the leader of the Muslim *ummah* – the Muslim world – something Saudi Arabia claims to be the leader of (Rakel, 2007). Therefore, the ‘sovereignty of God’ should be expanded at the hand of Khomeini, in which case, spilling over his sovereignty into Saudi’s sovereignty. The second reason why it can be concerning is that the ambiguous term that can be interpreted in a complex political realm within the Iranian power structure. Said differently, certain power circles can interpret this as a licence to enforce their regional vision and foreign policy. Some conservative would use it as a green-light to export their vision of their way of life. If there are elements within Iran who do wish to spread/export their revolution, the IRGC will be the main instrument in striving for that end.

Conversely, the notion of exporting the revolution is not straightforward, and some have argued against the idea that Iran is exporting any kind of revolution. For instance, Barzegar (2008) argues that the main motivation for Iran’s foreign policy in the region is a defensive measure against the perceived anti-Iranian American presence. He goes on further to claim that establishing friendly relations with neighbouring-Shia-friendly states (namely Iraq) is conducted out of strategic pragmatism, as opposed to an ideological disposition.

One cannot help but think how the mentioned extract, under the ‘Ideological Army’, provides Iranian hawks the green light to constitutionally implement their vision. Barzegar (2008) does not negate that the Iranian foreign policy is motivated by increasing its influence in the region. Moreover, he suggests that the Iranian policy towards Iraq is about shifting the balance of power, into balance of interests. Nevertheless, both Saudi Arabia and Israel will consider it expansionist and a significant threat to both of them, and therefore it is irrelevant if it is ideological or not. The spearhead of such Iranian policies in the region, and the responsibility lies with the ever so powerful IRGC- also known

as the “Padestran”. It is imperative that at this point to have a more intimate look at the influence that the IRGC has on the Iranian foreign policy.

The history of the IRGC is complex, convoluted, and some elements of it trace back to the days of the ousted Mossadegh premiership (1951-1953). The early days of the revolution can only be described as a period of chaos, with many militias trying to fill the security vacuum left behind by the security forces of the Shah. To say that there was disharmony amongst the anti-Shah militia would be an understatement, and the notion that there was a unified revolutionary military body from the outset of the revolution, tasked with protecting the revolution would be inaccurate. In reality, there was not just one guard, but the current IRGC predominantly comprised of four main ‘Guards’ that were dedicated to protecting the revolution. They were: the National Guard, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (this is not the same as the current IRGC), Holy Warriors of the Islamic Revolution, and the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution.

The amalgamation of these four into one body that we see today was not a welcomed procedure by the guard leaders at the time. Obviously, this meant that they would lose prestigious leadership position, and were afraid to be uninfluential members of bureaucracy. Khomeini knew that, but he also knew that he and the revolution cannot risk having any disunity amongst these militant revolutionary leaders. A unification of the Guards was a must for two main reasons: suppressing the shah-sympathetic army, and, suppressing the leftist guerrilla movements (whom the Khomeini distrusted). As a result, the leadership of the amalgamated revolutionary guards was one of a collective leadership. This information gathered from Alfoneh (2013) shows why the leadership of the IRGC is so influential in domestic politics and foreign relations. It shows that the IRGC, at its core, has a militant, revolutionary and ideological disposition, and represents a certain kind of vision of what the newly founded Islamic Republic of Iran ought to have, including the region they share with Saudi Arabia and Israel.

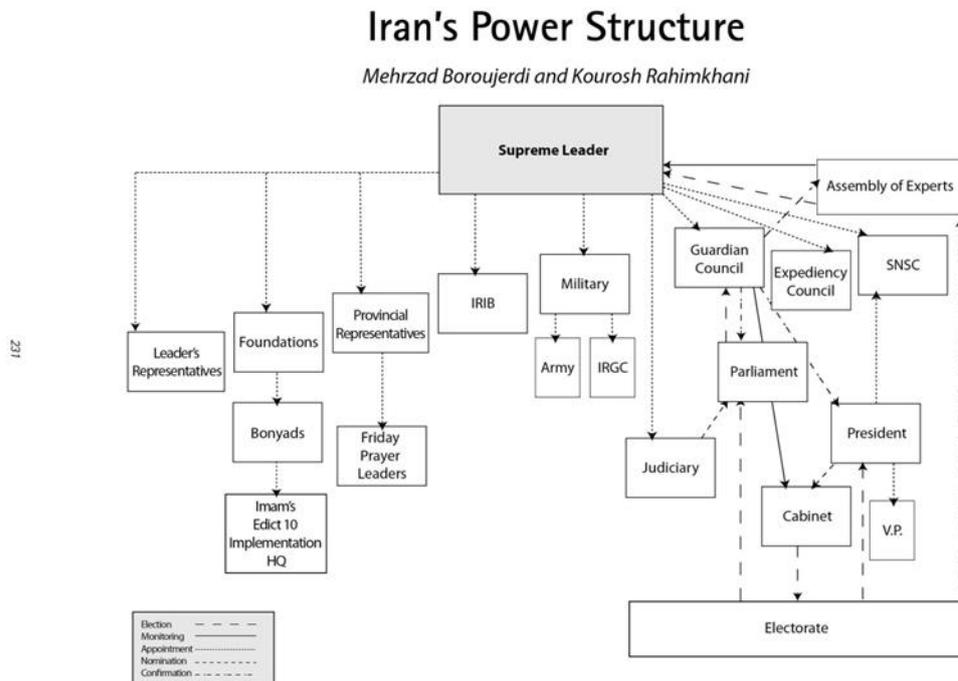
Alfoneh (2013) has provided a very useful work that shows the complex nature of the concept of the IRGC. Forzan's (2016) work provides great insights into how influential the IRGC can be – both domestic and regional.

Forzan (2016) closely examined the historical military and civil relationship in Iran, even before the 1979 revolution. What can be seen in regard to exporting the revolution is a battle between the pragmatist and the conservatives in Iran. In Forzan (2016), he claims that unlike the Shah of Iran, the IRGC was entered into the Iranian political arena, and therefore, the IRGC is part of the political fabric of the current Iranian government. Hence, the IRGC's role in exporting the revolution, or the 'ideology' it is a vanguard of, begins with its role in Iran's domestic decision making. Although there have been pragmatist who believe what the IRGC's role can hinder its relations with its neighbours and the West, the pragmatists in a way can be suppressed by the IRGC, and can be instrumentalised by hard-liners within Iran. Once the political tide turns in favour of the hard-liners, this then lubricates the way for the Iranian hard-liners to implement a more preferred foreign policy that both Israel and Saudi Arabia have always found as antagonistic. This then illustrates the military dimension of the IRGC- an ideological-military machine, and therefore producing a natural focal point between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

### **5.3.3 Supreme Leader**

The other element is the system of governance in Iran. The power structure of Iran is what solidifies such tendencies. The Supreme Leader in Iran has the overall and last say of all aspects of life. All political, economic, financial, social and even military affairs will be under his control. More importantly, what entrenches this ideology further, and makes the role of the Supreme Leader immune from any challenges is that is the Iranian constitution. Article (107) of the Iranian institution clearly states "The Leader Supreme Leader thus elected by the Assembly of Experts shall assume all the powers of the wilayat al-amr and all the responsibilities arising therefrom"

Figure 5.1



This diagram from (Wright, 2010) very much demonstrates the complexity of the Iranian domestic politics, in addition to, the point of how significant the position of Supreme Leader. This not only shows how strong some positions are, but how limited other positions are in the Iranian government. For example, strategic dimensions within the government such as the military dimension as well as judiciary answer only to the Supreme Leader. The Supreme Leader also controls the 'Provisional Representatives'. This body controls the imams who deliver the weekly Friday sermons and can heavily perpetuate anti-Saudi and anti-Israeli discourse (the Iranian rhetoric will be discussed further on in the chapter).

On the other hand, Iran officially has democratic practices and even values in its constitution. Iranian officials will counter any criticism of authoritarianism by emphasising that there are elections in Iran, and that the population play a role in how the government is formed. In Iran, people can vote for

who becomes president, and they can also vote for who gets to be in the Assembly of Experts, which chooses who is the next Supreme Leader. This can suggest that the Iranian people have a tremendous and pivotal role to play.

Conversely, it will be misleading and naïve to assume that Iranian population can change the power structure. It is important to understand that even though the people can vote for who gets to be in the Assembly of Experts, this assembly is controlled by the Guardian Council, yet, the Guardian Council same is controlled by the Supreme Leader. As a result, the Supreme Leader filters out who is not desired to be in the assembly. Therefore, Iran's foreign policy will always be dictated by the will and desire of the Supreme Leader. More importantly the Iranian Supreme Leader has the demonization of both Saudi Arabia and Israel at the heart of his rhetoric.

#### **5.3.4 Iranian Rhetoric**

The Iranian rhetoric is arguably the most significant factor that produces a natural focal point for Saudi Arabia and Israel. Iran tends to focus on the illegality of Israel and how it is an external actor that has been planted illegally in the Middle East. Constantly referring to it as the “cancer” of the Middle East and that it must be removed. While the Iranian rhetoric against Saudi Arabia focuses on how the Saudi ruling elite are illegitimate, and how they are not fit enough to host the two holiest shrines in Islam of Makah and Medina.

Furthermore, it also accuses Saudi Arabia of deceiving the Muslim and Arab world by using its own form of Sunni Islam to gain legitimacy. What is also interesting is that even in the early days of the revolution, the Iranian rhetoric placed Israel and Saudi Arabia in the same category. It's clear in the literature that there is ample anti-Israeli and anti-Saudi rhetoric. But what exactly is this literature.

The next following section will examine this rhetoric in greater detail to Saudi Arabia, Israel and then how the Iranian rhetoric accuses Saudi Arabia and Israel of being collaborators. In other words, how they are both actively assisting each other. This will be lengthy because there will be two kinds of

rhetoric in this section. This section will consist of Khomeini rhetoric and post Khomeini rhetoric. His will also expressed his “advice to the concerned cabinet ministers, now and for the future”. The reason why I highlight the Khomeini and post Khomeini rhetoric to prove how the anti-Saudi-Israeli demonization is embedded in Iranian politics. Ergo, maintaining this anti-Saudi and Israeli stance that contributes to the on-going Iranian focal point.

### **5.3.5 Anti-Israeli Rhetoric**

The anti –Israeli rhetoric is seen in the will of Khomeini as he states “the international Zionism does not stop short of any crime to achieve its base and greedy desires, crimes that the tongue and pen are ashamed to utter or write” (Khomeini 1989). He put this stance in his will in order to solidify this position against Israel for generations to come. This can be very clear in the rhetoric after Khomeini’s death. Ali Khamenei who is the current supreme leader of Iran has very much carried on the anti-Israel rhetoric. In 1999 he believed that the only solution to have peace in the Middle East was “the annihilation and destruction of the Zionist state” (Ali Khamenei, 1999). “Our stance against Israel is the same stance we have always taken,” he said. “Israel is a malignant cancerous tumour in the West Asian region that has to be removed and eradicated: it is possible and it will happen.”

The past and present Supreme Leaders were not the only officials in the Iranian government to display an anti-Israeli stance. Unlike president Khatami who was voted in in 1997-2005, President Ahmedeniajad was more explicit in his anti-Israeli stance. “Nations in the region will be more furious every day.” It won’t take long before the wrath of the people turns into a terrible explosion that will wipe the Zionist entity off the map”(Ahmedenajad , 2006).

There are significant issues to be deduced from the previous quote. Ahmadinejad is referring to the ‘people’ and not just Iran. There is this exasperation of Iran’s popularity when he said amongst ‘the people’. His statement indicates that he is assuming that he is the leader of the Muslim nation. Like

Khomeini, he also understands that demonising Israel and instrumentalizing Palestinian cause is a clear strategy for Iran.

### 5.3.6 Anti-Saudi rhetoric:

My advice to the Muslim nations is: do not wait for external help in reaching your objective which is the implementation of Islamic teachings and tenets. You yourselves must rise and undertake this vital work which will realise your independence and freedom

This is the Khomeini rhetoric was not just an attempt to delegitimize the Saudi ruling elite, but also attempting to destabilise Saudi Arabia from within. Saudi Arabia does have a significant Shiite population and called upon them and others to “rise” and revolt against the Saudi government. This is a clear attempt to spill over the revolution of in 1979 into Saudi Arabia by encouraging Saudi citizens to reject the Saudi ruling elite (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, 2002). In addition, Khomeini even explicitly insults Saudi ruling elite and claims that that “Muslims, he wrote “should curse tyrants, including the Saudi royal family, these traitors to God’s great shrine, may God’s curse and that of his angels be upon them”(Caughlin, 2009. P, 275). The fact that it is in his will means that he intends to keep this stance a fundamental position of Iranian foreign policy.

Evidence of such rhetoric being used today can be seen in the Saudi led war on the Houthi<sup>4</sup> rebels in Yemen. The Houthis are viewed by Saudi Arabia as an Iranian proxy meddling in Arab affairs. Mohsen Rezaei who is currently an Iranian official in the Expediency Discernment Council and the former head of the IRGC has also a very strong stance against this Saudi led war. In his open letter he demonises Saudi Arabia while championing the Houthi rebels and their leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi in particular (Brandt, 2017). Similar to the Khomeini, he calls the Saudi actions as “un-Islamic”. Clearly, this is a recycling of the Khomeini demonising discourse. He also called for the Houthi rebels to continue the fight against this so called aggression. Saudi Arabia on the other hand argues that this war is legal due to the invitation of the President Hadi (the current Yemeni president) and

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<sup>4</sup> Officially called “Ansar Allah” in Arabic means “Partisans of God”. They are mainly located in Sa’adh Yemen where Bader Aldeen- Al Houthi turned his followers into a political movement within Yean in the early 2000s.

therefore used Article 51<sup>5</sup> which legalizes the use of force for self-defence. But Rezaei even undermines the legality of which Saudi Arabia based this war on. This questioning and undermining of the legality of the war is part of the Iranian strategy of undermining the Saudi ruling elite fundamentally

[T]he justifications and arguments made by the Saudi government for attacking Yemen are so empty, flimsy and false...Who recognizes a fled resigned president [resigned Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi] as a pretext for military action that will leave thousands of innocent people slaughtered? (Rezaei, 2015)

### 5.3.7 Iranian allegation of Saudi-Israeli active cooperation

Khomeini considered Saudi Arabia in his will as “fellow-criminals with Israel and commit any act of treason against their own nations to serve the USA”. Iran is a strong focal point between Saudi Arabia and Israel because Iranian rhetoric constantly couples Saudi Arabia and Israel together. This is also very clear in the Iranian media nowadays. The current media always allege that Saudi Arabia and Israel are acting together against Iran in some kind of way, and is a clear attempt to cause more controversy and pressure on Saudi Arabia. Such examples can be seen in the open letter that Mohsen Rezaei’s wrote in support of the Houthi rebels. “Today the resistance in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and Bahrain stands against the faces of aggression, Israel and Saudi Arabia.” (Rezaei, 2015). This quote indicates two important things. The first aspect is that Iran’s rhetoric and discourse accuses Saudi Arabia and Israel of actively cooperating together.

The second, it reflects the current geopolitical situation that Saudi Arabia and Israel share. Syria, Lebanon and Bahrain are states that are part of the so called “Shiite crescent”<sup>6</sup>. This strongly indicates that Iran is indeed a Saudi-Israeli common security goal that is general as opposed to a precise goal. The generality and broad common goal is *the* key ingredient of the nature of goals in passive cooperation and increases the argument that Iran is indeed a Saudi-Israeli focal point.

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<sup>6</sup> A term that was coined by King Abdullah of Jordan highlighting the extent of the Iranian influence in the Middle East (Farr, 2008).

### **5.3.8 Iran's military capabilities: *Conventional and Unconventional threats.***

This section will focus on the threatening capabilities that Iran poses on both Saudi Arabia and Israel. The Iranian military and security framework will take a lot of time to explain here. The missions and aims of these groups will be very much intertwined and overlap. That is why this section intends to highlight the Iranian threat and divide it to conventional and unconventional threatening capabilities. Conventional meaning Iran's Army, Navy and air forces capabilities. While unconventional capabilities refer to the clandestine guerrilla tactics that Iran has such as the IRGC.

The extent of Iranian conventional capabilities varies in its threat towards Saudi Arabia and Israel. The reason being is because measuring power is very problematic. Should the emphasis be on size and quantity of equipment and personnel? Or should it be on the quality and efficiency of the equipment and personnel. Either one can pose different dangers and threats. The main conventional threat that Iran poses is in its quantitative military advantage is its manpower. It is almost twice the size Saudi Arabia's manpower and almost three times as much as the Israeli manpower. According to Cordesman's analyses, Iran has a significant numerical artillery advantage. This supplements the ground forces which is a sign of its numerical manpower advantage that Iran has over both Saudi Arabia and Israel (Wilner and Cordesman, 2011).

However, the numerical advantage of Iran's air force capabilities is not much more than Saudi Arabia and Israel. Iran's air forces are mostly comprised by aircraft and fighter jets from the days before the 1979 revolution. Even then, the aircraft capabilities were not superior against Saudi Arabia and Israel. Due to the sanctions that Iran had upon it they would not have the ability to develop their air force further. The Saudi petro dollars and Israeli influence in the United States allows both states to maintain a conventional technological military advantage. Saudi Arabia and Israel receive most of their fighter jets from the United States. It is acknowledged even by the Iranian military leadership that Iran's conventional military capabilities are not a match for Saudi Arabia's and Israel. For example, Cordesman and Gold (2014) quote Mohammad Jaffari's (head of the IRGC) saying that:

Asymmetrical warfare... is [our] strategy for dealing with the considerable [Conventional] capabilities of the enemy. A prominent example of this kind of warfare was [the tactics employed by Hizballah during] the Lebanon war in 2006 (...) Since the enemy has considerable technological abilities, and since we are still at a disadvantage in comparison, despite the progress we have made in the area of equipment, [our only] way to confront [the enemy] successfully is to adopt the strategy [of asymmetric warfare] and to employ various methods of this kind

As the quote above indicates, what Iran lacks in conventional advantages over Saudi Arabia and Israel, it certainly makes up for it in its unconventional capabilities. Iran very much knows that unconventional methods is more suitable for the context and the landscape that it finds its self in. Mainly because the nature of the conflict that involves Saudi Arabia, Israel and Iran is low level kind of conflict. Not a high intensity conflict such as the Iraq case. Furthermore, it not only participates in places like Syria and Lebanon, but it also trains native militia such as Hezbollah and the Houthi rebels. Hence this explains why Iran does focus on light equipment in order make these irregular forces more mobile.

It is mainly the IRGC that oversees such irregular warfare. What adds to knowledge of irregularity is the fact that it has many domestic obligations of security as well. More importantly, the IRGC especially the Quds force answer only to the Supreme Leader. This enables it to even have its own foreign policy (Cordesman, 2003). It is these kinds of unconventional capabilities coupled with the support that it has from the Supreme Leader which makes the unconventional capabilities of Iran a focal point to both Saudi Arabia and Israel.

### **5.3.9 Saudi intentional harmony of interests with Israel**

There have been some recent developments that have proved the value of passive cooperation and intentional harmony of interests in particular and becoming more hostile and problematic for both Saudi Arabia and Israel. The Saudi involvement in Syria is due to the attempt to stop Iran from gaining another sphere of influence there. This is something Israel shares as it too finds the role of Iran extremely problematic and dangerous for its security. In the early 2018, Israeli fighter jets have attacked Iranian targets directly in Syria. This means that Israel directly and militarily contributed to

the Saudi-Israeli focal point that they share. As a result, Syrian forces have retaliated and shot down an Israeli fighter jet, which then escalated the Israeli military response on Iranian and Assad targets.

What is the Saudi response to this? The answer is nothing- because Saudi Arabia is not obligated to assist Israeli in any way. If there was indeed an “alliance” as the Iranian regimes discourse alludes to, or some media outlets suggest, then by definition, Saudi Arabia would have been contractually obligated to defend Israel. But not such contractual obligation is present in passive cooperation. Instead, this is considered an intentional harmony of interest because Saudi Arabia intended to do two aspects. The first intention, Saudi Arabia intends to isolate Iranian regime, weaken its military, and increase the sanctions placed upon Iran in the hope to reduce the threat that Iran poses on Saudi Arabia, while knowing full well that Israel is doing the same thing for the same reasons. The second intention is that Saudi Arabia does not have an active cooperation with Israel in achieving their mutual goal of thwarting the Iranian threat. In this specific case, the intentional harmony of interest can be considered a Saudi balance between reaching a significant mutual goal with Israel, while avoiding domestic and external constraints. Put differently, the Saudi ruling elite is balancing between not being too close to Israel and not being too far. The lack of an obligation for Saudi Arabia to respond is one of the core benefits of passive cooperation. Saudi Arabia had no obligation what so ever to intervene, or even mention it. So long as the Iranian influence will increase in the region the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel in regards to the Iranian focal point will only increase their intentional harmony of interest, and not active cooperation simply because there is no need to. We can see that passive cooperation is sporadic yet convenient; this is what passive cooperation is all about

Arguably, the commonalities between Saudi Arabia and Israel are becoming ever clearer, and speculation of explicit coordination with Israel is often asked when Saudi officials face the media. “There are no ties or talks with Israel at any level” is the answer of the Saudi foreign minister when asked about the Israeli foreign minister’s regarding the alleged cooperation between Saudi Arabia

and Israel-especially towards Iran. This answer is very telling and there are a numbers of aspects that this answer can say. Firstly, it is obvious the official Saudi stance is in denying any kind of communication. Such allegations especially of Saudi Arabian and Israeli communication were very much fuelled by the Iranian media. It was an effort to demonise Saudi Arabia further. This kind of allegation did not result in what the Iranian media wanted to achieve. The Saudi population did not protest and neither did the greater Arab and Muslim world. This is due to the lack of a direct Saudi and Israeli channel of communication (at least publically). Also, the extent of the denial of these allegations of Saudi cooperation with Israel needs to be examined further. For example, the answer of the Saudi spokesperson for the foreign ministry was indeed that “[t]here are no ties or talks with Israel at any level” was indeed a denial that was limited in nature, as opposed to an elaborative kind of denial.

But why have a limited denial? A limited denial is a calculated balance between avoiding constrains and maintaining an intentional harmony of interest. The Saudi official did not overly deny it and explained why there will not be any kind communication. Or he did not explain how unacceptable it would be if there was any alleged communication. If there was no intentional harmony of interest between Saudi Arabia and Israel then the answer would have been a much more of a demonizing response. Therefore, limited deniability is a way of maintaining and intentional harmony of interest and ultimately passive cooperation by not admitting to active cooperation, yet, not overly denying which can disrupt the intentional harmony of interest between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Although constraints will be looked at in greater detail in chapter 6 and 7, a few words in this section will be relevant. Saudi Arabia will face is the Sunni terrorist within Saudi Arabia. These terrorists groups such as Al-Qaeda consider Saudi institutions and Saudi soldiers as legitimate targets for them. Such Fatwas encourage the attack on not only American targets, but Saudi targets as well. This fatwa by bin laden further strengthens the point.

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies [Saudi Arabia] — civilians and military — is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] and [Madenah] from their grip (Binladen, 1998)

In 2003, Saudi Arabia has faced tremendous amount of terrorist attacks. Their logic and reason was that they believed the Saudi ruling elite were not legitimate in their eyes and therefore they were un-Islamic. This is very much a similar kind of rhetoric that Ayatollah Khomeini had against Saudi Arabia. If there was any kind of active cooperation with Israel the terrorist groups in Saudi can recruit people for their anti-Saudi cause with more success. That hypothetical active cooperation would have been a political centre of gravity that can be targeted by the terrorists. However, one of the main benefits of passive cooperation is that it avoids centres of gravity (refer back to chapter 2 for more information on what COG is).

Furthermore, it will strengthen their cause and allow other lone-wolves who are individual terrorists to attack Saudi Arabia. It is clear that Bin laden is calling on all Muslims to revolt against the Saudi ruling elite due to their alliance with the United States. Since the Saudi-American relationship was the foundation to the terrorists' cause. If that was a reaction of a Saudi-American relationship, then one can only imagine how severe a Saudi-Israeli active cooperation will be treated within Saudi Arabia. Passive cooperation will therefore be the safest way to reach a common goal with Israel while avoiding domestic constraints

Foreign constraints are also a core reason why Saudi Arabia would maintain a passive cooperation with Israel rather than an active one. The external constraint in cooperating actively with Israel will be divided into two. The first constraint will be the Arab world, while the second one is the Muslim world. Reflecting on The Khomeini rhetoric will indicate the significance of the nature of the external constraint. Who exactly are the people or states that will be resulting in being a constraint of a Saudi and Israel active assistance?

The reason why Khomeini rhetoric is important now is because he constantly referred back to the Muslim world, and not just Arabs. Although he did not exempt Arabs from rising against what

Khomeini claimed were oppressors, and it was very much an Islamic rhetoric. This indicates that there is a competition of who is the leading state of the Muslim world, and Iran was after that role. Very similar to the second domestic constraint, cooperating with Israel against Iran will pose more constraints because many will view Iran as a champion of Islamic values. Especially the fact that Iran always instrumentalises the Palestinian- Israeli conflict and places it at the forefront of its foreign policy. The Palestinian –Israeli conflict is a tremendous tool to gain support and most importantly legitimacy from the Muslim and Arab world. Therefore, an active collaboration with Israel on Iran will exasperate the Iranian rhetoric against Saudi Arabia.

### **5.3.10 Israeli silent passive cooperation**

The Israeli policy Saudi Arabia in the facing the Iranian threat is once again a policy of passivity. In 2009 Saudi Arabia reached the largest military deal in history at the time (Quinn, 2010). This deal comprised to a large extent of offensive weapons and ammunition. This arms deal illustrates the Israeli passivity towards the Saudi goal due to the limited objection from the Israeli lobby to. The history of Israeli lobby (AIPAC) and how it fought against American arms sales to Saudi in congress will demonstrate why Israeli passivity in the 2010 arms deal is considered passive cooperation.

In the early 1980's Saudi Arabia campaigned to buy the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) from the United States. This aircraft is intended for communication purposes to assist in Saudi Arabia in protecting its borders, and not an aircraft with offensive capabilities. The Israeli lobby at the time fiercely campaigned against the AWACS deal. It is important to highlight that the Israeli lobby knew that the AWACS did not have any offensive capabilities. Nevertheless, they campaigned aggressively against the AWACs deal (Lacy, 2009; Simpson, 2006)

So it is clear that the Israeli lobby has a history of campaigning against Saudi arms sales: the deal involved inoffensive capabilities. So why did it not campaign against the Saudi arms deal in 2010, which has ample offensive capability? This is a sublime example of silent passive cooperation by

Israel. It is also clear that in order to figure out whether a state is passively cooperating or not, historical context must be put into account.

## **5.4 Comparing the two focal points and instances of passive cooperation.**

This section will be dedicated to comparing and contrasting the examinations of both focal points. Attempting to highlight similarities and differences will provide more information about passive cooperation. Furthermore, it will highlight certain topics that will be the foundation of the subsequent chapters.

### **5.4.1 Similarity of focal points:**

The clear reason why both cases were focal points to Saudi Arabia and Israel was that both focal points were security threats, as opposed to other economic or technological focal points. Furthermore, both focal points have categorised Saudi and Israel in the same context. They demonised Saudi Arabia by accusing it of cooperation with Israel. Both silent passive cooperation and an intentional harmony of interest have been demonstrated in both cases. This also indicates the importance of the role of the 'third party' in passive cooperation - especially in the silent form. Therefore, this indicates that the United States plays a tremendous role in the passive cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel- more so in the form of silent passive cooperation, and not the intentional harmony of interest.

Moreover, this indicates the silent passive assistance requires a balancer to help incentivise actors to being silent in a passive cooperation. This can be clear in secret American NSA memorandum that was published about the sales of AWACS and F-15 fighter jets to Saudi Arabia. The memorandum was written in 1981, and it in it said "[t]hus, I agree with the secretaries' assessment that we should balance the sale to Saudi Arabia with additional support to Israel". It can be deduced that silent passive cooperation can incur more activity for a third party. Hence silent passive cooperation has a level of dependency on a third party that an intentional harmony of interest does.

Both cases display that an intentional harmony of interest are very separate individual policies between Saudi Arabia and Israel. For example the willingness to allow Israel to attack Iraq from another airspace and the harmonious anti-nuclear programme effort are separate individual policy, but with the same end. There was no level of dependency on any third party, which is something that can be inferred from both cases.

#### **5.4.2 Difference in focal points**

Both focal points used rhetoric to demonise both Saudi Arabia and Israel, but the reason why they both became focal points is another difference between the two cases. In the Iraqi case, it was the fact that Iraq fired missiles into both Saudi Arabia and Israel simultaneously. In other words, it was Iraq's actions that caused the creation of the natural focal point between Saudi Arabia and Israel. While on the other hand, Iran has always rhetorically categorised Saudi Arabia and Israel which has made it a natural focal point between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Conversely, there were instances where Saddam Hussein and Iran have placed Saudi Arabia and Israel together in their rhetoric. However, the nature of the rhetoric is different. The Iraqi rhetoric is more of epideictic rhetoric while the Iranian the main Iranian rhetoric is deliberative kind of rhetoric. In other words, the epideictic rhetoric is regarding the demonization of the present time. While the Iranian deliberative kind of rhetoric is regarding future actions (Martin, 2014). This is very much clear because the Khomeini categorisation of Saudi Arabia and Israel is constantly used again. It always called for the action from the people to take matters in their own hand and revolt against Saudi Arabia in favour of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But what does this say about the nature of the focal point? This demonstrates that focal points can be very different. They can either be very sporadic and spontaneous kind of mutual security problem with a short duration. Or it can be a very long lasting kind of mutual security concern. In the case of the Iraqi focal point, the duration of it was not long, but the intensity of it was very high. While in the

Iranian case, the focal point is substantially longer but with less intensity. Ergo, focal points can be very different and subsequently the nature of the passive cooperation will adapt according to the nature of the focal point.

#### **5.4.3 Similarity of deniability**

What is clear from the outset was that Saudi Arabia never faced any credible allegations of collaborating with Israel. Thus being able to maintain plausible deniability is the main reason to passively cooperate. But how did deniability make Saudi Arabia not controversially connected to Israel? The focal points of Iraq and Iran were not specific threats to Saudi Arabia and Israel, but were general threats to the entire region, if not global. Passive cooperation and especially any kind of harmony of interest will attract policies against it. Said differently, an intentional harmony of interest between Saudi Arabia and Israel is a result of an overall general threat, and not a specific one that only involves Saudi Arabia and Israel exclusively. This reinforces the main difference of the concept of passive cooperation that I am using and was put forth by Piga and Giovenetti (2017) and Keohane's notion of harmony- in particular their goal.

Furthermore, the main benefit of plausible deniability between Saudi Arabia and Israel was the fact that Saudi Arabia always maintained legitimacy of its domestic and foreign dimensions. In other words, avoiding domestic and external constraints is the main reason why states passively cooperate rather than actively. This displays how important domestic and external constraints are while taking foreign policy decisions. Therefore, this needs to be examined further in the coming chapters.

#### **5.4.4 Difference in deniability.**

It is clear that there were many more occasions to deny in the Iranian case than the Iraqi case. The reason for that is the duration of the focal point which was mentioned in the previous section. The Iraqi focal point was short, unlike the Iranian case which was long lasting and still on-going ever since the revolution of 1979. There was not a question or at least there was not any report of any kind of

cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel in the Iraqi case, unlike the Iranian case. Therefore, the longer the focal point exists, the more speculation it will receive. But so long as the focal point is a general and encompassing goal between Saudi Arabia and Israel, passive cooperation is sufficient to achieving mutual goals while avoiding constraints.

## 5.5 Conclusion.

Both focal points of Iraq and Iran have resulted in passive cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Both of the cases do have commonalities and both have differences. For example, actions of Iran during the Gulf War resulted in producing a clear focal point, while the Iranian rhetoric was the significant reason producing a clear focal point. What this indicates is that passive cooperation can be very unpredictable and flexible depending on the nature of focal points. Passive cooperation is a result of convenience between the states or actors that are involved. States cannot plan a certain passive cooperation. This can be a weakness but when there are significant constraints, the lack of explicit communication and any kind of active cooperation, passive cooperation becomes very convenient. Furthermore, this chapter highlights that in order to understand whether states are passively cooperating or not, context must be put into account. Passive cooperation is a not a direct form of state behaviour. Therefore, concluding whether states do, or have, or are passively cooperating *must* examine the context and details of the situation very meticulously

The two case studies also highlighted how Saudi Arabia was able to maintain its internal and external legitimacy by how it maintained a passive cooperation with Israel, and never transforming it into an active one. What this chapter also highlighted is the significance of the domestic and foreign constraints. Arguably, that was the main reason why Saudi Arabia never transformed it into an active form of cooperation. Furthermore, this begs the question of why these are domestic and foreign constraints so important? What makes them important? And can the Saudi ruling elite ignore such important constraints? The next chapters will examine the theme of language, and how the Saudi discourse was able to navigate around domestic and external constraints.

# Chapter 6

## Saudi Peace Initiatives: *Identifying External Constraints.*

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### 6.1 Introduction

What would it take for Saudi Arabia and Israel to have active, public, direct and official cooperation? There are growing reports in the media suggesting that there is already active cooperation between them (Davidson, 2013). The fact that both states deny such reports suggests that this is still an exaggeration of the commonalities that both Saudi Arabia and Israel have. Yet, what about the communication between them? Do Saudi Arabia and Israel have under the table or secret channels of communication? It is certainly not worthwhile trying to analyse and suggest what cannot be seen and proved between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Instead, it is worth looking at what are the clear instances of communication between both states. Certainly, there is no evidence as of yet, of direct, secret or official talks with Israel. But diplomatic relations and ad-hoc meetings are not the only ways of communicating. Peace initiatives are a specific way of communicating to others as well. Not only is the fact that a peace initiative is a form of communication within itself, but the wording and tone of the language within particular peace initiative can communicate explicit and implicit messages.

This chapter will focus on what Saudi Arabia has communicated to Israel via its peace initiatives. The Saudi conceived peace initiatives are the Fahd plan (1981), Fez plan (1982), Abdullah plan (2002) and the Arab Peace Initiative (API) (2002). The chapter will analyse these four peace initiative into three categories of textual tones of demand, promise and request. So what would be demanded and what does the tone of how the demand is made say about Saudi policy towards Israel? What is Saudi Arabia promising, in addition to any explicit incentives they provide. Finally, what requests are made

by Saudi Arabia and to whom is the request made. The categorization of these tones will help shed light on what kind of policy Saudi Arabia has towards Israel.

The structure is as follows. Before looking at the actual peace initiatives, the chapter will look at the nature of the Saudi peace policies towards Israel. This will highlight what were the policies and behaviour leading up to the peace initiatives. One of the aims of the categorization of the tones will be to highlight the differences between the peace initiatives, in order to highlight the extent of how meanings have evolved as time as well as context have evolved. The other aim will be to highlight what was communicated within these plans and try to expose what can these implicit messages entail.

After examining the Fahd and Fez plan, the chapter will focus on the Saudi policy towards Israel before the Abdullah Plan and the Arab Peace Initiative (API). There will be two main aims of the categorization of the Abdullah Plan and API. The first, is to find the similarities and differences between the Fahd and Fez plan, and between the Abdullah plan and the API. After which, it will be more clear how the policy of Saudi Arabia towards Israel has evolved since the Fahd and Fez plan. The second aim is to extract the implicit and explicit communication towards Israel within these initiatives. Once that is done, I will go on to argue that firstly, Saudi Arabia is not opposed to negotiation with Israel, but the unresolved questions is who will conduct the negotiations. Secondly, that active cooperation is very likely to happen between Saudi Arabia and Israel once a peace agreement has been reached. Thirdly, that Saudi Arabia has to use extreme pragmatism while communicating what it wants to communicate to Israel in order to avoid external constraints.

## **6.2 Saudi policy before the Fahd and Fez plan**

The Saudi policy towards Israel before the Fahd and Fez plan is incredibly telling. It shows how problematic Israel is to Saudi Arabia, as well as how the Saudi identity is constrained in how it deals with Israel. Equally important, it shows the pragmatic attitude that Saudi has always had towards

Israel. The Saudi ruling elite have always tried to balance the very delicate issue of championing the pro-Arab cause with a careful Saudi foreign policy. The pragmatic nature of Saudi Arabia towards Israel goes back to the days before Israel was even a state. King Abdulaziz, who is the father of the modern day Saudi Arabia explained his stance to J. Rives Childs who was an American representative in Saudi Arabia in 1947 and said that

“[T]he US government had taken a decision with respect to Palestine which was most distasteful for the Arab world but (...) that was past and the Arabs would take such measures as they deemed necessary for the defence of their interests (...) although [the US and Saudi Arabia] differ enormously on the question of Palestine we still have our own mutual interests and friendship to safe guard... I occupy a position of prominence in the Arab world, in the case of Palestine I have to make common cause with other Arab states. Although the other Arab states may bring pressure on me I don't anticipate that a situation will arise whereby I shall be drawn into conflict with friendly western powers”(Bronson, 2006. P, 165)

The message obtained from the book “Thicker Than Oil” illustrates core themes that will dictate the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel, from that point till this very day. Firstly, it displayed the Saudi discontent with the United States in regards to favouring Israel over the Palestinian cause. It also shows that any notion that Saudi Arabia has always side-lined the Palestinian cause, or that it has always supported Israel is non-sense. Secondly, it shows the place that Saudi Arabia has in the Arab and Muslim world, but in particular the role that it has in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is clear that there is a certain expectation for Saudi Arabia to fight for the Arab cause and have a tough stance on Israel. However, it is down to Saudi pragmatism that has always maintained a strong stance towards Israel without being a reckless one. Thirdly, it is also clear that Saudi Arabia, in this instance has chosen to have a certain position within the Arab-Israeli conflict- a strictly pro-Arab stance (Bronson, 2006).

This leads to the final point, Saudi Arabia has always had a pragmatic approach in dealing with Israel as opposed to a military one. In other words, it is clear from the quote above, that Saudi Arabia has always had a passive policy towards Israel. Perhaps this is due to the fact that both Saudi Arabia and Israel have always had the United States as their security guarantor. Arguably, the Saudi policy

towards Israel was one of passivity and pragmatism, rather than emotion and recklessness, long before the Fahd and Fez plan.

The Saudi attitude towards Israel can also be seen during the reign of King Faisal (1962-1975), and in the immediate aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. It is very well documented that Saudi Arabia was part of the infamous three no's of the Arab world. In Khartoum Sudan, after the Arabs lost significant land to Israel during the 1967 war, the Arab league decided to have a collective stance on Israel and declared the "no recognition, no negotiation and no peace" with Israel (Reich, and Goldberg, 2010). Saudi Arabia was certainly a signatory to that strong stance towards Israel.

However- and only rarely mentioned - Saudi Arabia was not opposed to having negotiations with Israel. Of course, Saudi Arabia itself would not be involved as one of the negotiating parties, because it did not have land directly occupied by Israel-unlike other Arab states. But Israel did occupy Saudi land indirectly because Israel occupied the Saudi islands of Tiran and Sanafir which was lent to Egypt in 1950 in a show of pan-Arab solidarity- Israel occupied the islands from Egypt in 1967, but were first returned to Egypt as part of the 1979 camp David accords, and then Egypt returned the islands to Saudi Arabia in 2016 (Bar'el, 2016). Instead, its policy is that the "confrontational states" or other Arab states that have land disputes with Israel are the ones that should be having negotiations (Dawisha, 1983).

It is clear that the power dimensions in the Middle East after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war had changed dramatically. Israel has gained more land and increased its strategic security further. The United States increased its aid to Israel because it saw Israel as barriers against communist influence in the Middle East, and therefore a crucial ally in the Middle East. But most importantly, the Saudi perception of Israel changed. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war convinced Saudi Arabia and the Arab world that Israel is there to stay, hence, replacing a pure confrontational stance with an even more pragmatic one.

Furthermore, “[h]owever, Faisal resolutely assumed the leadership of the moderate camp and insisted on attaching to this militantly anti-Israeli resolution a clause stipulating that in the effort 'to eliminate the effects of the aggression', all possible instruments needed to be utilized, 'including the political and diplomatic’ (Dawisha,1983. P, 676). However, Dawisha (1983) does not elaborate what such “political and diplomatic” tools entail. Therefore Saudi Arabia did not rule out negotiations with Israel in 1967. This is a clear implicit policy that suggests that negotiations with Israel must be attempted, it therefore strongly indicates a pragmatic policy towards Israel.

This pragmatic Saudi policy towards Israel can also be seen in a memorandum sent to the US state department from the American General Consulate in 1969. The memorandum sums up the policy of Saudi Arabia during the reign of King Faisal. King Faisal certainly expressed his concern over Israel’s expansionist tendencies, and wanted to gain reassurance of what Israel’s tendencies were.

When King Faisal was asked of what “ought to be done to break present Arab-Israel impasse?” King Faisal replied by saying he “could not speak for Arab states directly involved and SAG [ Saudi Arabian Government] is only [an] interested by-stander”. King Faisal also communicated to the American representative that “If their [Israel] territorial demands are reasonable and compensation is offered, he thought Jordan would be willing and able [to] work out something”. Further on the memoranda, King Faisal informed the representative that with the exception of Jerusalem, the Saudi government “will accept anything which parties directly involved (as in the Arab countries that have land disputes with Israel) agree upon”.

This exchange between King Faisal and the American representative provides crucial information to the history of Saudi policy towards Israel. Firstly, the King in the above paragraph characterises Saudi Arabia as “an interested by stander” which strongly suggests the passive nature it consciously adopts towards Israel. Furthermore, it shows that the passive nature that King Abdulaziz indicated in a previous paragraph is certainly an early and ongoing policy of Saudi Arabia.

Secondly, the fact that King Faisal wanted to see what was an acceptable solution of a border dispute with the “parties involved” means that there is an extremely implicit but conditional recognition of Israel, which is no different than the current policy of Saudi Arabia today. Thirdly, that Saudi Arabia was not against negotiation with Israel after the 1967 war. The peace initiatives that will be examined in greater detail in the next sections.

### **6.3 Fahd plan**

Before examining the actual text of the Fahd plan, a contextualization of what led to the Fahd plan is imperative. All Arab-Israeli relations, including the major wars, play a fundamental role in how the policies of Arab states are towards Israel- Saudi foreign policy in particular. It was mentioned in the previous section of how significant the 1967 (in terms of borders and US support to Israel thereafter). In addition, the 1973 Arab-Israeli war played a crucial role leading up the Fahd plan eight years later. In sum, the attempt by then president of Egypt and Arab states (including Saudi Arabia) was to have a settlement with Israel. On the other hand, the question was how to go to the negotiation table with Israel: would it be by diplomacy or have a military “limited” military confrontation. The detail of the war plans are not as relevant as the intention of the joint Arab stance-which was to negotiate and settle for an agreement.

Negotiation between Egypt and Israel started in 1978 and the Camp David accords were agreed in September 17, 1978, and were made official in March 26, 1979. In March 31, 1979, The Arab league in Baghdad called upon the rest of the Arab League to “[w]ithdraw the ambassadors of the Arab states from Egypt immediately (...) recommend the severance of political and diplomatic relations with the Egyptian government”.

Clearly, this was a huge cost for Egypt, but it was a huge loss of the Arab joint stance. This was also an opportunity for Saudi Arabia to fill the leadership vacuum of the Arab states, especially in their joint stance towards Israel. Therefore, then Crown Prince Fahd issued a peace initiative that wanted to

unite the Arab states after it was discombobulated after the Camp David accords, but also, to reach peace agreement with Israel. The language of the peace initiative will be examined as it will be analysed through the three tones of demand, promise and request. The Fahd plan was officially declared on August 7, 1981. It states the following:

(1) Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Arab Jerusalem (2) The removal of the settlements established by Israel in Arab territory after 1967 (3) Guarantees of freedom of worship and of the practice of religious rites for all faiths in the holy places (4) Confirmation of the right of the Palestinian people to return, and compensation for those who do not wish to return (5) The placement of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under United Nations supervision for a transitional period lasting not more than a few months (6) The establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital (7) Confirmation of the rights of all the states of the region to live in peace (8) Guarantees by the United Nations or certain United Nations member countries of the implementation of these principles

### **6.3.1 Context between the Fahd and Fez plan**

The time between the Fahd plan and the Fez plan witnessed significant developments. It is widely argued in the literature that the Fahd plan itself was a milestone in the Arab-Israeli discourse and it is widely argued that clause (7) can be interpreted an implicit recognition of Israel (Rasvi, 1981). However, a debate began whether it was a tacit recognition towards Israel or were observers looking too much into the language.

The Saudi acting ambassador to the UN at the time declared that clause 7 does not mean relations, and therefore the Saudi policy does not recognize Israel, and therefore it was not recognition of Israel. Conversely, on the next day, the Saudi press papers declared that "The acting ambassador Gaffer Allaganv's explanations about certain points in the Plan are not proper and he is not authorized to give personal explanation on the Plan [Fahd plan]" (Dhahani, 1982. P, 101)

This shows three main things about the communication towards Israel at that time. First, it is clear and strongly argued that clause 7 was an implicit recognition of Israel, and that Saudi Arabia wanted to communicate that to Israel. Secondly, the nature of communication towards Israel was very implicit, but nevertheless, Saudi ruling elite communicated its message towards Israel of recognition. Thirdly, the media is clearly a useful tool that allows Saudi Arabia to communicate implicit and

abstract messages to Israel. Therefore, statements through the media should be focused further in the realm of Saudi-Israeli communication.

What is also very clear is the amount of external constraints that Saudi Arabia faced between the Fahd and Fez plan. It is also important to note that the Fahd plan was not rejected unanimously, instead, can be considered a gradual rejection. Some states initially supported the Fahd plan, such as Qatar, Bahrain, Sudan and Tunisia, while other states such as North Yemen, south Yemen Iraq, Libya and Syria stood against it (Dhahani, 1982). It can be deduced that the external constraint that Saudi Arabia had in communicating to Israel were some of the above mentioned Arab states that prefer a stronger stance towards Israel- not because it wants war with it, but because it built much of their own legitimacy in the demonization of Israel.

This presented a clear test for Saudi diplomacy. How can Saudi Arabia balance between a pragmatic stance and peace proposal towards Israel, while gaining the support of the Fahd plan from the entire Arab World? Saudi Arabia opted to change the wording of its original text in the Fahd plan in order to get it accepted by the Arab League and it declared the Fez plan in 1982.

### **6.3.2 Fez Plan**

The Fez plan was declared after an Arab league summit in Fez Morocco on September 9, 1982. It states the following:

(1) Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem (2) Removal of the settlements established by Israel in the Arab territories since 1967 (3) Guarantees of the freedom of worship and the practice of religious rites for all faiths in the holy places (4) The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to practice its inalienable national rights under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative, and compensation for those not wishing to return to Palestine (5) The West Bank and Gaza Strip to be placed under United Nations supervision for a transitional period lasting not more than a few months. (6) Establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital (7) The United Nations Security Council to provide guarantees for peace between all states of the region, including the independent Palestinian state (8) The Security Council to guarantee implementation of these principles.

### **6.3.4 Category 1) Demanding tone**

There may be a similarity between the Fahd and Fez plan in regards to their demands, but what the actual demands are, is very different. When the Fahd plan was first initiated in 1981, the only change that was different from the demand of the 1967 borders was the Sinai Peninsula and the Jordanian territories. The Fez plan demanded more land due to the Israeli invasion of south of Lebanon of 1982 (Freilich, 2012). Interestingly, even though Israel occupied more land, the demanding tone was the same.

As a result, this illustrates the Saudi unacceptability of any Arab land occupied by Israel regardless of the size of Arab land Israel occupies. In other words, whether an inch of Arab land or a mile of Arab land that is occupied by Israel, it will attract a very strong tone and attitude of unacceptability from Saudi Arabia. Theoretically speaking, this highlights a clear external constraint on Saudi-Israel active cooperation.

Clause (6) of both Fahd and Fez plan also comes under the demanding tone. As can be seen above, it mentions the “establishment of an independent state, and Jerusalem as its capital” (Dhahani, 1982). One can easily argue that this is a Saudi and Arab demand from Israel to recognize the state of Palestine. It must be said that it would be unthinkable for Saudi Arabia to have a peace initiative that would not have the demand from Israel to recognize the state of Palestine. Therefore, a demand from Israel to recognize a Palestinian state would be core to any peace initiative from Saudi Arabia towards Israel. In other words, the recognition of a Palestinian state is a non-negotiable aspect for Saudi Arabia., especially Jerusalem- but is it all of Jerusalem? This will be examined later on in the chapter.

There is also a difference in the fourth clause between the Fahd and Fez plan. Although there is a similarity with the compensation of the Palestinian people, the difference is in whom in particular within the Palestinian people should be compensated. The Fahd plan referred to the Palestinian people generally. The Fez plan mentions the PLO in particular. This difference in the fourth clause of the Fez plan indicates far more prestige and emphasis on the PLO making it “the sole legitimate

representative” as was mentioned in the Fez plan. The influence of the PLO and Yasser Arafat is evident in the change of the fourth clause. Yet again, another remainder of how does the external constraints affect the Saudi behaviour towards Israel.

If there is anything identical in both the Fahd and Fez plan it would be clause (6). As was mentioned above, this is a demand of Israel to recognize Palestine as a state, but it will have Jerusalem as its capital (Dhahani, 1982). Moreover, this is a very significant issue especially regarding the fact that a year before the initiative, Israel declared that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel. However, did the Fahd and Fez plan really demand all of Jerusalem? Or mostly likely it is implicitly pointing to East Jerusalem since east Jerusalem was mentioned in the first clause of both Fahd and Fez plan. So, if there is an Achilles heel in both peace initiatives, it would be asking for all of Jerusalem to be the capital of a Palestinian state.

Moreover, anybody that would dismiss this peace initiative as incompatible with Israeli demands would use the ambiguity of clause (6). But why was East Jerusalem not explicitly mentioned? I argue that the language used in clause 6 for both the Fahd and Fez plan joined a strong Arab stance, with an implicit message of sharing Jerusalem. The reason for a strong tone of demand is to tap in on the Arab emotions and pride, in order in order to gain support from the other Arab states.

This involves a strong tone against Israel, in addition to a strong ‘fantasmatic’ (Glynos and Howarth, 2007) desire of obtaining Jerusalem under Arab and Muslim sovereignty. This demand in a way is reminiscent of the Saladin days having expelled the crusaders from Jerusalem and having Jerusalem under Islamic sovereignty (Landau, 2013). In other words, this is a demanding tone that is nostalgic which grips the Arab populations attention and convinces them further that Arab states are indeed resisting Israel- something that is desired by many in the Arab streets.

Interestingly, there is an element of deniability that was displayed in the language used in clause 6. In a way, there is a balancing act between emotions on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both

Arabs and Israeli hold Jerusalem dear to them. The language used in clause 6 can help deny two things. Firstly, Saudi Arabia can claim that it defended Arab pride by demanding that Jerusalem (one of the jewels of the Arab and Muslim world) be returned to Arab and Palestinian sovereignty, and hence, navigating around any criticism from any Arab, Muslim or any other state of having not having a strong stance on Israel. Secondly, Saudi Arabia can deny to third parties and whoever is overseeing the peace initiatives that it is not ruling out that that Jerusalem is to be shared by Israel and Palestine, and therefore denying that it insists on demanding of all Jerusalem. This choice of language shows how careful Saudi Arabia is and has to be in order to balance between Arab consensus, and having peace with Israel.

#### **6.3.5 Category 2) Promising tone**

Clauses 3 and 7 of both Fahd and Fez plan provide promises to Israel. Clause 3 of the Fahd and Fez plan promise that the Arabs will respect the right to all practices of all religions. It is also worth to note that the Jerusalem has religious significance to Muslims, Jews and Christians. This indicates that the Arab states lead by Saudi Arabia wanted to send the message to Israel that this is not a religious conflict, and their opposition to Israel is not a religious one. In this attempt, the Saudis communicated religious tolerance to the Arabs.

There is a very good reason why Saudi Arabia wanted to relay this message of religious tolerance. In this message, it implicitly communicated that this conflict with Israel is very solvable, and peace is not impossible. A religious conflict is arguably much more intense than other political conflicts. A religious war then becomes a war of values which then makes the nature of that religious war unending and a divine cause. The Saudi language aimed to negate that notion.

conflicts based on religion tend to become dogged, tenacious and brutal types of wars. When conflicts are couched in religious terms, they become transformed in value conflicts. Unlike other

issues, such as resource conflicts which can be resolved by pragmatic and distributive means, value conflicts have a tendency to become mutually conclusive or zero-sum issues (Reychler, 1997)

This claim is strengthened by the fact that King Abdullah initiated the discourse of all religions that included all religions including the Jewish one. Moreover, then Prince Abdullah gave an interview in 1980 where he said that “Muslims and Jews are cousins” regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. In other words, it is a policy of Saudi Arabia that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not a religious conflict (Dhahani, 1982.).

Secondly, the seventh clause in the Fahd/Fez plan has an explicit message and an implicit message to Israel. The Arabs explicitly communicated to Israel their willingness for a peace between all Arab states. This can be very clear from the initiative above. Implicitly, the Arabs will recognize Israel. But what does this recognition mean? Will the borders be recognized? Will the government of Israel be recognized on international platforms? It is clear that what the implicit recognition entails is very vague and ambiguous, thus it does not indicate of any potential active cooperation with Israel as a result of this peace, unlike the peace initiatives that will be looked at later on in the chapter.

Although both the promising tones Fahd and Fez plan communicate the recognition of Israel implicitly, Saudi Arabia as a policy explicitly as well as publically recognized Israel outside the eight point Fahd and Fez plan. The explicit recognition came through then Crown Prince Abdullah who was deputy Prime Minister and head of the Saudi National Guard (Bronson, 2006).

In an interview on November 9th 1981 Prince Abdullah said “our plan [Fahd plan] recognizes the right of Israel to exist only after the acceptance of a Palestinian state, the return to 1967 borders and the end to the state of belligerency. If these conditions are met, then the recognition of Israel will be de facto. How can you deny them [Israel] that right”. Two things can be clear the statement of the then prince Abdullah. Firstly, the tone of his statement is clearly a stronger tone of promise to recognize Israel. Secondly, peace initiatives are part of an overall policy of Saudi Arabia. Just because

the Arabs or Israel have rejected the peace initiative, does not mean that the communication that the initiative produced is obsolete or out of date. On the contrary, these initiatives especially in the Saudi-Israeli discourse are constantly used as reference points in the continuing process of Saudi-Israeli communication (Bronson, 2006).

However, the Saudi explanation of explicit recognition of Israel through the statements of then Prince Abdullah is different inasmuch as the Fez plan mentions “all the states in the region have a right to peace”. This indicates that other Arab states would like to have a guarantee to live in peace with Israel, and it also involves Israel as one of these states. In other words, Israel is less implicit in the Fez plan.

The other difference in the seventh clause is that the Fez plan includes the involvement of the UNSC, while the Fahd plan did not. It is important to note that the Fahd plan was initiated and declared before the Israeli invasion of the south of Lebanon. The fact that the seventh clause mentions the involvement of the UNSC and insisted to involve all states in the region indicates that the Arab states wanted more reassurance from any more Israeli aggression. Or, it could indicate that the Arab states were willing to have a peace with Israel without being involved in a direct conflict with Israel.

#### *6.3.6 Category 3) Requesting tone*

In the Fahd/Fez plan, clauses (7) and (8) fall under the request category, but what are the Saudi led peace initiatives requesting and from whom? The Fahd/Fez plan requested from the UNSC two things. The Arabs requested that the UNSC provide a guaranteed peace to all states, while the second request was for the UNSC to oversee the implementation of these peace initiatives. The requesting tone does not involve any other actor but the UNSC.

The third difference is in the eighth and final clause of the Fez plan. In the Fahd plan, it states that the implementation of the peace initiative should be carried out by the UN or certain members within the UN. On the other hand, the eighth clause in the Fez plan mentions that the UNSC should

oversee or be the body that implements the peace initiative. In order to figure out more about what this difference mean, we must try to find out more about who the potential “certain member states” are?

It is easy to argue that the United States had played a prominent role in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the region in general, whether it was assisting Israel during the 1973 war, or trying to broker peace deals between Arabs and Israel (Gawrych, 2015). Moreover, the United States is the main security guarantor to both Saudi Arabia and Israel. Hence, the certain member that was stated in the Fahd plan, and not in the Fez plan, strongly suggests that it was the United States that was referred to in the Fahd plan.

The second question would be why the Arab states desire the UNSC over just an American involvement? It is obvious that ever since 1967 as was mentioned earlier in the chapter; the United States made the protection of Israel as a top priority in its policy in the Middle East. Some Arab states would view the United States with a tremendous level of suspicion. They would also view it as a biased peace broker that will not implement the Saudi peace deal or Fez plan fairly. As Martin Indyk, the former U.S ambassador to Israel stated in an interview “I would say that the United States is pro-Israel and that's what gives it its influence in the peace process, and that's the heart of the matter. We are not neutral. We don't claim to be neutral”(Indyke, 2016)

Moreover, at the time some of the Arab states had good relations with other major players in the UNSC. For example, Iraq and Syria had good relations with the Soviet Union (USSR). This can be a hidden incentive by other Arab states to include other major players in the UNSC because they can increase their bargaining power if the Arabs began negotiations with Israel.

On the other hand, if Israel was a top priority for the United States, then, Saudi Arabia would be a second priority for the United States in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia does have much better relations with the United States than many other Arab states. But in order to gain the Arab

consensus, Saudi Arabia needed to change the eighth clause and made it just the UNSC rather than “certain states” that implements the peace initiative request.

In addition, there is an element of communication as well. This can be significant for two reasons. The first, the inclusion of the UNSC can be a communicative third party functioning as a communicative buffer and reducing the probability of communicating directly with Israel. This is not farfetched since much of Arab states’ discourses and rhetoric has legitimized their rule. On the other hand, it can help the moderate Arab states; especially the Arab states that have good relations with the permanent members of the UNSC who can facilitate any communication via a third party in order to reach a settlement.

The analysis of the Fahd and Fez plans reveals two main points. First of all, the previous initiatives show the role that Saudi Arabia has in the Arab world. The expulsion of Egypt from the Arab league in 1979 left a leadership vacuum within the Arab world. Saudi Arabia would unofficially rise to the position of the leading Arab state (Rasvi, 1981). It understood very well that acting unilaterally towards Israel outside the conditions of Arab states is a taboo and therefore an irrational option. This claim of the Saudi role within the Arab world is further strengthened due to the significance of the peace initiatives within the Arab-Israeli peace discourse

Secondly, one the most significant conclusions that can be seen from the previous initiatives is it shifts the collective Arab tone towards Israel from a very antagonistic one to a more pragmatic tone. As was mention in the previous section, one of the results of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war was the infamous three no’s of the Khartoum summit of 1967: no recognition, no negotiation and no peace with Israel. The peace initiatives negate that stand, and therefore clearly indicates the willingness of the Arab states to have a peace. More importantly, Saudi Arabia led these initiatives, ideas and foundations for collective peace Israel, and potentially more than just peace.

#### **6.4 Context before the Abdullah plan and (API)**

The time after the Fahd/Fez plan and before the Abdullah plan/ API witnessed significant events that helped change some of the behaviour as well as perception within the Saudi-Israeli discourse. Events such as the Iran-Iraq war and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait convinced many in the Arab world that Israel is perhaps is not as a dangerous threat to them as other states are (Shindler, 2011).

In addition, the Saudi stance towards the Jordanian-Israeli peace deal in 1994 was much different to the Egyptian-Israeli peace deal. While Saudi Arabia did (with hesitation and reluctance) support the expulsion of Egypt from the Arab League, it did not do the same after the Jordanian-Israeli peace deal. This indicates a certain evolution in the Saudi policy towards Israel. "It neither welcomed nor opposed the Jordan's peace treaty with Israel in 1994" (Partrick, 2016. P, 176).

But it is in the aftermath of Desert Shield/ Storm (1990-91) that one can also infer the nature of Saudi policy towards Israel. As the United States and Saudi Arabia were planning how to deal with the political situation after Desert Storm, King Fahd had a peace with Israel as a high priority on the Saudi agenda. Although there was not any official public policy that would encourage the United States to broker a peace between the Arabs and Israel, there was a clear tacit promise from the United States that if the Saudis cooperate, they will initiate a peace between the Arabs and Israel.

Brent Scowcroft, who was the National Security Advisor at the time said "we did say quietly to King Fahd, and to Mubarak and others, 'you stick with us here –let's focus on this [Desert Storm], after this, we'll move on the Palestinian Israeli issue. We'll give you our private word that we'll move after this is over" (Simpson, 2006. P, 244).

Although Saudi Arabia was not involved in the direct negotiations with Israel, it was still an "interested observer" as King Faisal said in 1969. The desire to establish the Madrid conference combined with a very subtle representation in that conference sums up the nature of Saudi policy towards Israel. Saudi Arabia plays a leading role in trying to establish a peace with Israel, and creates a consensus to do so in the Arab world. Yet, it is very distant when it comes to negotiating with Israel

directly. What this offers is deniability, and avoiding constraints in having direct talks with Israel, which could attract negative criticism of Saudi Arabia domestically. Also, it can then deny any responsibility for any failed peace negotiations.

Such behaviour towards Israel is also displayed in the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel in 1995-1996. As preparation by the United States began to organize peace talks between Syria and Israel, Saudi Arabia wanted to seize the moment. The Saudi King sent the then ambassador to the United States to express a significant stance towards Israel. After a meeting with Dennis Ross who was the Arab-Israeli advisor to President Clinton at the time.

A meeting took place in the residence of the Saudi ambassador when a milestone happened in the Saudi-Israeli relations. Prince Bandar then communicated to the United States that Saudi Arabia would be willing to recognize Israel diplomatically if Syria and Israel strike a peace deal. He added how he “was authorized to say ‘Saudi Arabia will make such a commitment [diplomatic relation]. King Fahd is ready to make peace’”. Moreover, the Saudi ambassador also added that “it [Syrian-Israeli peace deal] does send a signal to Assad and to Peres. It tells Assad he has Arab support [referring to Saudi Arabia diplomatically recognizing Israel] for his move and it tells Peres when he makes peace with Syria; he is really making it with the Arab world” (Ross, 2004. P, 218).

Such attitude towards Israel was echoed in Daniel Abraham’s book “Peace is Possible” (2006). Here, he recalls how he once had a visit to Saudi Arabia with the congressman Wayne Owens how surprised he was about the Saudi policy was towards Israel. He writes “ [s]ure, they were bitter against Israel, but they spoke a greater sense of balance and pragmatism than I had expected. As the deputy foreign minister sheik Abdularahman El-Mansuri told us ‘ [w]e are pushing for peace. Of course, it can’t come overnight, but we need peace more than the Israelis. It’s good for economic development and stability and that’s what we want’”(Abraham, 2006. P, 24).

It is not clear when exactly did this conversation take place because Abraham does not state when it exactly happened. In hindsight, he does write in his book that these trips with congressman Owens took place between 1988 to 2002. This means it fits in with the timeframe between the Fahd and Fez plan and the Abdullah plan and API.

The quote also shows that Saudi Arabia had conditional desire to have diplomatic relations before the Abdullah plan was declared in 2002. Not only was there conditional diplomatic relations with Israel, but there was conditional active cooperation with Israel before the Abdullah plan in 2002. In other words, if Syria and Israel would have reached a peace settlement, Saudi Arabia will have official normal relations with Israel. Such agreement by Saudi Arabia with Israel was an incentive for Israel to accept a peace settlement (Ross, 2004). In addition, the communication with Israel was in a very indirect way. It can easily be argued that Saudi Arabia knows that the United States will communicate to Israel what the Saudi intentions were.

As a result, it would make the nature of communication between Saudi Arabia and Israel in the form of one-ended indirect forms of communication. More importantly, these policies and intentions that Saudi Arabia had materialized into the Abdullah plan and then the API. Saudi Arabia did have the desire to have a conditional normalization of relations with Israel before the Abdullah and the API which will be examined in the next section.

#### **6.4.1 The Abdullah plan**

The Saudi peace initiative and in particular the Abdullah plan of 2002 was ground breaking event in the Arab Israeli peace process and in particular realm of Saudi-Israeli relations . However, there may be slight confusion over how this initiative came about due to the nature of its publication. The declaration of the Abdullah plan was very unlike the other peace initiatives which were declared in Arab summits such as the Fahd plan, Fez plan and the API. Instead, it was published in the media in a news article in February 2002 for it to be declared as the Saudi peace initiative.

Interestingly, the article by Thomas Friedman was titled “An Intriguing Signal From the Saudi Crown Prince”. Friedman does not elaborate who the signal is directed to. Is it the United States? The Arab world? Saudi citizens? Did the Crown Prince want to show that Saudi Arabia is committed to stopping the violence in Palestine? Or is it a clear signal to Israel? Arguably, it is a clear signal to all, but most importantly it is a direct signal to the government of Israel and the people of Israel. The reason why one would argue that the main audience for “his (then Prince Abdullah) initiative was to Israel was because he already prepared a speech addressing the Israeli people” (Friedman, 2002).

So what makes the Abdullah plan ground breaking? During the interview Friedman explained that he heard rumours in the Arab world about a peace initiative towards Israel. The then Crown Prince replied by confirming this and sarcastically asking Friedman if he had broken into his desk. Hinting that he had a speech ready to deliver this initiative in the coming Arab summit. The then Crown Prince then stated that Saudi Arabia wanted Israel to have a “full withdrawal from all the occupied [Arab] territories, in accord with U.N. resolutions 242, and 338], including in Jerusalem, for full normalization of relations,“. It is this aspect of full normalization of relations with Israel that is in the Saudi peace initiative that will be the source of contention amongst the Arab world, but more on this later in the chapter.

He also affirmed that he was trying to get the Arab world to support this idea of “full normalization” after the full withdrawal”. This clearly indicates that Saudi Arabia knows that it will face external constraints. It is very important to note that this was a conversation between the Saudi Crown Prince and Friedman, so there was no desire that the Saudis would want their intentions being public before the Arab summit the following month. Conversely, Friedman asked to make the then Crown Prince’s ideas public since he felt so passionately. The Crown Prince then made the decision to publicize his thoughts which lead to it becoming the Abdullah peace plan and the Saudi peace initiative.

The Saudi peace initiative communicated two very significant things, the first was the clear demand to withdraw to the 1967 borders, and secondly, the full normalization of relations. In other words, Saudi Arabia has communicated that it is willing to have conditional active and public cooperation and communication with Israel. This was the ground breaking moment within the Arab-Israeli and more precisely the Saudi- Israeli discourse. In addition, this will show the difference between the tones that Saudi Arabia has towards Israel compared to other Arab states. The Arab peace Initiative is as the following:

1. Requests Israel to reconsider its policies and declare that a just peace is its strategic option as well.
2. Further calls upon Israel to affirm:
  - a. Full Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights to the lines of June 4, 1967, as well as the remaining occupied Lebanese territories in the south of Lebanon.
  - b. Achievement of a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem to be agreed upon in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194.
  - c. The acceptance of the establishment of a sovereign independent Palestinian state on the Palestinian territories occupied since the 4th of June 1967 in the west bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital.
3. Consequently, the Arab countries affirm the following:
  - a. Consider the Arab-Israeli conflict ended, and enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and provide security for all the states of the region.
  - b. Establish normal relations with Israel in the context of this comprehensive peace.
4. Assures the rejection of all forms of Palestinian patriation which conflict with the special circumstances of the Arab host countries.
5. Calls upon the government of Israel and all Israelis to accept this initiative in order to safeguard the prospects for peace and stop the further shedding of blood, enabling the Arab countries and Israel to live in peace and good neighborliness and provide future generations with security, stability, and prosperity.
6. Invites the international community and all countries and organizations to support this initiative.
7. Requests the chairman of the summit to form a special committee composed of some of its concerned member states and the secretary general of the League of Arab States to pursue the necessary contacts to gain support for this initiative at all levels, particularly from the United Nations, the Security Council, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the Muslim states and the European Union.

As done previously with the Fahd and Fez plan, the next paragraphs will examine the Abdullah plan as well as the API within the three tones of demand, promise and request. The subsequent paragraphs will not only examine what the difference between the Abdullah plan and the API, but it will highlight the differences between both Fahd and Fez plans, and between the Abdullah plan and API. After which, the evolution of Saudi foreign policy words Israel will be more clear.

#### **6.4.2 Category 1): Demanding tone**

If the three categories of tone and language are applied in the Abdullah plan API, there will be similarities with the Fahd/Fez plan in terms of the tone, but mostly differences in the tone and in

what the Saudi plan/API actually demand. By the time the API was initiated in 2002, there have been significant changes to the geo-politics of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Jordan reached a land for peace deal with Israel so the East Bank was not in demand of Israel in the API. Israel was ousted by Hezbollah in 2000 so most of the south of Lebanon was not in demand excluding remaining land that was occupied by Israel since 1982.

Indeed the API demanded of Israel to return to the 1967 border twice, which is the same amount of times that it was mentioned in the Fahd/Fez plan. However, the API named the land that Israel should return explicitly. It mentioned the “Syrian Golan Heights to the lines of June 4, 1967, as well as the remaining occupied Lebanese territories in the south of Lebanon” explicitly. That did not happen in the Fahd/Fez plan. Possible, this was a way to show the world that not a large area of land being demanded. It may also reflect influence that Syria and Lebanon had on Saudi Arabia that mentioned their countries explicitly? If it was because of the former, it would have been a tactic that Saudi Arabia had used to demonstrate to the world of how Israel is an obstacle to peace. If it was the latter, then it demonstrates the external constraints that Saudi Arabia has when communicating with Israel.

Moreover, the demand of the return to the 1967 borders was mentioned again in part C of clause 2 of the API. This time, it mentioned the demand of Israel to accept “the establishment of a sovereign independent Palestinian state on the Palestinian territories occupied since the 4th of June 1967 in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital”. Although there is a demand here, the tone towards Israel is different from the Fahd/Fez plan. What part C of the second clause is demanding is the removal of the settlements, which was mentioned explicitly in the Fahd/Fez plan, but it was implicitly mentioned in the API. In part C, there was an explicit demand to have East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

Again, it is clear that there linguistic balancing act through a web of references. What is meant by web of references is that certain words in the peace initiatives are used to complement implicit

wording and communication in other parts of the initiatives. Once we take the web of referencing into account, the settlement problem (which is illegal) does not necessarily mean the complete removal of the settlers. That would be because Part B of clause 2 also demands of Israel to have “a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem to be agreed upon in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194”. This is when the value of using “just” comes into play. A “just” solution does entertain the notion that Saudis, as well as the Arabs are entertaining the needs of Israel, and perhaps even open to negotiating what would be “just” solutions. A fair solution can never be a dictate.

That’s why I argue that the meticulous choice of words and where the words placed in the peace initiatives formulates a certain communication to Israel once the language of the peace initiative is thoroughly examined. I also argue that not a word of this peace initiative was random. The negotiations amongst the Arabs between Saudi plan and the API in regards to changing the wording supports my claim (Maddy-Weitzman, 2010). It took the Arabs approximately a month to change the wording of the Saudi peace initiative because certain Arab states like Syria and Lebanon wanted to communicate their message.

Therefore, the main difference here in the demanding tone between the Fahd/Fez plan is that the demanding tone is more pragmatic in the API, rather than the direct and non-negotiable demanding tone of the Fahd/Fez plan. Interestingly, although the Saudi plan/API are asking for less land, they must communicate to Israel that Arab land is a non-negotiable to Saudi Arabia and that can never be compromised. Just as much as the tone was a communication to Israel, it was also a communication to the Arab world signalling that “we will always stand with you”.

Although there are less Arab territories being demanded in the API than Fahd and Fez plan, there are other demands being placed on Israel such as the right of return for Palestinian refugees. This was not mentioned in both Fahd/Fez plan. This can be down to two reasons. The first and the obvious

one is that the Arab-Israeli conflict and in particular the Palestinian conflict went on further which resulted in many more refugees being misplaced.

The second and possibly more realistic one is that the growing Palestinian refugee crises lead to a growing number of Palestinian refugees in Arab host nations. These Arab nations really would want the API to succeed because they want to reduce as much tension as they can result from hosting these refugees. This contributed to making the demanding tone towards Israel (Tietelbaum, 2009)

#### *6.4.5 Category 2): Promise tone*

As was deduced in the previous category of tone, there are similarities, but mainly differences between the different tones of promise. In the Fahd and Fez plan, the promising tone was very hard to find. Phrased differently, the obligation of Saudi Arabia and the Arab states towards Israel was very minimal. It was one of religious tolerance and the expression of living in peace with another. This is clearly due to the strong anti-Israeli sentiment as well as the need to have a strong stance on Israel in order for the peace initiative to be accepted by the Arab states.

If there was a category that was so different in tone between the Fahd/Fez plan, and between the Abdullah plan/API, it would be the promising tone. There are two main reasons why the tones are juristically different. The first, is because the Abdullah plan/API explicitly highlighted their promises to Israel. That they would “[c]onsider the Arab-Israeli conflict ended”, something that was not explicitly mentioned in the Fahd/Fez plan, only implicitly was this communicated before.

Secondly, and more significantly, is that the API affirms that Saudi Arabia and the Arab countries will “[e]stablish normal relations with Israel in the context of this comprehensive peace”. “Normal relations” is truly the most significant aspect and idea that was presented in this peace initiative, but also in the Arab-Israeli discourse (excluding the Egyptian and Jordanian peace with Israel). Although “Normal relations” is one of the differences between the Abdullah plan’s “normalization of relations”, is still ground-breaking and communicates not only a promise to Israel, but potential

developments beyond peace with Israel that entails active cooperation and communication with all Arab states.

It is this aspect of “normal relations” that makes this tone a promising, but in an incentivizing tone as well. Something the Fahd/Fez plan did not have at all. This is the aspect that made the Israeli government at the time consider the API as an encouraging step to the direction of peace and more. This promise of normalizing relations certainly generates certain questions. The Jordanian foreign minister elaborated on this issue and said” we are not talking about peace, but relations” (Tietelbaum, 2009. P, 12).

But what kind of relations? Is it only diplomatic relations? Military? Intelligence? Should normalizations of relations mean diplomatic relations before any other steps that lead to normalization in other dimensions? Or should diplomatic recognition be part of the overall process of normalization with other states.

There has been much literature explaining the complexity as well as the practicality of normalization of relations. Barnson (2013) in his book “Modern Diplomacy” actually allocates a whole chapter to the diplomacy of normalization. Barnson (2013) even gives a potential definition of normalization of relations as “a process involving the recognition of the need for measures to reduce tensions or friction”. Although I believe it is extremely tricky to provide normalization of relations a definition because it is difficult every state relations is unique. So we don’t know what normal relations between states are because every state relation is different. Nevertheless, the definition that Barnson (2013) provides is very fitting to the Saudi proposal of normalization of relation with Israel. In addition, Barnson (2013) also claims that the “[P]rocess of normalization will be influenced by several factors, including: the effect of the domestic and external setting” (P, 280).

I argue that the main incentive and desire of Saudi Arabia to incentivize Israel of normal relations is to reach an end to the conflict, rather than a hidden desire to immediately have active cooperation

with Israel. This can be deduced from part B of clause 3. That normalizing relations will come after peace. Moreover, this is indicated in a statement that the former Saudi foreign minister Saud Al-Faisal said that the “bloodshed must end”. In other words, we can say that Saudi Arabia dangled “normalization” in the Abdullah plan in front of Israel in order that Israel can be incentivized into peace.

#### **6.4.6 Category 3): Requesting tone**

The third category is one of request. Although a request means asking for something, it is certainly not the same in asking for something in a demanding tone. The tone in the demand category was one of order, unwillingness or unconditional. While the tone of the request was more moderate which indicates there can be room for manoeuvre or potential negotiation over what is being requested.

The API does have an overlap with the Fahd/Fez plan in regards to requesting from the UNSC to support this initiative. Said differently, the API shares with the Fahd/Fez plan the idea of having third parties to supervise the process of their peace initiatives. Where the API and the Fahd/Fez differ is in whom the Saudis and Arab countries request from as well as involve as third parties. While the request in the Fahd/Fez plan was only to the United Nations Security Council, the API requested “particularly from United Nations, the Security, European Union, the United States of America, The Russian Federation and the Muslim states”. This invitation and request to all the actors mentioned in the previous sentence is in the seventh and final clause of the API.

There is an explicit as well as an implicit requesting tone in the seventh clause of the API. The implicit request was to the certain Arab states to generate as much support for this initiative at all levels, including Israel. I argue that the request the API made for the “certain member states of the Arab league” are Egypt and Jordan who already have diplomatic relations with Israel, in order to use their channels to generate support for the API. The reason why I believe this was an implicit message

to Arab states to use their communication with Israel is because the seventh clause says “concerned member states and the secretary general of the League of Arab States to pursue the necessary contacts to gain support for this initiative at all levels”. The most important aspect that needs to be focused on in the previous sentence was “all levels”. Even a novice student of international relations would know that the communication between states can be secretive, and know that there are different levels of which states can communicate.

What also adds to my the belief that this was an implicit message to use their contacts with Israel is the seventh clause in both the Fahd and Fez plan which considered implicitly recognizing Israel by saying “ peace between all states”. It seems that Israel is substituted by “all states” whenever Saudi Arabia wants to mention Israel implicitly. According the Saudi press agency, the late Saudi Foreign minister Saud Al-Faisal, said that the API is owned by the Arab world, if they want to change it and amend, Saudi Arabia would be happy with that”. Therefore, the API is negotiable and customized to what these “concerned member states of the Arab League” want. In other words, Arab states can use their avenues and channels to Israel to negotiate a deal. Nothing in the Saudi policy suggests any differently.

In addition, the mentioning of the United Nations, United States and the Federation of Russia highlight mutual third parties between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The United States in particular is the most prominent third party that Saudi Arabia and Israel share. Therefore, the seventh clause can be considered as a platform and avenue for potential negotiations. Perhaps these third parties and the United States in particular can mediate or use their persuasive powers to encourage Israel to accept this initiative before Israel can either accept or reject it.

The United States did indeed play the role of mediator between the Palestinians and Israelis, and it relayed one-ended messages between Saudi Arabia and Israel. What is meant of one-ended messages is that certain messages would be sent via a third party but not expecting an answer back. Both Saudi Arabia and Israel have used these one-sided messages in the past.

For example, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, Israel sent a request via the United States to Saudi Arabia to have a fly-over channel to attack scud sites in Iraq during Desert Storm of 1991. (Schwarzkopf and Petre, 1992). Also, Saudi Arabia did indeed use the United States to tell Israel to de-escalate its stance when it became public that Saudi Arabia has obtained surface to surface missiles from China. The Israelis as well as the United States believed that Saudi Arabia had obtained nuclear missiles from China, but the then Saudi ambassador told Colin Powell who was the Chief of military staff “ For God’s sake, tell the Israelis that [we don’t have nuclear weapons]” (Simpsonson, 2006. P, 163). In both cases mentioned above, the communication intended to readjust policies, but not to use third parties to relay messages back and forth. Instead, it was forwarding messages without anything back.

Although Israel was mentioned implicitly in the seventh clause of the API, a requesting tone towards Israel was mentioned thorough the API. In fact, the API started off stating explicitly that the Saudis and the Arab countries “ [R]equests Israel to reconsider its policies and declare that a just peace is its strategic option” . Now this can be considered an implicit criticism from the Arabs towards Israel claiming that Israel does not consider peace with the Arab world as an important priority. Nevertheless, it was an explicit request towards Israel which demonstrates a more diplomatic pragmatic tone as opposed to a demanding tone. More importantly, the fact that the API starts with a requesting, it then sets the tone for the API in general. This also indicates that the API is more pragmatic in nature.

In addition, clause 5 of the API does go under the request category to Israel. Although rather than saying “request” like the first clause, it began with “Calls upon the government of Israel”. The fifth clause is very significant because it states clearly the reason why Israel would be incentivized to accept the API. The main incentive for Israel is peace, but the API stated other incentives such as security, stability and prosperity. In this category, we can see a clear similarity with previous demanding category. Both categories do have an additional incentivizing tone. Now, if clause 5 is

then combined with clause 3 B which is the establishment of normal relations with Israel, then there is a rough picture of what active cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel can look like.

This can also be indicated from the order of wording in clause 5. It can be argued that after achieving peace and resolving major conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis, achieving mutual security concerns between Saudi Arabia and Israel is a high priority. Peace and the end of blood shed took up most of the clause 5, but then it was security as a second incentive which can consist of mainly military and intelligence matters. Stability as a third incentive could lead to maintain the security status quo. Or, creating a new status quo in the region. Prosperity as the fourth incentive which can consist of developing economic relations, trade, education and technological development.

It is strongly argued that active security cooperation after peace was reached would be a priority is not far-fetched at all. According to Dror (2011), one of the main incentives for Israel and the Arab world to accept the API would be the "[S]hared deterrence of Iran, if it becomes a nuclear weapons country, is a main rationale for an agreement [API]" (Dror, 2011. P, 171). Clearly, Dror (2011) argues that the active cooperation will be a strong incentive for Arab and Israeli cooperation over Iran. But what he does not indicate to what kind of active cooperation will happen between Saudi Arabia and Israel if the API is accepted.

The former United States' secretary of state Hilary Clinton gives a clearer picture of what kind of cooperation that will most likely take place if the API is agreed upon. She wrote that the "[Abdulah] plan was unanimously endorsed by all Arab League members, including Syria in March 2002. If this is achieved, it would have profound implications for the strategic dynamics of the Middle East. Because of their shared suspicion of Iran and their partnership with the United states, Israel and many of the Arab states, especially the Gulf monarchies, should have been natural allies" (Clinton, 2014. P, 262).

Interestingly, she does not only assume that Saudi-Israeli cooperation will happen, but she claims that Saudi Arabia and Israel would have had a contractual obligation to assist each other (refer back to chapter 2 for more on alliances). This strongly suggests that the Saudi-Israeli mutual concern is obvious. In other words, Iran would be a clear goal that Saudi and Israel would work actively together on within the framework of the API.

On the other hand, others that may not be convinced of my argument that active security cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel would happen once the peace is achieved would claim that this can be an exaggeration of Saudi-Israeli mutual security concerns. But the then Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia does support my argument that security will be a high priority after peace is achieved in the speech he gave after the API was declared in March 2002. Hence, his speech is significant in many ways.

Firstly, the future King of Saudi directly addressed the Israeli people. This becomes a mile stone in the Saudi-Israeli discourse. This was the first time that a Saudi head of state directly and publically communicated to Israel. Communication before this was very implicit in statements and peace initiatives, or, very indirect in one-ended messages as was mentioned above. Furthermore, the then Crown Prince concludes his speech with his commitment that we as in Saudi Arabia and the signatories of the API “will not hesitate to accept the right of the Israeli people to live in security with the people of the region”.

The Crown Prince did not say the Israeli people to live in prosperity and stability, the Crown Prince chose security over the previous two. But why end with the speech with the region and not say we will live side by side in peace with you? Could there be other endeavours to achieve peace together with the Israeli people for others in the region? I believe that including “peoples of the region” is together for peace with others, and not only have we had peace, we will have peace with you only. The extent of achieving piece together is much unknown, but what I am arguing is that the speech does not negate working together to achieve peace with others and for others with Israel.

Perhaps the choice of security is a direct answer to Israeli rhetoric that Israel needs security, or perhaps security is a strong incentive to accept this peace initiative. Either way, this strongly confirms the theme that I highlight of security comes straight after peace as a high priority. Furthermore, the Crown Prince included security with the people of the region, and not just with you (the Israeli people). Including the people in Palestine, south of Lebanon where Hezbollah are located, and the people of Iran.

## 6.5 Conclusion

The chapter has highlighted the attempts and desire for Saudi Arabia to make an official peace with Israel. This certainly has been covered in the literature. However, certain questions about these peace initiatives were unanswered. One of the questions is what is the aim of these peace initiatives? Do the peace deals mean a cold peace with and tolerances of each other's presence in the region? Or, does peace in this context means the allowances of having Saudi-Israeli active cooperation? It would be very difficult to argue that the Saudi desire of peace and negotiation during the days of King Faisal meant that there will be active cooperation. It will then be less difficult to claim that cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel would have ensued if the Israelis accepted the Fahd and Fez plan. In hindsight, it would be even more difficult to argue if there will not be any active cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel if the Abdullah plan and the API would have been accepted by Israel.

This raises the question of to what extent is peace connected with active cooperation. Highlighting the changing behaviour within the Saudi attempts to have peace does shed led light on the prospects of active cooperation through peace. What can be deduced from this chapter is that there is an evolution of the Saudi policy towards Israel. It started off as a very passive stance from the King Abdulaziz days, then an extremely strong confrontational stance just after the 1967 war under the reign of King Faisal. Which was the very furthest point to any kind of Saudi-Israeli cooperation. To gradually having an incentivizing policy stance towards Israel now.

I argue that understanding the events between the peace initiatives does play a role in the behaviour of Saudi Arabia towards Israel. During the King Faisal days, although other Arab countries posed a threat to Saudi Arabia, Israel was viewed as a large threat. During the Fahd and Fez plan, Iran had already established their revolutionary government and the Iran-Iraq war was at the beginning stages. However, the promise of diplomatic relations with Israel in the mid-1990s, the Abdullah plan in 2002 and the API all came after the Iranian presence had intensified and grew in threat to Saudi Arabia, Desert Storm in 1991 and other security threats such as Al-Qaida and ISIS have been a clear threat to both states. In other words, the Saudi peace initiative with an incentivizing tone that would obviously leads to active cooperation came after both Saudi Arabia and Israel had significant shared security interests.

This also begs another question of how can the current Saudi policy towards Israel develop even further. Will there be different of future peace initiatives? Or perhaps there will be other avenues to express the significance of the Saudi peace initiatives. The direct yet unofficial discussions that took place between Saudi and Israeli representatives does give an indication of how these peace initiatives can evolve even more. Prince Turki Al-Faisal who was the former Saudi head of intelligence met several times with former Israeli officials on certain platforms to discuss the peace initiates.

It is incredibly interesting to note how similar the unofficial Saudi discourse was to the official Saudi stance on Israel. The first meeting that they had focused on how the peace initiative was a good step in the right direction. The second meeting did mention the theme of the enemy of my enemy is my friend, referring to the shared Saudi-Israeli security threat of Iran. However, in the last meeting that he had, prince Turki Al-Faisal did acknowledge how the peace initiative does allow room to address security problems in the region “whether it was Iran or any other”.

Moreover, other unofficial meetings between Saudi and Israel official have taken place as well. General Eshki had meetings with Israeli official to discuss the mutual growing Iranian threat. In

addition, General Eshki even with former Israeli officials in Jerusalem. Interestingly, no criticism by the Saudi government accrued towards the general. Instead, a statement of that the general does not represent Saudi Arabia officially, which is a matter of fact, but no more than that and displaying a key characteristic within the Saudi policy towards Israel which is deniability.

This is very telling about the current Saudi policy towards Israel today. This does show that the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel is not against having an active cooperation, but only with conditions. It is not new in the literature that active cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel will happen if peace initiatives are accepted. Rather, I argue that Saudi Arabia had this as a policy earlier than the public peace initiatives did.

# Chapter 7

## Sharia, legitimisation and de-legitimisation: *The domestic constraints of Saudi-Israeli cooperation.*

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### 7.1 Introduction

It has been mentioned in the previous chapters about how Saudi ruling elite maintained its legitimacy by not cooperating actively with Israel. But we must ask ourselves, what makes Saudi Arabia legitimate? The Saudi flag is “No God but Allah and Mohamed is his Messenger”, which is the first pillar of Islam. The official title of the King is the “Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques”. Chapter 4 focused on what were the attempts of the Saudi ruling elite to cooperate actively with Israel in the political and regional dimension, but not in the religious dimension. Clearly, Saudi Arabia bases its legitimacy on Islamic teachings of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH<sup>7</sup> (also known as the Sunnah), and the Holy Quran. This is known as the “Sharia”.

What is meant by the Sharia? Sharia has been a word that is used many times in political, social security and terrorism discourses. Unfortunately, it is correlated with negative aspects and is considered as an intolerant legal Islamic framework. Certainly, Sharia can mean legal a framework, but that would be too simplistic, since it is far more just that. Many Islamic scholars have interpreted and defined Sharia according to their disciplines which lead to many different definitions. However, “[T]he literal meaning of the word ‘Sharia’ is ‘the way that leads to a source of water and by extension the path to be followed. For the path that leads to water in a desert is the path of survival and salvation” (Ramadan, 2017. P, 146).

That is how Saudi ruling elite view the Sharia- the way of governance-the way of legitimacy. Therefore, the Sharia to Saudi Arabia is what water is to life in the desert. Without the Sharia, there will be no legitimacy. That is why it is imperative to understand what the Sharia says about peace

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<sup>7</sup> Peace Be Upon Him

and cooperation with Israel. It is equally imperative to see how the Sharia was used as a constraint and tool for de-legitimization of Saudi governance due to unpopular foreign policy decisions. It was used before by Bin Laden and Muqrin who were known terrorist in Saudi Arabia. They were against the US presence after Desert Storm 1990-91, but the perceived Israeli presence as well. Something the literature has not considered so far.

This chapter will display how Sharia was used to legitimise cooperation with the United States, and can be used to legitimise a future Saudi-Israeli active cooperation. It will first look briefly at why is Islam so significant for Saudi legitimacy. Then, it will look at the rhetoric of the known constraints of the Saudi foreign policy to invite the USA. By examining this particular rhetoric, it will show how they tried to use the Sharia to recruit members in joining their violent anti-Saudi cause. These individuals who were the target of recruitment will be labelled as “potential constraints”. They also have certain characteristics which will be explained because it is the potential constraints that will most likely be the constraints for an active Saudi-Israeli cooperation. After which, the chapter will look at the Saudi instrumentalisation of the Sharia. The response will be in two ways. The first is the religious symbolism of some security forces, and the second is the religious establishment’s use of Sharia to legitimize such cooperation. Finally, this chapter will argue that the Saudi ruling elite would be able to maintain legitimacy were it to decide to have open, active and bilateral relationship with Israel.

## **7.2 Rent or Religion?**

It is at this point that one must ask the question, what makes the Saudi ruling elite legitimate? Is it their claim that they are the vanguards of Islam and protectors of Islam’s Two holists sites, or is it the Tribble element that creates a structured hierarchy, or is it an element of paternalism that shows that the elite are providing the people with everything they need-as does a parent to their child. To dismiss one of them will be dismissing a part of the Saudi fabric that is so crucial in understanding the ever elusive Saudi phenomena.

One must assess the role that oil plays in the Saudi social-contract, or more specifically speaking, the role of 'rent'. The Rentier State Theory (RST) has been used in an attempt to study oil rich countries and their robustness in maintaining their grip on power. Maldahvi (1970) contributed to the literature by understanding how can these states function. He begins by defining Rentier states, and puts forth that Rentier states are "those countries that receive on a regular basis substantial amount of external rent. [Therefore] External rent in turn defined as rentals paid by foreign individuals" (Maldahvi,1970. P, 428 ). Although Maldahvi (1970) introduced us to the significance of rent (oil) in the Middle East, his attempt was more concerned about asking economic question as opposed to political question that revolved around legitimacy. One of his main conclusions that can be obtained from his work is that "[T]he oil industries major contribution is that it enables the governments of the oil producing country to embark on large public expenditure" (Maldahvi,1970. P, 432).

Using Maldavi's work would not be enough to understanding the real affectability on a social contract. Therefore, the work of Belbawi (1987) provides a more useful notion. Beblawi introduces the logic of Rentiers, or RST to the social—political dimension, "[a] rentier is thus more of a social function than an economic category" (Belbawi, 1987. P, 50)

Belbawi improves the RST by adding more characteristics and it's suitability for a political explanation. His aim was to "define a rentier state is not to reach an abstract notion of such a state but to help elucidate the impact of recent economic developments, in particular the oil phenomenon, on the nature of the state in the Arab region". (Belbawi, 1987. P, 50).

In addition, he adds more analysis on what constitutes a rentier stat by adding four main characteristics that need to be understood while looking at the rentier states. He claims that there is no complete rentier state, and that every state has aspects of rentierism. But what makes a state considered as a rentier state, is the extent of the dependency on rent. In Saudi's case-oil. Secondly, the "rent" must be external rent as opposed to internal. In other words, the flow of money must be sourced from another actor as opposed to producing funds domestically. This increases the reliance

on external countries, but decreases the need for domestic methods of producing funds. As one can easily see how this can create an environment where a certain population can be conditioned to depend on the state for funds and subsidies. Thirdly, there are very few actors who are involved in the production and flow of the rent. Fourthly, the group that is in control of the rent are a small group of elites. This does not mean a government, but a government within the government. As a result of the government being the sole receiver of the rent, they have the ability, as Maldahvi said, to distribute the rent to the people. The main aim of the rentier state would not be about producing more avenues, rather, it will be an allocative/distributive government. The combination of these characteristics can assist the rentier state to buy the loyalty of their citizens.

Rentier states have an ability to buy loyalty and stability, but can it buy legitimacy? According to Niblock (2006)- it can. In his work "Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival", Niblock (2006) aimed to understand many aspects of Saudi Arabia: from foreign policy to sources of legitimacy. He put forth five sources of legitimacy of the Saudi state: Ideological; traditional; eudaemonic; and Democratic/structural. It is in the eudaemonic aspect in which rent, or oil money can lead to maintaining legitimacy. In essence the Saudi state plays the role of provider and financial guarantor to the citizens. With the ample amount of oil money, the Saudi ruling elite have accumulated; it makes it exceptionally responsive to any financial/economic difficulties the Saudi population can face. If the difficulty is about employability, the Saudi state can increase its bureaucracy and increase the level of employment. If the problem is about oil prices, then the state can increase subsidies to its population. In short, the rent that Saudi ruling elite receive enables it to increase its legitimacy.

However, at this point, one must ask two questions: does RST explain the presence of stability or legitimacy? And does rent/oil money give the Saudi ruling elite legitimacy or stability? The role of oil money in Belbawi (1987) functions as a supplementary role to legitimacy. In other words, the main ingredient of legitimacy in Saudi is not oil, rather, it is their tribal and religious fabric that is supplanted and entrenched by oil money. "It is important to add here that the rentier nature of the

new state is magnified by the tribal [ and religious] origins of these states.” the previous quote indicates specific if role that indicates that oil money supplements both tribal and religious origins within Saudi Arabia. Other writers are more explicit in criticising the notion of ren/oil money and the production of legitimacy.

This equation [legitimacy solely based on oil] of Saudi power exclusively with its oil wealth is mistaken. Historically, a principal and the most consistent source of Saudi power at the domestic, regional and global levels has not been revenues from oil, but the cultural power that inheres in a Kingdom that is both the capital of the Muslim and Arab worlds (Gallarotti and Al-Filali, 2012. P, 233).

Moreover, if one looks historically, the Saudi state, or Saudi movement if one reflects earlier in history, was legitimate in the eyes of their followers before the discovery of oil, let alone developing the rentier attitude take place. Therefore, one must look at the reason why the Saudi movement was perceived as legitimate in 18th and 19th century- religion, or more in particular-Islam. Although tribalism is not be a variable that is underestimated in the unification of Saudi, it can conversely be an antagonistic reason why the Saudi ruling elite are viewed as delegitimate. As a result, co-opting tribalism is a political phenomenon, but not a question of legitimacy. Islam, and the unification of serving Islam is the core aspect that legitimizes the Saudi ruling elite in which other aspects such as oil and tribalism revolves around. Therefore, the religious and Islamic dynamic is the aspect that must be looked at in greater detail.

### **7.3 History of politics and religion in KSA**

In 1744, a meeting between two men took place in the Najid province<sup>8</sup> of Saudi Arabia. It was between Mohammad bin Saud, a ruler of a small emirate. The second person is a religious scholar called Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahab (MBAW). It is clear how significant both men are in Saudi history. Mohammad bin Saud is the first ruler of the first Saudi dynasty, and therefore his title is the “Saud” in Saudi Arabia. While the very misconceived “Wahhabism” is named after Mohammad bin Abdul-Wahab (more on the Wahabi myth later). What can be taken from this meeting is the

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<sup>8</sup> Najid is the province that hosts the capital of KSA- Riyadh. It is regarded as the beacon of Saudi rule and therefore has a strategic and sentimental significance for the Saudi ruling elite

production of the very foundation of the Saudi state which has Islam at its core (Aarts and Nonneman, 2015).

The marriage and the embeddedness of religion and politics happened in 1744. This relationship meant that the political dimension will supervise and overlook the religious dimension. This can be due to the fact that MSAW wanted the practice of religion to be as pure as possible. It also can be due to the understanding of the need to have a political will that can enforce a certain ideology.

Religion from the very outset of the Saudi rule becomes the most important tool for the political dimension, while the political power is main tool for the religious dimension to exist. Subsequently, the religious establishment certainly played a very important role in the politics of Saudi Arabia ever since. For example, their role became clear when King Abdulaziz had a political dilemma with members of the Ikhwan<sup>9</sup>. King Abdulaziz felt compelled to confront them militarily, crushing their opposition, but not before obtaining a fatwa which was issued in 1929 (Steinberg, 2005). Significantly, the religious establishment was used to legitimize political and temporal affairs. This is a reflection of how influential religion is through the history of Saudi Arabia because it displays that “the ulama’s power to issue fatwas on any issue which concerned them was a useful instrument to promote governmental objectives” (Niblock, 2006. P, 33)

There are, however, a lot of misconceptions in regards to the infancy of the relationship between politics and religion. Hence it is important to clarify these points. Firstly, it is assumed that “Wahhabism” is a form of religion or even a sect within Islam. This notion is simply not true. It has been used to categorise the exotic and mysterious phenomenon of Saudi Arabia (Oliver, 2002). When actually, MSAW followed the “Hanbali” tradition and discouraged people from just blindly following other scholars. One of the biggest indications that there is no such sect or form of Islam called “Wahhabism” is by looking at who the Saudi scholars reference in their fatwas (which will be

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<sup>9</sup> The Ikhwan (brothers in English) consisted of indigenous tribes to Saudi Arabia that were in an alliance with King Abdulaziz. He needed their support to unify the Kingdom under his rule, but they subsequently turned against him which then lead to the “Siblah” war in 1929. After that, the Saudi Kingdom was firmly under King Abdulaziz’s rule.

examined later on in the chapter). They never reference any of the teaching of M<sup>B</sup>A<sup>W</sup>. Instead, they look at what the teachings of the Prophet P<sup>B</sup>U<sup>H</sup> and versus from the Holy Quran.

Rather than calling themselves “wahabi”, the Saudi religious establishment identifies its self as “Salafi”. Salafism is a reformist movement that calls for the purification of worship, and the return to how the Prophet P<sup>B</sup>U<sup>H</sup> used to worship. This is what M<sup>B</sup>A<sup>W</sup> wanted due to the increase of polytheism that was present at his time. This identification of “salifi” will be very important later on while examining the recruitment efforts of the known constraints.

This leads to the second misconception namely that the tie between religion and politics justifies practices of intolerance. Due to the strict and conservative adherence to Islam, observers such as Little (2006) claim that is synonymous with intolerance. Niblock (2006) however argues that is a misconception: “Despite the radicalism of ‘Abdulwahab religious message, and his desire for state protection and promotion of his religious message, the flexibility approach points to his emphasis on dialogue and discussion” (Niblock, 2006. P, 25).

The third myth suggests that Saudi Arabia cannot be a pragmatic diplomatic player in the regional and international sphere due to an anti-non-Muslim sentiment (Little, 2016). Saudi Arabia had however already relations with western-non-Muslim actors very early on in its history. According to the Saudi historian Othaimeen (2014), Saudi Arabia had a mutual understanding with the British Empire as far back as 1810. They even agreed on having peaceful and steady relations. He wrote that the reason for that is because Saudi Arabia knew it cannot afford a confrontation with the military superior British Empire. Significantly, such relations received the blessing from the religious community at that time.

This is significant because it means that Saudi Arabia does have a tradition of dealing with Western actors from the very infancy of the Saudi regime. More importantly, Saudi Arabia viewed these relations as being religiously consistent, and therefore not sacrificing their legitimacy of rule and

governance. Without the religious blessing, such relations would not have been legitimate and could have undermined the Saudi authority. It is therefore vital for religion to legitimize relations between Saudi Arabia and other Western actors. And if there is to be a potential active Saudi-Israeli cooperation, then it is vital for the religious establishment to legitimize such relations when there is the political will of doing so. This will be looked at in greater detail later on the chapter. The next section will look at who were the known constraints to Saudi cooperation with Western countries, and who would be the potential constraint of a Saudi-Israeli cooperation be.

#### **7.4 Domestic constraints**

Unpopular foreign policy decisions by Saudi Arabia were a catalyst for delegitimizing rhetoric. In addition, critics of the Saudi ruling elite such as Bin Laden and Muqrin tried to use Islamic foundations, teachings and scripts in their attempts to legitimise their cause, and delegitimizing the Saudi government and their supporters.

There are two aims to this section. First, is to highlight briefly who were previously known as a constraint. Second, it is to highlight who are, and would be potential constraint of Saudi-Israeli relations. As one can tell from the name, the know constraints were known historically as being opposed to the Saudi government. Their official reason for such opposition was down to the presence of the US forces in Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm in 1990-91. However, they had other discrepancies with the Saudi government. For example, Bin Laden's discord happen not because of the presence of the USA per se, but because the USA was chosen by the Saudi government rather than Bin laden (Gerges, 2011). Analysing their (Bin Laden and Muqrin) reasons of discord with the Saudi government is not the aim of this section. Rather, understanding their rhetoric, delegitimising strategy, their perceptions and who they were trying to have join their cause is the main reason why they are being examined. Subsequently, a clearer picture of who can future potential constraints for active Saudi-Israeli cooperation can be deduced.

### 7.4.1 Known terrorists

Bin Laden: Osama bin Laden was one of the most infamous terrorists the world has ever seen- he was a particular threat to Saudi Arabia and the USA. This is clear from the second paragraph of his declaration of war fatwa in 1996. It states, "Message from Usama bin Muhammad bin Laden unto his Muslim Brethren all over the world generally, in the Arab Peninsula specifically".

It can be argued that Bin Laden was not a Saudi domestic constraint because the Saudi government revoked his Saudi citizenship. In hindsight, the argument that he is a domestic constraint is strong. He constantly spoke against Saudi Arabia as if he is inside the kingdom. He asked questions in his fatwas such as "whether we [Saudi Arabia] are the largest exporting country?!" and makes statements as "your forces [American forces] are on our [Saudi Arabia] land" posits that he is speaking about Saudi Arabia, and describing the frustration within it. This provides a very good understanding of how can people within Saudi Arabia act towards an unpopular foreign decision such as cooperating with Israel. Let us examine what his fatwas say.

Bin Laden's textual and rhetorical delegitimising tactic had a combination between religion and politics. As a result, Bin Laden tried to delegitimise Saudi Arabia through religious foundations and principles. Such a strategy is a serious matter for the Saudi government due to its dependency on the implementation of Sharia as their source of legitimacy. Said differently, Bin Laden targeted the very core of Saudi legitimacy.

Ignoring the divine Shari'ah law; depriving people of their legitimate rights; allowing the American to occupy the land of the two Holy Places; imprisonment, unjustly, of the sincere scholars. The honourable Ulama and scholars as well as merchants, economists and eminent people of the country were all alerted by this disastrous situation... Through its course of actions the regime has torn off its legitimacy (Bin Laden, 1996)

Another relevant, but less known radical thinker is Abdulaziz Al-Muqrin : unlike Bin Laden, there was no doubt that Abdulaziz Al-Muqrin was a Saudi national. He was the leader of the Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula AQAP. His book "Al-Qaeda's Doctrine for Insurgency" gives a guideline of how to conduct terrorist activities. Although the catalyst to his antipathy towards the Saudi government was

due to an unpopular foreign policy (invitation of the US forces in 1990), he had a slightly different approach to gain supports than Bin Laden did. Muqrin's language in his book aimed at facilitating terrorist activities, while bin Laden had a more emotional approach. The discourse and rhetoric of both Bin Laden and Muqrin will be examined in the next paragraphs.

#### **7.4.1.1 Perception of Israel**

What is interesting is the perception of who is the Saudi government cooperating with. Indeed, the United States is the clear target and reason for his fatwas. Many sources such as Gerges (2011), Guaranatra (2002) and Hellmich (2011) argue that his discord with the Saudi government was due to discontent with Saudi ruling elites choice of allies.

In his 1996 fatwa, Bin Laden mentioned "American" 15 times. He states that the occupation of the land of the two holy mosques or Saudi Arabia is being "imposed on them [Muslims within Saudi Arabia] by the Zionist Crusaders alliance and their collaborators [Saudi Arabia]". The term "Zionist-Crusader alliance" or "American-Zionist" alliance was mentioned six times in his first declaration of war.

This is tremendously significant because this indicates that Saudi Arabia was perceived to be cooperating not just with the United States. Rather, it was perceived as having an active cooperation with Israel. This is something that the sources in the previous paragraphs and the literature in general pay little attention to. It makes the analyses of the potential constraints less speculative and more realistic.

The perception of a Saudi-US cooperation as cooperation with Israel can also be seen in Muqrin's book. Muqrin invests significant effort towards identifying the types of targets that individuals can attack within cities. The first is an ideological target, the second is an economic target, and the third are human targets. It is within the detail of his description of the human targets that exhibits more

detail about whom these known constraints perceived as their enemy as collaborators within Saudi Arabia.

Within his category of human targets, he emphasised on the need to “target and kill Jews and Christians” (Cigar, 2009. P, 129) replicating the term “Zionist-Crusader” Bin Laden used in his fatwas. He even prioritized the human targets as the following. The highest priority of his human targets are “Jews that come from Israel or the United States”. Then, he considers Christians to be targeted, especially American Christians. After the Israeli and American targets are apostates, in other words, Muslims who have rejected Islam after they were once Muslim.

What is more, it is also in Muqrin’s elaboration of human targets that indicates how difficult a Saudi-Israeli cooperation would be to manage. The highest priority of apostates are “[T]hose who are close to the Jewish [Israel] and Christian [US] governments are to be considered among the most important targets, such as Hosni Mubarak and the rulers on the Arabian Peninsula and their advisors” (Cigar, 2009. P, 130).

There are three things that can be deduced from the previous paragraphs. Firstly, the cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm was perceived and argued by the known constraints as Saudi-Israeli active cooperation. Secondly, such a foreign policy decision legitimized violent action towards Saudi Arabian, American and Israeli targets (although there is no evidence that suggest that were any Israeli targets in Saudi at the time). This means that the potential constraints will refer to violence rather than just protests.

This shows that Israel and Saudi Arabia have yet again been placed in the same category creating a natural focal point between them and therefore adds to the ever increasing Saudi-Israeli commonalities. Thirdly, the known constraints wanted to communicate to the potential constraints that Saudi Arabia is cooperating with Israel. Therefore, individuals who joined the anti-Saudi cause

did so because of perceived active Saudi-Israeli cooperation. This leads to the next section which will endeavour to see who are the potential constraints of an actual Saudi-Israeli cooperation.

#### **7.4.2 Potential domestic opponents.**

Individualism, youthfulness and sinfulness are the three main characteristics of the potential constraint. The reason why it is considered potential is that these characteristics will always be present in any society. However, looking at who did the known constraints want to join their cause can provide a picture of who can be potentially obstructive in the future. Therefore, this constraint is of static kind, and relies on an unpopular foreign policy decision to mobilize it.

##### **7.4.2.1 Characteristic 1: Individuals and not institutions**

This section will look at how the known opponents that were mentioned above tried to recruit individuals within Saudi Arabia as opposed to Saudi institutions. Moreover, both Bin Laden and Muqrin made it an individual responsibility to fight against the Saudi government and the ruling elite due to their foreign policy decisions. For example, Bin Laden started his fatwa and declaration of war with selected verses from the Quran. Interestingly, the nature of these verses which is clear in the paragraph below does not call for taking violent action. Instead, it is a call for people to perform their duties to Allah.

{O you who believe! be careful of your duty to Allah with the proper care which is due to Him, and do not die unless you are Muslim} (Quran; 3:102). In addition to, {O people be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same kind and spread from these two, many men and women; and be careful of your duty to Allah, by whom you demand one of another your rights, and (be careful) to the ties of kinship; surely Allah ever watches over you} (Quran; 4:1)

It needs to be noted that after writing these verses of the Quran, and the hadeeth, he jumped straight into how the “Zionist Crusader alliance and their collaborators” are being imposed upon the Muslims in Saudi Arabia. He also mentioned to a large extent about other Muslim struggles around the world, and how all these struggles are due to the “Zionist-Crusader alliance”. He stated that the “Muslims blood became the cheapest and their wealth as loot in the hands of the enemies”.

This is clearly a way of tapping into the emotions of Muslims globally, but in particular, individuals in Saudi Arabia. As a result, “[a] vast majority of the security detainees [in Saudi Arabia] who were radicalised were motivated by their perceptions of Muslims grievances and oppression around the world”(Al-Hadlaq, 2011. P, 60). After stimulating the emotions within his targeted audience/potential constraints, these emotions will be channelled against the Saudi government for their perceived cooperation with Israel.

What made his rhetoric more seductive to potential constraints was that he individualized it. Making such individuals feel the need to answer his call because they seemed he was calling upon them specifically (Hellmich, 2011; Meijer, 2005). Therefore, individualism was a key feature that Bin Laden was aiming for, and a key characteristic of a potential opponent.

Recruiting individuals can also be seen Muqrin’s rhetoric and discourse. In his book, he dedicates a whole chapter about “Unconventional War (Guerrilla War)”. He defines a guerrilla and unconventional war as a “revolutionary war mobilizing the civilian population, or part of it, against the military power of the current authority in power, whether a local or an invading foreign one. Those rising up are a section of the local people who oppose the government’s programme, ideology and legitimacy” (Cigar, 2009. P, 92).

If the definition is analysed further, there can be clear indication about the first characteristic of the potential opponent. It is clear he emphasised on members of the population. In other words, individuals within the population that should partake in being an obstacle to a Saudi-Israeli cooperation. In Muqrin’s case, he does not merely suggest to the population to show their dissatisfaction peacefully. Instead, he urged them to partake in a war against the Saudi state because he deemed the Saudi government to be illegitimate. Exactly what Bin laden did in the 1996 and 1998 fatwas.

Moreover, what also suggests that individualism is a key attribute of the potential opponent and not institutions is that Muqrin calls for militant action against such institutions and establishments. Again, this goes back to the legitimacy factor in his discourse which makes nothing in Saudi Arabian governmental apparatus legitimate. This indicates strongly that any Saudi-Israeli cooperation will have domestic constraints, but these constraints will be members of the society and not Saudi establishments such as the military, tribal factions or any security establishments. Including the religious establishment which legitimized the US presence in Saudi, and can legitimize Saudi-Israeli cooperation (this will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter).

Muqrin's second chapter emphasised the importance of the individual in a guerrilla/unconventional war. He emphasised that the "mujahid" (which is an individual holy warrior, and not the "mujahideen" which is plural for holy warrior) should embrace and sympathise with the other potential domestic constraint. "Therefore, any budding movement or any group that wants to wage a successful guerrilla war must pay attention to the situation of the ordinary people" (Cigar, 2009. P, 104).

Interestingly, Muqrin highlights how individual potential domestic opponents can play either an active or passive role in order to serve his cause. It is clear what an active role in helping terrorist will entail. He used examples that an active role will consist of offering themselves as fighters and share the risks of being part of these terrorist operations.

The other hand, the passive support is also very interesting. He highlights how there are individuals who do not want to share the risks and burdens of fighting actively for the cause. He claims that these individuals can still play a role by offering the terrorists money, food and logistical support. He also writes that these individuals, in other words potential opponents "are close to joining the organisation, and a successful organisation [known opponents] has only to motivate them [potential opponents] to move to an active response, but the group [known opponents] will not be able to

accomplish that unless it demonstrates to these people [potential opponents] its ability to manage and control matters effectively”

It is already established that the first characteristic of the potential opponents are individuals. The literature regarding Saudi’s counter-terrorism efforts strongly suggests that the terrorists that were radicalised, or have the potential to be radicalised were individuals, and what is being argued in this part is actually not surprising in the counter-terrorism domain.

Conversely, this chapter is not about counter-terrorism, rather, it is about whom or what will be the potential opponents for a Saudi-Israeli active cooperation. Therefore, the emphasis of the individual nature of potential opponents must be clarified in order to have a better picture of the constraints to such a relationship.

#### **7.4.2.2 Characteristic 2: YOUTH**

The youths were the companions of Muhammad (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him), and was it not the youths themselves who killed Aba Jahal, the Pharaoh of this Ummah?. Our youths are the best descendent of the best ancestors (Bin Laden 1996)

The second feature of the potential opponents is youth. Significantly, the youth were the only category that Bin Laden used examples of individuals who took action against the perceived enemies of Islam. He could have mentioned about the heroic military commanders such as Khalid bin Wailed in order to address the military population. Or, stories and examples about the business class of the days of the Profit PBUH if he wanted to encourage the business class in Saudi Arabia to wage a financial war against the USA or financing the people against the “Zionist-Crusader alliance”. But he did not. Also, it was the youth that were at the core of his “action-taking” rhetoric that encouraged violence.

Bin Laden shared a story about how two youths tried to look for Abo Jahal in the battlefield. He tried to create a nostalgic, heroic and romantic image of youth doing their duty to Allah by killing of the main adversaries of the Prophet PBUH. In this instant, Bin laden as a known opponent, is trying

to persuade other individual youth in joining his anti-Saudi cause by using this fantasmatic logic (Glynos and Howarth, 2007) in order to capture, grip and control the individual youths in order that they perform their “duty”- violent action against Saudi-Israeli-American institutions.

Hegghammer (2006) gives a very helpful and informative insight to who are the potential opponents. He built a data set and compiles a sample of 241 individuals of the captured members of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). However, he argues against the notion that the AQAP recruits are young and gullible teenagers is a myth. He claimed that the average age of his sample was 27 (Hegghammer, 2006).

On the other hand, he actually supports the claim that the chapter is making in that the potential opponents are individual youths. The time that Hegghammer (2006) chose the sample was in 2002 and the average age of the sample he chosen was 27. But the time of the first fatwa of Bin Laden came in 1996, 6 years prior. As a result, this lowers the average age to 21 during the time that Bin Laden was encouraging, reaching out to and calling upon the “youth” to take action. What is more, Muqrin, who is the other know opponent that is being analysed in this chapter, and who later became the leader of the AQAP was 23 when he the main fatwa of Bin Laden was declared (Cigar, 2009). This strongly suggest the impact and the efficiency of Bin Laden’s rhetoric and discourse.

Many other scholars such as Guaranatra ( 2002) who look at the process of radicalisation within Saudi Arabia will attest and argue that the youth were the majority of the people radicalised, and who Bin Laden and Muqrin tried to recruit. Ergo, it has been established that the second key characteristic of the potential constraints so far are individualism and youthfulness. But what of about the nature of these individual youths?

#### **7.4.2.3 Characteristic 3: Sinfulness**

O you who believe! be careful of your duty to Allah and speak the right word; He will put your deeds into a right state for you, and forgive you your faults; and whoever obeys Allah and his Apostle, he indeed achieve a mighty success (Quran; 33:7071)

The verse above which was used in Bin Laden's fatwa indicates youth that are involved in sin. This verse would not be suitable if he was targeting a crowd or audience that are well practicing Muslim youths who understand and adhere to Islamic teachings. Instead, he is calling upon those individual youth who were deviants and seem to be at odds with implementing and practicing the Islamic teachings.

In short, he is targeting non-religious youth and communicates to them that all their sins and past will be forgiven, if they wage a holy war on the Saudi government, US forces, and the perceived Israeli forces. Hence, the beginning of the fatwa started with verses that call upon people to pay attention to their duty of worship. In this case, the performing of the duty means violent action against the Saudi-American-Israeli alliance. This indicates yet another characteristic of the potential opponents.

This specific characteristic of attracting youthful non-religious individuals is also mentioned in Muqrin's book. One of Muqrin's tactics was to attract the ordinary person to their cause. Muqrin suggested to the recruiters to "be mindful that the majority of people are preoccupied with their day to day lives and expend their energies chasing their daily bread"

Hegghammer (2013) proves this point, and claims that in the "Course in the Art of Recruitment (Al-Qa'idi, 2008) advised recruiters to choose old friends or relatives who are not particularly religious, and to avoid very pious people and certain types of profess" (Hegghammer, 2013. P, 6 ). Hegghammer also added " [i]nterestingly, a history of delinquency or non-observance was not an obstacle for joining QAP. At least one person in our sample was involved in petty crime, two had been dismissed from work for embezzlement, while two were described as having lived 'in sin' (an expression associated with smoking, drinking, womanizing and/or the failure to observe prayer)" (Hegghammer, 2013)

After examining Al-Qaeda's "Course in the Art of Recruitment" myself, much more detail can be obtained than Hegghammer's findings. This very well structured guide prioritises who they should recruit, and therefore who are potential constraints. Under the heading of "Groups who may be recruited", the first target of recruitment is the "Non-religious Muslims". The author's explanation is made below.

This is the sector that I prefer. This is because you will be the one to guide him (i.e. this nonreligious Muslim) to the right path; and you can choose who you want to be with you in your brigade, God willing. This sector (contains candidates) without limit, especially the youths, who are the safest people (for recruitment), and all praise be to Allah.

The author (Abu Amro Al-Qa'di) then ranks "The Muslims who recently returned to the practice of the deen [religion]" in second place. It must be noted how central "youth" is in the desired characteristics. At number five on his list are "youths who live far from the cities", while university students are seventh, and even high school students in eighth place. So far, the list has reinforced the chapter's argument that characteristics of the potential opponents to Saudi-Israeli cooperation are sinfulness, individualism and youthfulness. But the list does indicate something else. The list indicated that the tenth priority of recruitment is the "the Salafis".

But who do they mean by "Salafi"? This is when it is important referring back to the beginning of the chapter. This strongly suggests and reaffirms that "Wahhabism" is not something that people identify with, rather, as was mentioned a western categorisation. In this case, the Al-Qaeda manual labels the Saudi religious establishment as the "Salafis". The reason why they are tenth is because the author "put them in the last group because it is a fact that most of the Salafis have ideas against Al Qaida (...) [because] They have taken these ideas from their [Salafi] scholars."

There can be a number of reasons why the known opponent's would prefer youth who are non-religious. Firstly, there is a certain amount of ignorance about what is the essence of doing a duty in Islam. Such delinquents would assume that a real significant duty is that of action, especially when there is a manufacturing of a certain narrative like the Gulf War or any future relations with Israel. Secondly, the religious institution in Saudi is far more prominent and therefore more convincing in

its religious rhetoric of legitimizing an unpopular foreign policy decision. This is why the known opponents tried to create a vacuum of religious leadership by de-legitimizing the Saudi government.

This is what the next section is about

## **7.5 The competition over religious authority**

It is this role that is now required from the people who have the expertise and knowledge in fighting the enemy. They should guide their brothers and sons in this matter; once that has been done, then our youths will repeat what their forefathers had said before: "I swear by Allah if I see him I'll not let my shadow to depart from his [Abo Jahal] shadow till one of us is dead.

Within Bin Ladens's rhetoric, it can be clearly seen that he tried to convince the potential opponents that he is the authority by delegitimizing the Saudi religious establishment. He has labelled them as "fake muftis" who are legitimizing cooperation with the "Zionist-Crusader alliance". Two things can be deduced from this.

Firstly, this is yet another reminder that suggests potential opponents are made up of individuals, because he clearly argues against an establishment. Secondly, by undermining the Saudi religious establishment, he tried to create a vacuum of religious authority. By doing so, he tried to add more religious-political authority by his constant reference to the Sharia. He attempted to be the divine authority so that his call for Jihad against the Zionist-Crusader alliance and Saudi Arabia is considered a divine duty, as was mentioned earlier in the chapter.

This is clear from the first sentence of his quote above. He referred to himself as an "expert" and one with the "suitable knowledge". However, expertise and knowledge is mentioned in the same sentence with "fighting the enemy". Therefore, the intention to become the religious authority is not for development of the Muslim "ummah" or nation, nor tackling any social issues. Instead, it is to convince the potential opponents, and mobilise them to joining his cause and use violence against Saudi Arabia.

Hellmich (2011) highlights that Bin Laden is trying to establish a “competition for sacred authority”. She also highlighted some of the tactics that he used to make himself more of a religious charismatic figure. One of them is by using the notion to liberate holy lands as well as constantly mentioning the Palestinian cause in order to connect with the listeners, in this case, connect with the potential opponents. Moreover, what increased his appeal to the potential opponents was how he “presented himself in the traditional clothing of a devout Muslim, and the air of heroism and personal sacrifice is conferred by stories of the rich businessman who has forsaken the pleasures of privileged life” (Hellmich, 2011. P, 100).

But who is he competing with? Hellmich (2011) mentions how Bin Laden issued a fatwa denouncing the Saudi mufti’s fatwa of Bin Baz which authorized the religious reproach and peace accords in 1993 (which will be looked at later in the chapter). Although she indicates that Bin Laden is competing in a general sense, she does not indicate who Bin Laden might be in competition with. Also, how does this competition manifest itself? I argue that there is a clear competition between the Saudi authorities and the known opponents through the rhetoric and discourse of Islam, and Islamic insignia for the loyalty of the potential opponents.

#### **7.6 The Saudi instrumentalization of Islam.**

It is in this section that will display how the authorities in Saudi Arabia competed against the known opponents for the banner of Islam. The very banner that can transform the potential opponents into potential soldiers for the Saudi government. The Saudi religious efforts can be divided into two. The security-religious efforts and the legitimization efforts. The former will be under the supervision and control of the already existing security apparatus in Saudi Interior Ministry. The latter will be a different institution that is headed by the Mufti, and council of religious scholars of Saudi- the religious establishment. In addition, the legitimizing effort is where the analyses of the principles of the Sharia will be used to legitimize any state cooperation, including Israel.

### 7.6.1 Islamic insignia as dissuasion.

Saudi authorities use Islam in this case as a tool of dissuasion. It must be noted that there is more than one way in how Saudi Arabia can gain these individuals on their side. But religion is a very key way of doing so since it is most significant political tool within Saudi Arabia, and therefore reinforces Saudi legitimacy. Such Islamic insignia can be seen in two bodies

Firstly, the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (CPVP) has much agency, influence and sometimes controversy in Saudi domestic politics. In laymen terms, they are the religious police inside the Kingdom. It supervises the conduct of behaviour and makes sure that not only Saudi citizens, but anybody in the Saudi public is conducting their behaviour consistently with the Sharia. Hence, “[t]he Commission is primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with the precepts of Islam, but performs some security functions in dealing with religious extremists.”(Cordesman, 2009. P, 286).

In addition, “ the [Saudi] state had to appeal to the rationality and trust of the population, demonstrate its efficiency by destroying QAP [Al-Qaeda in the Arabian peninsula, which Muqrin used to lead] as quickly as possible, and isolate and marginalise the radicals from the moderates by demonstrating that they were un-Islamic and therefore deviants from Islam. Symbolically, the struggle between the two sides was represented by the capacity of the [Saudi] authorities to arrest or kill the members of the two lists [of terrorist wanted by the Saudi authorities issued in 2003] of terrorists” (Meijer, 2005. P, 279).

This quote does support two notions that have been mentioned earlier in the chapter. It does support the notion that there is a competition over two things: the Islamic symbol, and for the loyalty of the individuals. Secondly, it also suggests that those who would adhere to terrorism are un-Islamic and fits in the characteristics of who could be constraints in the future. Such competition can be seen in other instances.

The second body is a fairly new group within the Saudi security apparatus that has not much written about it called the “mujahedeen”, as in holy warriors. They are not to be mixed up with the mujahedeen that were in Afghanistan or elsewhere. Rather, they are an internal security force that plays a role in security and intelligence gathering within Saudi. Two things need to be paid attention in regards to this group (Cordesman, 2009).

The first, is the fact that this security force is categorised as “holy warriors” emphasises their cause more than their aim. What is meant by this is that although their aim is to provide and assist with security, especially counter-terrorism. Conversely, the main intention of the establishment and naming them as “mujahideen” is to signify and publicize that they are the “holy warriors” within Saudi Arabia. Hence, this is what holy warriors ought to do- serving their King and country. More importantly, it tries to dissuade the young youthful individuals from answering the call of the known opponents and their so-called call for Jihad.

The second aspect that is telling is that the name mujahedeen is in plural, and not “mujahid”, which is singular. Mujahid is how Muqrin labelled the potential opponents. While the Saudi security force called this group “mujahedeen” because it is a Saudi institution. This solidifies the argument that potential opponents will be individuals and not institutions.

This competition for the youth can also be seen in the statements of the late Interior Minister of Interior Prince Nayef. He stated that the CPVP must change the way it deals and behaves towards people, “especially the youth” (Cordesman, 2009). In addition, the CPVP should improve its recruitment of well-qualified people rather than an unskilled work force.

Two things can be obtained from this. The first is the nature of the CPVP’s recruitment. It is clear from the statement of the late Interior Minister that the religious police were recruiting members with low skills and abilities, and incentivising them in joining this establishment. What is interesting

is that many of the recruiters that the known opponents tried to recruit were individuals that faced the same kind of problems. Generally, they were unskilled and uneducated (Cordesman, 2009).

In this instance, there is a clear competition in the grass roots levels. As a result, the more the Saudi government recruit uneducated and unskilled individuals, the more known opponents within Saudi Arabia have a less chance of recruiting these individuals. In other words, the CPVP's recruitment (at least in the past) hindered the recruitment efforts of the known opponents.

The second thing that can be taken was the reason why the Interior Minister made these statements. He wanted the CPVP to "gently deal with the people and avoid harshness, especially young people". As an Interior Minister who oversaw and was responsible of the counter terrorism efforts, he would know more than most the importance and the danger of how susceptible the youth are to radicalisation.

He did not want youthful individuals to have a sense of despair or have them holding any kind of political grudge on the Saudi government. The CPVP's misconduct and recklessness can be the seeds for radicalisation and resentment towards the Saudi government. That is one of the reasons why he mentioned the youth especially. He knew that "[t]he youth of Saudi Arabia would constitute the vanguard of this movement that would martyr itself for the cause of this movement" (Meijer, 2005, P, 278).

This quote describes the nature of the role of the youth as passionate people. Sometimes a frustration is mixed with this passion. This is when the CPVP play a pivotal role in the recruitment. Said differently, the CPVP does provide the passionate youths an avenue of implementing and enforcing Sharia law, negating or making the other terrorist avenues of implementing Sharia law less desirable. This also supports the claim that was made in the early introduction about how politics oversees religion, but religion is the biggest tool to politics in Saudi Arabia. Now, a question that

should be asked is, what does the Sharia say about a cooperation with Israel? And what does the religious establishment in Saudi Arabia say about cooperation with Israel?

### **7.6.2 Saudi religious establishment.**

Literature regarding how the Sharia legitimizes Saudi-Israeli cooperation is truly scarce. Looking at the literature of Islamic international law has been very useful. But, before examining what the Saudi religious establishment says about cooperation with Israel, a brief adumbration of what the Sharia in general says about cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims is essential. That way, it will be clarified that the Saudi religious establishment is not merely making up Sharia laws. Rather, the fatwas that will be examined later are consistent with Islamic laws and principles.

The first attempt at producing a foreign policy of Islam was done by Shaibani (750-805). He compiled the teachings of the Prophet PBUH to form a framework of Islamic international law. This then developed into a branch of knowledge within the Sharia called “Siyar”. In his book, “Siyar”, it explains how the Prophet PBUH conducted foreign relations. He emphasised the point that the Sunnah does provide precedent for certain relations like alliances and peace treaties. The reason why the everyday relations of the Prophet PBUH can be used as precedents of foreign relations is due two things: the context at the time, and the perceptions of the “other”.

The environment that the Prophet PBUH found himself in was indeed diverse with Muslims and non-Muslims living side by side. Therefore, the non-Muslims at that time constituted the “other” (Ismail, 2016). These relations involved disputes, cooperation, financial loans (the Prophet PBUH died having a loan from a Jewish person) and inter-marriages. Hence, the everyday dealings of the prophet PBUH with other non-Muslims created the inspiration and foundation for Islamic foreign relations, foreign law and foreign policy- and therefore Saudi-foreign policy towards Israel.

Subsequent work of Islamic international law such as (Zuhili,2005), Buzan (2010) and others have in common, is that Islamic international relations is done based on principles that the Sharia provides.

These principles can be implemented differently according to the context that individuals and states find themselves in. Ergo, the Sharia in its very nature provides a tremendous amount of flexibility that Muslim states have at their disposal.

In fact, Ramadan (2001) who claimed that legislative verses such as (constitutional law, penal and civil codes international relations economic order) of Islam consisted of 228 out 6238 total versus in the Quran (Ramadan, 2001). One of the main reasons to have such a wide realm of versus that does not constitute legislation and jurisprudence is that it encourages reflection and adaptation.

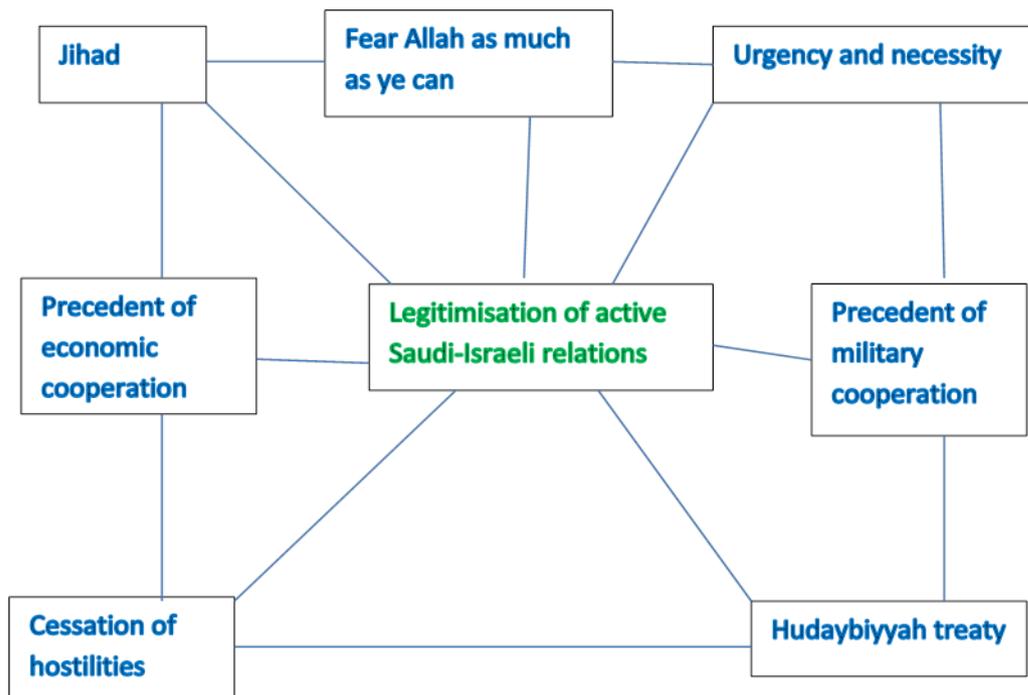
This means the Sharia allows modern day politician and diplomats of Saudi Arabia to use their statecraft in dealing with Israel within the borders of the Sharia by understanding the context that they find themselves in. Therefore, reaching their political objectives without sacrificing the core of Saudi legitimacy-Islamic Sharia.

The role which is central in the legitimisation effort in Saudi Arabia is the Mufti. His role is not necessarily a powerful one, but nevertheless, and extremely influential one. Since the legitimacy of the state is based on the Sharia, the Mufti then plays the role of the official legitimizer of the Saudi policy. There are different ways of constituting a legitimate fatwa. It can either be by declaring one, or it can be in the forms of answering questions of Saudi citizens. Thereby, analyses of the content and context of the fatwas will highlight what the religious establishment in Saudi Arabia can refer to in order to legitimize open and active Saudi-Israeli relations.

Most of the fatwas and principles that will be explained below were issued by Bin Baz (1910-1999) who was the Saudi mufti at the time of the Gulf crises in 1990-91. The fatwas and principles below were mostly in the forms of answers to questions in regards to general dealings with Israel, the USA or other threats that Saudi Arabia faced. . Either way, it set the religious tone to what is religiously acceptable for Saudi Arabia to conduct itself towards “other” states-including Israel.

The reason why I preferred to analyse the principles and concepts rather than the fatwa is because these concepts and principles were mentioned in numerous fatwas by Bin Baz. In addition, the meanings of the concepts and principles below change when connected with other concepts and principles. See the figure below.

**Figure 7.1: Key principles of Saudi foreign policy legitimisation**



As one can see from the figure above, these principles are connected in a form of a web. That can then be communicated to produce a communicative balance. Yet, they are very broad and therefore the meaning of the principles can be different depending on the context, and how it is connected with other principles. So, an examination of those connected concepts and principles is crucial. This offers a shield against criticism to a foreign policy decision, and allows a very flexible and legitimate way of adhering to the Sharia while making potentially unpopular foreign policy decisions.

### 7.6.2.1 Jihad

There have been numerous fatwas in regards to how Saudi Arabia and the Muslim ummah in how they should approach Israel. They have also been published in a unique time with a unique context. The first fatwa that will be examined was in regards to Israel and the response to the intifada. The main intention of the fatwa was to aid the support the jihad conducted by the Palestinian people.

Although the essential meaning of Jihad revolves around the self, this concept can, and has, been used in different ways that would suit the interpreters and their objectives. An observer cannot understand the aim and meaning of “jihad” unless the context, and the way it has been used is taking into account. It was clear how the known constraints that were mentioned previously wanted others to understand the concept of “jihad”- violence and conflict. But is violence and war what was Bin Baz’s intention when he called for Jihad for the Palestinian people?

This is a timely opportunity to expand upon the context of Jihad. There is a misconception about jihad being just a religious holy war. Although this is not completely untrue, this is however a very superficial understanding of one of the most important concepts within Islam, and within the discourse of Arab-Israeli relations. Tariq Ramadan in his book “Islam and the West” asks “[H]ow can a concept [Jihad] become the most negative symbol of religious expression?” (Ramadan, 2001. P, 59).

The concept of jihad is originally an individual and spiritual journey that Muslims will find themselves in. It is about how to protect an individual from their own negative tendencies, weaknesses and impulses, which include violent and emotional impulses. A constant journey for self-improvement and an “inward effort and this struggle against the “postulations” of interiority is the most appropriate (literal and figurative translations of the word “jihad”” (Ramadan, 2001. P, 61).

He also describes how an internal conflict within the self is something normal, and the main objective of this inner struggle is to achieve inner peace based on actions and choices to oneself, and

through how to treat others. Since internal conflict within the self is natural in everybody, so is the reality of conflict within an international sphere (Ramadan, 2001).

Nevertheless, the strive to be at peace with either oneself or with others does not change in the essence of jihad. It is the jihad with the others that this section will focus on. People may consider this fatwa as legitimising, championing and giving a blessing to fighting Israel. However, I argue the main intention of his fatwa was to wage a general jihad, and not a fight against Israel. The declaration of war is a small part of what jihad is.

Jihad comes from the word “juhd”, which means exerting effort. With this in mind, it can be deduced that the fatwa was encouraging the Palestinian people and the Muslim ummah to approach and deal with the situation in the proper way, and not necessarily fighting. This can be illustrated by the amount of times the word fighting and the word jihad were used. The word fighting was used only once in the whole fatwa, while jihad was used seven times.

It can be argued that the intention of Bin Baz’s use of the term jihad was in a context of war. This can be indicated by the fact that he labels the Palestinians as “jihad warriors”. The benefit of using jihadi warriors would negate any criticism that claims Bin Baz is being too passive. Hence, there can be a balance between maintain the image of bravery, while advocating more wisdom and pragmatism towards Israel. Conversely, I argue that even though Bin Baz labels the Palestinians as “jihad warriors”, his main audience were the Muslim ummah due to the Quranic verse he referenced.

Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed administered the [funds], for those whose hearts have been reconciled, for those in bondage and in debt in the cause of Allah and for the wayfarer, ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom(Quran 9:60)

Bin Baz emphasised the duty of the Muslim ummah to support their Muslim brothers in Palestine by giving charity to them. Helping them in what they need financially. If Bin Baz’s main aim of this fatwa was to legitimize war and call upon the Muslim ummah to fight Israel, he would have certainly used other Quranic verses such as the sword verse.

Through the process of web of references, this can then be connected with other fatwas that supports the argument that jihad in this instance means exerted effort to maintain wisdom. There were fatwas that clearly stated that the suicide bombing that have been conducted by some of the extremist as wrong and religiously inconsistent. This can be argued by the current mufti of Saudi Shiek Abdulaziz- Al-Shiek by saying that “those who kill themselves with explosives are criminals who are hastening their way to hell”, therefore, “killing oneself is a grave crime and a grave sin” Violence and jihad should not be mixed up.

It is not farfetched to argue that jihad is intended to find a suitable and peaceful resolution. As was demonstrated in chapter 4, Saudi Arabia excreted tremendous amount of effort, or “juhd” (which is the Arabic word as was mentioned above), to balance between maintaining Arab support and communicating pragmatically to Israel. Moreover, other efforts to end the conflict and reach a peace through communicating via third-parties with Israel should be considered effort towards the Palestinian cause. Therefore, peace initiatives can be used as a form of jihad with the Palestinian people.

On the other hand, the tone and the description of Israel within this fatwa perceived Israel to be the aggressive enemy. This fatwa was published during the intifada in 1987. This is very telling because it was three years before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In other words, it was three years before Saudi Arabia and Israel had a mutual focal point of Iraq (see chapter 3). The Iraqi focal point, or in this case the lack of it would have contributed to the Saudi perception of Israel, and how would the Mufti of Saudi Arabia view Israel in the eyes of the Sharia. Threat perception and commonality of security threats with Israel needs to be considered as well.

#### **7.6.2.2 Cessation of hostilities**

Bin Baz was asked “what is the Sharia’s perspective in regards to making an actual peace with Israel?” He stressed that peace is permitted and that there is no reason why Muslims would not accept

peace over conflict. He used the following verse. "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah". Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing" (Quran: 8:61). Although Bin Baz referred to this verse alone, it is important to mention the verses before and after the verse that Bin Baz referenced because many important principles of relations can be deduced. And they are as the following.

And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged (60) And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing (61) But if they intend to deceive you - then sufficient for you is Allah . It is He who supported you with His help and with the believers (62) And brought together their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together; but Allah brought them together. Indeed, He is Exalted in Might and Wise(63)(Quran: 8:60-61)

It is important to highlight the previous and proceeding verses because it explains accurately what the political climate, and the perception of Israel is within Saudi Arabia, and in the Arab world (Bickerton and Klausner, 2010). Clearly, the verse first does mention the concept of war and its reality. But it certainly advocates the preparation of war as deterrence, as opposed to an everlasting war. This goes against the intention of the known constraints who tried to religify their conflict with the "Zionist-Crusader alliance", and their collaborators as divine everlasting war.

The next verse is the verse that Bin Baz uses about the permissibility of making a peace. However, I argue that it is not only permissible; rather, it is an obligation to incline towards peace if the "other" inclines to it. If the essence of the verse that Bin Baz referenced was permissibility, then the verse could have been "and if they incline towards peace, you can incline to it". But the verse did not say that. Instead, the verse said "incline to it", in other words, this was a clear order to strive to peace which makes peace a necessity and obligation which are principles that will be looked at in the next section.

The rest of the two verses address the perception of the other non-Muslims after the peace has been made. In short, it argues that if there is the suspicion that the "other" party will try to do harm,

then it is an obligation to maintain the peace as opposed to acting upon the suspicion. The following verse explains that Allah has brought together their hearts and that it was the will of Allah the mighty that desired this peace after the conflict.

This is extremely significant because there is the notion that Israel can never be trusted to maintain this peace as they are the stronger party within the Arab-Israeli relations (Bickerton and Klausner, 2010). But that the Muslims should still adhere to the peace even in a position of a lack of military strength because peace in this case is a necessity.

Interestingly, Reiter (2011) does mention the same verse that Bin Baz used in regards to cessation of hostilities. In hindsight, Reiter's translation is incorrect which alters the meaning and the subsequent perception between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The verse that is mentioned in his book is "But if the enemy incline towards peace". The correct version does not have the word "enemy", instead it is "they".

This is significant because it highlights what kind of "other" is Israel. Clearly, the verse that proceed this did say that they are the enemy, but that was before the inclination of peace. Reiter's version suggest that "they" are always the enemy, even after peace, which is wrong. The verses suggest a transition and transformation of perception from the enemy, into a partner for peace.

It is established that inclining towards peace is a matter of obligation if the "other" incline towards it. However, this begs the question of why did Bin Baz not stress upon the obligatory nature of making peace as opposed to permissibility. This I argue is a balancing act between two audiences. The first audience are the people who would have a strong anti-Israeli sentiment within Saudi Arabia. The second are the policy makers who believe in the necessity to make peace with Israel. Bin Baz's delivery of this fatwa allows the more sceptical audience to argue that if there is no inclination towards peace then there is no obligation towards peace, maintaining a hard-line stance towards Israel.

On the other hand, it allows the policy makers with the political will to base an argument on how Israel is inclining towards peace. This allows them to then argue how obligatory it is to make peace with Israel. The establishment of an argument of Israel's inclination towards peace will require effort or "Juhd". Subsequently, exerting effort to make peace can be a form of Jihad. Other principles like necessity and benefit (which will be mentioned in further detail later on) can be connected in a web of references when arguing for the desire to make peace. Ergo, making the legitimizing Saudi-Israeli cooperation face less obstacles, and may help to pave the way to Saudi-Israeli -active cooperation.

### **7.6.2.3 Negotiations and the Hudaybiyyah treaty**

The Muslim world was neither unified nor monolithic in terms of their rapprochement with Israel. This started the Bin Baz and Qardawee debate in response to Shiek Qardawee who opposed the peace with Israel (Khalil, 2011). The two different prominent religious scholars represent two different political establishments. Inevitably, the two political establishments dictate the tone of how to religiously approach Israel. Sheik Qardawee is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and currently resides in Qatar, and is also regarded as the spiritual leader of the MB. Both Qatar and the MB support Hamas which has a militant policy towards Israel, and wants to establish a Palestinian state through force rather than negotiations. (Khalil, 2011).

It was mentioned in the previous section about the Saudi fatwas that prohibited the use of suicide bombings against Israel. Qardawee was one of the religious scholars who legitimized such an act. He considered suicide bombing as a form of jihad, while Shiek Abdulaziz Al-Shaik who is the current mufti of Saudi Arabia, arguing against it. This supports the notion that the jihad fatwa that Bin Baz issued above was an intended for Saudi Arabia and Muslims in general to have a pragmatic approach to Israel and not a militant one.

In his response to answering Qardawee's debate, Bin Baz used the precedent of the Hudaibiyyah treaty that happened with the prophet PBUH and his rivals in Makkah in 628 AD. Since Bin Baz's fatwa mentioned it as a basis of Palestinian-Israeli reconciliation and rapprochement, then it is necessary to explain the treaty further. Mainly, because there are numerous principles that can legitimize explicit Saudi-Israeli communication before any kind of peace and cooperation.

In 628 AD, the Prophet PBUH and his companions were already exiled in Medina and wanted to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca. On his way, he was intercepted by his rivals. After which, an exchange of emissaries and negotiations began in order to communicate each other's stance (Ismail, 2016). A significant deduction can be made from this. This aspect of exchanging emissaries gives the precedent, as well as religiously legitimizes the exchange of communication with Israel, even diplomatic relations with Israel before reaching an official peace.

This links back to when the then Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah in 2002 speech gave a speech addressing the people of Israel. He encouraged "all" measures must be taken by certain members of the Arab League. The argument that I made in chapter 4 is that clause 7 of the API said "certain" Arab League states such as Egypt and Jordan-who already have public relations with Israel should try and generate support for accepting the API. Hence, legitimizing any kind of channel of communication with Israel.

There is a second significant deduction that can be taken from the actual meeting. The treaty was signed and concluded between the Prophet Mohammad PBUH and his rivals' representative "Suhayl ibn 'Amer". The nature of the asymmetry of the deal was evident from the outset. Suhayl refused to write "Mohammad the Prophet of Allah" on the title of the Hudaibiyyah treaty. Instead, their logic was that if he was indeed the Prophet then we would believe in him, but they did not, and they wanted to assert that. The Prophet PBUH agreed that the letter would continue without the title, because he knew that he was the weaker party in the negotiations (Ismail, 2016).

In addition, both parties agreed that if anyone from the rivals in Mecca was to defect to the Muslims in Madeenah that they would be returned. Conversely, anybody that would defect from the Muslims to their rivals in Mecca would stay there. Also, if the Prophet and his companions were to visit in the next year, they must be unarmed. The Prophet PBUH agreed to the peace although it was unfair.

The essence of this agreement was that it was beneficial for the Muslims at the time knowing their lack of military strength. This allows Saudi Arabia and other countries to accept preliminary deals that may not seem fair to them. In other words, an asymmetrical deal with Israel can be wise since the prophet PBUH accepted a wise asymmetrical deal. This treaty also shows that image, prestige and display of strength to gain more public opinion should not be a good enough reason to avoid negotiations with Israel.

The third principle that can be deduced is what happened when the treaty was violated. The violation of the treaty occurred two years later when the Prophet's PBUH rivals in Mecca (Quraish) attacked another of the Muslims' allies. This was the catalyst for the Prophets conquest of Makkah in 630 AD (Ismail, 2016). Although Ismail (2016) mentions how diplomatically wise the prophet was at the time, the aim of mentioning this is to display the principles that the Prophet PBUH used during and after the state of war.

The Prophet PBUH said "[D]o not be deceitful with the spoils; do not be treacherous, nor mutilate nor kill children." Of course the Prophet PBUH based his teaching on the ultimate source of Sharia which is the Quran. It says "Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly" (Qur'an 2: 190). In addition to "God does not prohibit you from showing kindness and being just with those who do not fight you nor have driven you out of your homes. Indeed God loves those who are just" [Qur'an 60: 8].

The Sharia clearly shows the reality of conflict, but more importantly the conduct of which Muslims should have when dealing with during a conflict. This is a great opportunity to explain how the calls of the killing of innocent people that the known constraints of Bin Laden and Muqrin violate the principles of the Sharia. Although there can be political conflicts with other states, it is never permitted to attack the innocent. Conflicts do not only take the form of wars, rather, conflicts can be non-violent such as the current situation with Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Therefore, the Hdaybiyyah treaty shows that there must be respect between the parties. This is also linked to the otherisation that was mentioned in the previous section. Being the other does not necessarily mean being the enemy. Although there is a history of political conflict between Saudi Arabia and Israel, this does not mean the people of Israel are the enemy.

A great example of this is when the then Crown Prince Abdullah addressed the Israeli people directly, and communicated that there is no animosity between Saudi Arabia and the people of Israel. (Hinbush, 2003). This treaty certainly caters for different audiences within Saudi Arabia. The anti-Israeli audience could use the treaty as a way to champion action after making peace. They perhaps can use the web of references to use this treaty, and connect it with the short-term cessation of peace.

On the other hand, the political elite can use the web of references to connect this treaty with the long-term cessation of hostilities. Moreover, the audience can use the transition of perception from an enemy to an “other” that was mentioned in the section of cessation of hostilities using the verse “And if they incline to peace, then incline to it”. Such perception of the Israeli people can then help in making peace more tangible by negating the stigma of the Israeli people. This point must be made clear and can never be overlooked as their will be people who will use such religious texts to hinder any Saudi-Israeli developments in the future. Although this treaty can cater for different audiences, the treaty hear was certainly intended to allow a rapprochement even if there is an asymmetric peace deal.

#### 7.6.2.4 (Necessity and urgency)

Bin Baz did issue fatwas in regards to the US coalition in Saudi Arabia as being religiously consistent. It is clear that the context at that time was a matter of urgency of protecting the sovereignty and safety of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He was asked many times on several occasions about the perspective of the Sharia in terms of the cooperation with the US during Desert Storm. He explained how Allah in the Quran permitted prohibitions when there is a need. He then used the following verse “He has explained in detail to you what He has forbidden you, excepting that to which you are compelled” (Quran 6:119).

He further explained that the cooperation with other non-Muslim countries in order to protect themselves from the “great danger [Saddam Hussien]”. He said in this case of Desert Storm, Saudi Arabia is “obligated to exercise what can be used to defend against the evil [Saddam Hussein’s aggression]”. On the other hand, the choice of verse that Bin Baz used does indicate how relations with the US are forbidden one.

Although there is an obligation to cooperate with “other” non-Muslim states. There can be particular reasons why Bin Baz used this particular verse. It could be to soften the shock of a military cooperation against another Arab state. Especially, a state that was receiving a lot of support from Saudi during the Iran-Iraq war. Also, it can allow the anti-American population to need not embrace friendship, and that was a matter of necessity. Nevertheless, allowing such cooperation on the bases of necessity.

On another occasion, Bin Baz was asked about the contradiction of the Arab states cooperating with the US against Iraq, and Arab states not supporting the Palestinian cause enough. He explained how the Palestinian-Israeli issue is a different topic, and how the Saudi public should “ not connect this [Iraqi aggression] with that [Palestinian-Israeli relations]”. Bin Baz also added later in the same fatwa of how necessary and obligatory it is for the Saudi government to cooperate with the US and

perform “jihad against the enemy of Allah [Saddam Hussein] who is more of a non-believer than the Jews [Israel] and the Christians [United States]”.

This is extremely interesting because it hints at a non-religious way of legitimising cooperation with Israel. Demonization of the “other” can be used to legitimise a future Saudi-Israeli relationship. This is interesting because there are degrees to demonization. By highlighting a “great danger” as Bin Baz mentioned previously, he is highlighting a greater demon. Subsequently, producing a lesser demon. Ergo, the perception of cooperation with the lesser demon becomes more palatable. For example, this can be used currently with the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. This allows people to highlight how bad Israel is or can be, but allowing cooperation with Israel because Iran a greater threat, and therefore necessary to face it.

Interestingly, Bin Baz in the quote above called the military action against with the US a “jihad against the enemy of Allah [Saddam Hussein]”. The concept of jihad has been mentioned in detail earlier in the chapter. Jihad in this instance looks different than the jihad that Bin Baz used in his call for supporting the Palestinian people. In this context, jihad is a militant form. The reason why I argue Jihad in this instant is a military form is because Bin Baz referred in the same fatwa to a verse of “Fear Allah as much as ye can”, and will be explained below as a principle. This shows how the concept of jihad can be used to Saudi Arabia’s advantage and how it wants jihad to be interpreted by connecting in a web of references. Hence, illustrating how the meanings of the principles change according to the context and who is the audience.

#### **7.6.2.5 “Fear Allah as much as ye can” (Quran: 64:16)**

The principle that can be extracted from this verse “Fear Allah as much as ye can” is that one should always do what is in their means to do their duty. In other words, performing their duties within the limitation that one finds themselves in. He then claimed that although there may be limitations to addressing the Israeli-Palestinian issue, those limitations are not present in facing Saddam Hussein’s

aggression. Hence, it is of greater priority in facing the threat of Saddam Hussein than addressing the Palestinian-Israeli issue at that time.

Moreover, he said how the rulers should use what they have at their disposal in meeting the needs of their people. It was in the need to cooperate with the US, but it was not within the ability to either use force, cut diplomatic relations with the US in response to the Arab-Israeli issues. In short, Bin Baz explained that the Saudi government must do what it can. If it cannot, or such policies in facing the Arab-Israeli issues will result in harm for the Saudi population, then the Saudi government should not pursue them because it will go against the benefit of the people.

Bin Baz did say that there needs to be “powerful” states in facing the danger of Saddam Hussein. This also suggests that Saudi Arabia does face a limitation of who to cooperate with against dangers- “great demons”. Currently, the US is gradually withdrawing from the Middle East (Bronson, 2006), and the instability within the Arab league is increasing. As a result, this does limit the Saudi options in the Middle East, and therefore makes Israel more of a realistic option than before. Saudi Arabia can then use this principle to illustrate and argue how there is no other option in facing the Iranian threat than cooperating with Israel.

#### **7.6.2.6 Precedents of military and economic cooperation**

In the fatwa that was mentioned above, Bin Baz was asked about cooperation with the US, but there was another occasion where he was asked about cooperation with non-Muslims. He was asked, “is it permissible to stand with a non-Muslim organisation?” Bin Baz replied that “there is no discrepancy with standing with a non-Muslim organisation against him [Saddam Hussein]”. He explained how the Prophet PBUH “asked for assistance from sufwan bin umayyah in the Huwazin war, and received help from the Jews to rebuild the Khabair farms”. He reiterated that so far as there is a need to cooperate, then the Sharia allows it (Fatoohi, 2013).

There are two kinds of cooperation that can be taken from the quote that was mentioned above. The first one is military cooperation. It is clear from the quote that asking for help in a time of war from a non-Muslim country is not inconsistent with the Sharia. This is president is closely connected and goes under the principle of necessity that was previously mentioned.

The second form of cooperation is economic. The Prophet PBUH did ask for assistance, and cooperated with the Jewish community in regards to agriculture. Obviously, agriculture then is far more important than now because it was a way of creating and developing prosperity. This precedent is connected with the principle of benefit for the Muslim nation.

In addition, Bin Baz used the word “build” when describing the cooperation with the Jews over agricultural matters. Building can be used for many matters. It can be peace-building in order to reduce the incentive of violence and increase security. Or, it can be building cooperation and relations to increase prosperity. Building security and prosperity were mentioned in the seventh clause of the API that was mentioned in chapter 4.

Lastly, the fact that this economic cooperation were between the prophet and Jewish community can make it easier to legitimise a potential cooperation with Israel. Although both Saudi Arabia and Israel do not represent all of the Muslims and Jews all over the world, they are both considered homelands for the followers of Islam and Judaism. Ergo, this president of relations can lead to legitimising any kind of non-military cooperation such as economic and educational cooperation.

#### **7.6.2.7 Responsibility: “Every Shepard is responsible for their herd”**

Bin Baz was asked whether or not a Palestinian-Israeli peace and normalisation of relations will force other Arab states to normalising their relations with Israel. “Is it permitted to build on the cessation of hostilities with the Jewish enemy [Israel] and provide them with treaties of normalisation and benefiting from Muslim countries economically and other aspects... and therefore Muslims are obliged to open their markets to sell their [Israel] items and create economic establishments”.

His answer was that there “is no obligation [of peace and normalisation] resulting between the PLO and the Jews [Israel] upon other states”. This answer might suggest being an un-encouraging step for Saudi-Israeli prospects. But in his explanation and response to this question, he provides principles that strongly encourage future prospects in two ways.

Firstly, he emphasised the duty of the ruler(s) to fulfil their responsibility towards who they govern directly, as opposed to who are governed by others. This means if there is a benefit from an Israeli cooperation, then the ruler is obliged to cooperate. In this fatwa he referenced a hadeeth from the Prophet PBUH: “Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects”

This argument is strengthened by Bin Baz saying that the head of states whether they are a “King, Prince or President of a Republic must do what is in the interest of his people”. On the bases of this principle, Bin Baz legitimized Saudi Arabia, any of the Gulf States or any of the Arab Republics to make a bilateral peace with Israel if they see fit. Explicit direct communication or negotiation will be then be allowed. This goes against the notion that there must be a unified Arab and Muslim stance towards Israel-at least in the Islamic sense.

Secondly, the fatwa above increases Saudi-Israeli precepts through perception. Although, the fatwa above certainly “otherises” Israel, but it also “otherises” the Kings, Princes and other heads of Republics who are not Saudi. This means that Arab and Muslim states are within the same realm of “otherisation” as Israel. This does not mean that they are the same kind of “other”, but nevertheless an “other” that is foreign to Saudi Arabia.

This categorisation of perception contributes to Saudi-Israeli prospects in different ways. For example, Bin Baz considered Saddam Hussein as “more of a non-believer than the Jews [Israel]” and therefore deducing that there are two “others”, but in the same time Saddam Hussein was greater of a demon than Israel. This demonization, is connected via the web of references with the necessity

principles which was mentioned earlier, suggesting that highlighting a greater demon can legitimize Saudi-Israeli cooperation.

What the fatwa shows and what the principle indicates is that there are other potential lesser demons than Israel. This can be seen with the current situation with Qatar, and how it was a friendly “other” at one stage, but then transforming into arguably a greater demon than Israel. In sum, the fatwa and principle of responsibility contributes to the Saudi-Israeli prospects in two ways. It allows Saudi Arabia to put its own interests first. Secondly, it shows that the more states or “others” there are, the greater the likelihood of Saudi-Israeli prospects.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This chapter examined how significant is the role of religion in Saudi politics. As was mentioned, Islam and politics are embedded together. It also showed how religion was used to either legitimize or de-legitimize the political will of the ruling elite. A clear deduction from the chapter is that so long as the religious establishment believes the foreign policy decision is religiously consistent, then, it will be the biggest step towards legitimizing future active Saudi-Israeli cooperation.

The characteristics of the potential opponents have been discussed. But what needs to be mentioned further is the likelihood of them reemerging as opponents in the future. What made the potential opponents potential for known opponents to recruit them? What made such youthful, sinful individuals susceptible to standing against their government policies violently? The reason for such a phenomenon is that the nature of the potential opponents in Saudi Arabia is a static one. There will always be youth and sinners in Saudi Arabia that will have some sort of resentment of any kind. As a result, a certain foreign policy maybe a catalyst for the potential opponents to reappear again.

The chapter also exhibited that Saudi Arabia can manage and overcome obstacles to foreign policy decision affectively. It also showed it is something Saudi Arabia cannot eliminate completely. There

will always be individuals that will have a sense of resentment towards any government. But, there are different ways that Saudi Arabia can manage such individuals in the future. The chapter has shown how Saudi Arabia can instrumentalize its most powerful political tool to manage a controversial decision.

However, what other ways can Saudi Arabia legitimize such a controversial relationship? We can see indications of such ways in some of the fatwas of Bin Baz by highlighting a greater threat and a greater “demon”. Such emphasis on perception is therefore crucial. In order for Israel to be an acceptable and palatable option would need a greater demon. Hence, demonization that can be used by other Saudi establishments would become vital. The Ministry of Information for example can play an important role in two ways. It can highlight how there can be a greater threat. And, it can improve the image of Israel.

Saudi Arabia faces a turbulent climate in the region today. There is an on-going war with the Houthi rebels on the Saudi border with Yemen, and an on-going civil war in Syria which Saudi Arabia is heavily invested in. The opposing side that Saudi Arabia is facing in both wars is Iran. The Saudi media currently is highlighting how much of a “demon” Iran is- there is no doubt of that.

Such discourse of Iranian demonization can then be webbed with the other discourse of improving the Israeli image. What is meant by improving Israeli image is not constructing how lovely and innocent of a state Israel is. On the contrary, such an over the top attempt can have the reversal affect. Rather, it is highlighting how Israel can bring benefit to the Saudi society and business. The media can highlight how Israeli technology is everywhere in the world and in many Saudi households. Especially in a time where the Saudi direction is heading towards a neo-liberal era of privatisation and the ambitious 2030 vision. As a result of such neo-liberal policies, Saudi Arabia will privatise 5% of ARAMCO. This means that Israeli investors can be potentially investing in Saudi assets.

Perhaps demonization of the other, or highlighting a greater threat on its own is not enough. But with the increasing commonalities and mutual economic interests, Saudi-Israel cooperation becomes less unlikely and increases the incentives of such a relationship. Finally, the Saudi ruling elite do have different tools to legitimize any political decision. So long as Saudi Arabia has power over perception, Saudi Arabia can legitimize any cooperation, including Israel.

# Chapter 8

## Conclusion

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It is important now to go back and revisit the very first sentence of this project: is Saudi Arabia cooperating with Israel and is it communicating to Israel? I answered the two questions with another two questions: what is meant by cooperation and what is meant by communication? In order to provide a comprehensive and good attempt at answering the latter questions, the previous chapters were necessary. One can see that Saudi Arabia preferred a passive policy towards Israel because it reached its mutual goals with Israel while avoiding constraints. It also required a passive form of communication, and a communicative balance that allowed Saudi Arabia to communicate about potential active cooperation (upon certain conditions) but in a very passive way. This then begs another question, why does Saudi Arabia prefer a passive policy? What makes a passive behaviour (whether cooperating or communicating) very unique? The Saudi ruling elite are masters at balancing the appropriateness of their identity while achieving their strategic goals.

The Saudi foreign policy towards Israel is extremely unique because it allows it to reach its goals with Israel while honestly denying active cooperation. It communicates to Israel yet it does not have to explicate. To assume that passive cooperation and communication is synonymous with a lack of activity is wrong. On the contrary, the Saudi passive foreign policy towards Israel requires a tremendous amount of effort. Without shadow of a doubt, active cooperation between states is not simple, nor is it straightforward, and certainly has its own complexities. However, I do put forth the argument that if active cooperation is not simple, passive cooperation and passive communication is more complex. The conceptual and theoretical tools offered in the literature explained active cooperation could not have been helpful in the Saudi-Israeli case. A complication of cooperation and communication was imperative, and therefore resulted in the projected having two main themes of cooperation and communication.

In chapter 2, the concept of passive cooperation was expanded upon. It reviewed the literature of what is cooperation first, and examined various definitions of cooperation. A number of interesting conclusions were found just in that small section of chapter 2. Firstly, the concept of cooperation is vast which makes it extremely elusive and difficult to pin down. This is a result of such diversity within cooperation. It became increasingly clear that cooperation revolved around three main ingredients: mutual assistance, intentionality of assistance and the sharing of a mutual goal. These ingredients of cooperation are very much present in passive cooperation, but they might look different than they would in an active form of cooperation. Said differently, the conditions upon the three ingredients of passive cooperation are different than it would be in active cooperation. For example, both passive and active cooperation must share mutual goals, but the nature of the goal is different. In short, the goal in passive cooperation is one of a general and ominous nature such as a regional threat- in the Saudi –Israeli case-Iran, while the active cooperation will involve more explicit coordination. Obviously, there will be pros and cons to everything, and cooperation is no exception. The benefits of both have been highlighted which gave not only a better understanding as to what is passive cooperation, but why would states cooperate passively. Benefits such as no need for explicit coordination due to a focal, and avoiding domestic and foreign constraints are key incentive for why a state will opt for a passive form of cooperation. But deniability is fundamental reason why states will choose to cooperate in such passive fashion.

The benefits of such were explained in chapter 3. It looked at two focal points that Saudi Arabia and Israel shared at different times: Iraq and Iran. The benefits of passive cooperation and deniability of such allowed both Saudi Arabia and Israel to reach their mutual goals even though if it was for different reasons. What is very interesting about this chapter is that it analysed how passive cooperation has happened between Saudi Arabia and Israel, but also it showed two very important aspects: how difficult it is to have a passive cooperation, and how close passive cooperation can turn into active cooperation. It is important to remind the reader not to assume that passive cooperation means not doing anything. There is a lot of activity that can take place in a process of passive

cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel, just not towards each. This leads to the next important point to note. The ease in which passive cooperation could have been transformed into active cooperation must not be ignored. In chapter 2, I have spent a great deal of effort in separating between active and passive cooperation. The aim of this separation was to try to give passive cooperation its own uniqueness as a separate form of cooperation. Although I have separated them, it is now a good opportunity to show how related they are. As was mentioned earlier in the conclusion, and in greater detail in chapter 2, they both share the same characteristics of cooperation: mutual goals, mutual assistance and mutual goals. This means that both passive and active cooperation have the “cooperative spirit”. This is a response to any criticism that passive cooperation would not be considered as a form of cooperation. They are both credible forms of cooperation, as was discussed about the Saudi-Israeli focal point of Iran in chapter 3.

But what does Iran mean for the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel in the future? It was mentioned that the kind of passive cooperation that took place between Saudi Arabia and Israel towards their focal point of Iran was certainly more of an intentional harmony of interest. Indeed there was an instant in 2009, where Israel maintained its silence again over the large arms deal that consisted of offensive weaponry. On the other hand, one cannot ignore the growing increasing harmony that is happening between Saudi Arabia and Israel currently.

Saudi Arabia indeed does see Iran in a security context during the on-going cold war in the Middle East. But do they see Israel in a security context? Or do they see Israel as a potential partner for other goals. To rephrase the question, can there be active cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel? The answer is a conditional yes because it has communicated this in a very passive way. This is why the role of language had to be developed further. Indeed, passive cooperation is a pragmatic policy that Saudi Arabia has towards Israel, but it is not the only way it shows its pragmatism towards Israel. Passive communication and the communicative balance is indeed a remarkable area that has not been examined in deep detail; in the future. Frankly, it was quite surprising that the

Saudi foreign policy towards Israel has not been studied in far greater detail as the primary sources such as the four peace initiative examined in chapter 5 and the number of fatwas in chapter 6 are all in the open. What may have deterred further research in regards to the language used of this pragmatic and passive policy towards Israel required a complexification and deep analysis of such discourse.

This is why Discourse analysis and Speech act theory have played a fundamental role in this project. Both of the literatures, including the work of Pehar's (2001) work on ambiguities have contributed to the necessary lens that can allow us to analyse the language used in the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel. Chapter 4 is where the theme of the project changes from cooperation to language. There needed to be a chapter which provided the necessary linguistic and discursive explanations which will guide chapter 5 and 6.

There is not only a passive form of cooperation, but there is also a passive form of communication. What passive communication attempted to achieve was a communicative balance. A balance does not have to be between actual audiences but a balance between ideas and an image as well. The chapter focuses on 3 main literatures: speech act theory, diplomacy and Discourse analysis. Speech act theory was very beneficial as it revolved around how can there be a competence of communication. Said differently, this refers to how people can communicate their ideas or whatever they want to communicate in the proper way. The tones that were emphasised on were substantially important as tones have a subtle way of communicating. This is not just what is said, but how it is said is still very communicative, and shall not be overlooked. What can be gained is that after the analyses of the tones in chapter 5, Saudi Arabia has indeed communicated the willingness and even the encouragement to negotiate with Israel due to the presence of the tone of request. As was mentioned earlier in the project, requests are the source of contingency of meanings. When requests are combined with both promise and demand, a peace initiative such as the initiatives that were examined can be contingent and flexible as well. It is also an important factor that contributes

to the communicative balance. The main aspect that can be gained from this is that ambiguities in a process of communication means that there is a phenomenon of different simultaneous means being communicated between different audiences and ideas. However, there was room for developing the process of communicative balance by looking at the mechanism within two very prominent concepts of empty signifiers and nodal points. I believe I am making a very good contribution not only to the International Relations literature, but as well as the Discourse Analysis literature because the project concluded that such concepts as empty signifiers and nodal points are only relevant in how states communicates, but also in how such dense concepts have been used to achieve a communicative balance and a passive communication. What ties all the ingredients together is the element of contingency. Contingency is the reason why there was an evolution of tones between the first block of peace initiatives and the API. In addition, constancy is what allows the potentiality of relations to be fleshed out as it allows the ever changing context to provide the language used in initiatives and statements coming out of Saudi Arabia towards Israel to be fleshed out.

Not only does the contingency of language gives a better and clearer picture of what relations might be like between Saudi Arabia and Israel, but contingency is the corner stone of the changing of identities. The contingent element of language is something that has been overlooked in the study of the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel. In addition, it is language that embraces the grey area of perception as was seen in chapter 6. We could see that Israel has been perceived differently in numerous contexts. It was once perceived as a potential ally. The legitimisation of an active cooperation from within Saudi Arabia can only happen with language with contingent and flexible meanings. Therefore, contingency is the key to legitimacy.

There is room for development of the Saudi-Israeli understanding in future work. Such work in the future can consist of questioners on a large scale that could help shed light on what are the different

perceptions of Israel within Saudi Arabia and by whom. This would be important because it can indicate how much effort is needed to normalise or active Saudi-Israeli cooperation.

Let us not forget, that this is a study of the Saudi policy towards Israel, and not a study primarily focused on Saudi-Israeli relations. Although Israeli policies have been mentioned throughout the project, it has been used to either highlight the nature of harmony between Saudi Arabia and Israel, and examples that would illustrate the concept of passive cooperation. The project did not focus on the Israeli dynamics of a potential active cooperation with Saudi Arabia. It did not touch upon the domestic and external constraint of such a relationship. Nor did it focus on the nature of language Israel used in communicating to Saudi Arabia. This project leaves room for such work.

This project is not only useful as a foundation for academic work future work, but it also significant policy impact in two main ways. The first, this work can be used to advise the Saudi ruling elite of how utilize Israel. The biggest suggestion this project can provide for the Saudi government is that they should maintain this passive policy as it is becoming clearer that passive cooperation and communication is sufficient. However, if Saudi ruling elite decide to pursue these goals through active cooperation without much Arab/regional consensus, then it will encounter significant external constraint rather than internal constraints. Any cooperation with Israel and even a lack of vociferous of Israel will be used to demonise Saudi Arabia even further.

The second policy impact is that this project contributes to the Arab-Israeli literature by arguing against previous works that serve as ideological ammunition for dogmatic arguments that insist on the notion that the Arab-Israeli relationship is only conducted in conflict. This work will help encourage others to adopt a nuanced approach to the Arab-Israeli relations. By examining and expanding upon commonalties as well as the language used Saudi Arabia towards Israel, one can only hope that such work will encourage others to embrace the complexity of the situation between Arab states and Israel. Finally, whether it is a political impact to the project or contribution to the literature, the study of the Saudi foreign policy towards Israel is worth knowing because it exposes

us to different ways and approaches of how we can approach the International Relations of the Middle East. Such a complex approach allows us to not only understand what happens between Saudi Arabia and Israel, but also, how it happens, and the significance of what does *not* happen.

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