

Abdalla Osman Ahmed

Real Time Training & Development Center, United Arab Emirates, Abu-Dhabi,
e-mail: abdullah76@yahoo.com

HISTORICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ARAB GULF COUNTRIES AND RUSSIA

Russia began making contact with Gulf States back in 1932, when the USSR became one of the first countries that formally recognized Saudi Arabia and established diplomatic relations with the state. Shortly after, due to the change in the Soviets' party line (conversion to a new ideology and development of a moderate stance towards regional conflicts), the relations were suspended. The aggravation of international relations in the region was also the result of the competition between the Great Powers, and their respective political ambition. In the light of "West—East" political-military confrontation, the Soviet Union took immediate interest in the latest regional developments.

This article used descriptive approach to the specificity of the problem of the study, which aims to study relations and differences, where this method is concerned with the study of what is the object and interpretation and determine the relationships between the facts.

The results of the study reached that Russia is one of the largest oil and gas producers in the world, and the largest oil exporter outside OPEC, as it usually seeks to maintain high energy prices despite tensions and conflicts in the Middle East, as it has caused huge losses to the economy of the Gulf countries due to lower oil prices. The volume of trade exchange between Russia and the countries of the Cooperation Council is very low compared to the Gulf's trade relations with China. This may be due to the fact that Russia is futile in trade, although the latter is working to correct this deficit, but the desired results may take some time.

In the changing world, Moscow's allies are not necessarily Washington's foes, and vice versa. Cooperation between Russia and Gulf States is based on their shared interests, in particular, fighting international terrorism.

Key words: Russia, Arabian Gulf, GCC, Syria, Saudi Arabia, UAE, international relations, oil.

Абдалла Осман Ахмед

Нақты уақыттағы оқу және даму орталығы, Біріккен Араб Әмірліктері, Абу-Даби
e-mail: abdullah76@yahoo.com

Араб шығанағы елдері мен Ресейдің арасындағы тарихи қатынастар

Ресей Парсы шығанағы мемлекеттерімен 1932 жылы байланыс орната бастады. Сол кезде КСРО Сауд Арабиясын ресми түрде ел ретінде мойындап және мемлекеттер арасында дипломатиялық қатынастар орнатыла басталды. Көп ұзамай Кеңестердің партиялық құрамының өзгеруінен кейін (жаңа идеологияға көшу және аймақтық қақтығыстарға қатысты қалыпты ұстанымның дамуы) қатынастар тоқтатылды. Аймақтағы халықаралық қатынастардың шиеленісуі ұлы державалар мен олардың тиісті саяси амбицияларының арасындағы бәсекелестіктің нәтижесі болды. Батыс пен Шығыстың әскери-саяси қақтығысы аясында Кеңес Одағы аймақтағы соңғы оқиғаларға бірден қызығушылық танытты.

Бұл мақалада қатынастар мен айырмашылықтарды зерттеуге бағытталған зерттеу мәселесінің ерекшелігіне сипаттамалық көзқарас пайдаланылады, мұнда бұл әдіс объект болып табылатын нәрсені зерттеуге, фактілер арасындағы байланысты түсіндіруге және анықтауға байланысты.

Зерттеу нәтижелері Ресей әлемдегі ең ірі мұнай және газ өндірушілердің бірі және МЭЭУ-нан тысқары ірі мұнай экспорты болып табылатындығын көрсетті. Ол әдетте Таяу Шығыстағы шиеленістер мен қақтығыстарға қарамастан жоғары қуат бағаларын ұстап тұруға тырысады. Парсы шығанағы елдері мұнай бағасының төмендеуіне байланысты бұл экономикаға үлкен зиян келтірді. Ресей мен Ынтымақтастық кеңесі елдері арасындағы сауда биржаларының көлемі Парсы шығанағы мен Қытай арасындағы сауда қатынастарымен салыстырғанда өте төмен. Бұл Ресейдің саудада пайдасыздығына байланысты болуы мүмкін, ал соңғысы бұл тапшылықты түзету үшін жұмыс істеп жатыр, бірақ қажетті нәтижелер біраз уақыт алуы мүмкін.

Өзгеріп жатқан әлемде Мәскеудің одақтастары Вашингтонның жаулары емес және оған керісінше де емес. Ресей мен Парсы шығанағы мемлекеттерінің ынтымақтастығы олардың ортақ мүдделеріне, атап айтқанда, халықаралық терроризммен күреске.

Түйін сөздер: Ресей, Парсы шығанағы, ГКК, Сирия, Сауд Арабиясы, БАӘ, халықаралық қатынастар, мұнай.

Абдалла Осман Ахмед

Центр обучения и развития в реальном времени, Объединенные Арабские Эмираты, Абу Даби
e-mail: abdullah76@yahoo.com

Исторические отношения между странами арабского залива и Россией

Россия начала вступать в контакт с государствами Персидского залива еще в 1932 году, когда СССР стал одной из первых стран, которые официально признали Саудовскую Аравию и установили дипломатические отношения с государством. Вскоре после изменения партийной линии Советов (переход к новой идеологии и развитие умеренной позиции в отношении региональных конфликтов) отношения были приостановлены. Обострение международных отношений в регионе было также результатом конкуренции между великими державами и их соответствующими политическими амбициями. В свете военно-политической конфронтации между Западом и Востоком Советский Союз сразу же заинтересовался последними событиями в регионе.

В данной статье использован дескриптивный подход к специфике проблемы исследования, которая направлена на изучение отношений и различий, где данный метод связан с изучением того, что является объектом, и интерпретацией и определением отношений между фактами.

Результаты исследования показали, что Россия является одним из крупнейших производителей нефти и газа в мире и крупнейшим экспортером нефти за пределами ОПЕК, поскольку она обычно стремится поддерживать высокие цены на энергоносители, несмотря на напряженность и конфликты на Ближнем Востоке, поскольку она может нанести огромный ущерб экономике стран Персидского залива из-за снижения цен на нефть. Объем торгового обмена между Россией и странами Совета сотрудничества очень низок по сравнению с торговыми отношениями Персидского залива с Китаем. Это может быть связано с тем, что Россия бесполезна в торговле, хотя последняя работает над исправлением этого дефицита, но желаемые результаты могут занять некоторое время.

В меняющемся мире союзники Москвы не обязательно являются врагами Вашингтона, и наоборот. Сотрудничество между Россией и государствами Персидского залива основывается на их общих интересах, в частности, борьбе с международным терроризмом.

Ключевые слова: Россия, Персидский залив, ССЗ, Сирия, Саудовская Аравия, ОАЭ, международные отношения, нефть.

Introduction

The Gulf countries are considered to be entities with high geo-economics' status, which has always made them vulnerable to external interventions, especially after increasing rates of production of oil and gas, and high oil reserves in the countries of the region, in addition to the region playing a major role in the global capitalist economy, in the sense that the global leadership system It cannot give up its hegemony over these countries even if it is forced to use force, as happened in Kuwait, Iraq and Iran, so the Arab Gulf region is more integrated with the global system. Russia's relations with Arab countries, is a priority of foreign policy in the Middle East. Russian-Arab relations have a long history and distinct traditions. Nevertheless, the Middle East plays a very important global role, and for a long time there was a belief that the economy of the Arab countries was still based on oil only, but in reality the financial markets and global financial centers such as the World Trade Center in Dubai are formed.

During that time, there is cooperation, exchange of views and discussion between Russia and the Arab Gulf countries to strengthen the relationship and partnership. However, the countries of the region face a number of serious problems, and the economy of many Arab countries, such as the Russian economy, suffers from dependency on developments in the oil market. Indeed, the Arab countries are forced to solve the same problems that Russia faces, and the latter feel jointly that there is a lack of foreign investment and the necessity Search for new markets for the sale of Russian goods (Salman, 2010).

President Putin has a basic view, "Russia and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries are energy allies and not competition in meeting the needs of global energy markets. It is also necessary to build Arab-Russian strategic cooperation in the field of oil, as Russia and the Arab countries are the focus of international powers, especially the United States. President Putin has previously expressed his country's desire to direct part of its foreign investment to the Arab Gulf countries.

Methodology

The study used descriptive approach to the specificity of the problem of the study, which aims to study relations and differences, where this method is concerned with the study of what is the object and interpretation and determine the relationships between the facts. The descriptive approach as a research methodology in the social sciences does not depend on the collection and classification of data and information, but exceeds. This was explained by the methodology of field surveying, data analysis and reasoning as a research method. There are two main research approaches to collect and analyze the data information. The first one is qualitative approach and the second one is quantitative approach. In the first approach, researchers concentrate on understanding a phenomenon from a closer perspective (Creswell, 2013).

Literature Review

Russia began making contact with Gulf States back in 1932, when the USSR became one of the first countries that formally recognized Saudi Arabia and established diplomatic relations with the state. Shortly after, due to the change in the Soviets' party line (conversion to a new ideology and development of a moderate stance towards regional conflicts), the relations were suspended. The aggravation of international relations in the region was also the result of the competition between the Great Powers, and their respective political ambition. In the light of "West—East" political-military confrontation, the Soviet Union took immediate interest in the latest regional developments.

During the Cold War, the Soviet government viewed Gulf States as the United States' allies, and consequently, Moscow's adversaries. The Kremlin-Riyadh relations became especially strained after the introduction of Soviet troops on the territory of Afghanistan. In 1990s, the Kingdom's support of separatism in Kosovo and Chechnya became a large stumbling block in the two states' relations. At the time, however, due to a growing rapport between Moscow and the West, Russia—Saudi Arabia relations shifted to the background of the global arena.

In the 2000s, Russia renewed its rapprochement with Gulf States, which was based primarily on mutual economic interests. In 2006, when Russia served as a host nation for a G8 summit for the first time, Moscow leaders suggested including problems of "energy security" in the agenda for

negotiations and declared their determination to play a key role in this sphere across the globe and, in particular, in Eurasia. They also came up with the concept of an "energy superpower", describing Russia as such, and stated that this is how Moscow would like to be perceived by its G8 partners. The reaction of the leading states of the globe was immediate and extremely negative. Thereafter, the Russian government never officially referred to this concept again. At the same time, a number of policy documents in various fields of homeland security approved by Russian President Vladimir Putin after 2006, were based on the recognition of overriding importance of the energy sector in Russia's growing economic power. Russian policy in the energy sector is also driven by the need to control "key positions" in order to guarantee the country's economic security and maintain its status as a nuclear superpower. In spite of having large energy resources, the Arab Gulf monarchies are greatly dependent on the oil market, and, essentially, they have to face the same challenges as Russia.

Today, the Gulf countries are passing through their most historical stages; political and economic changes. Moreover the challenges of the Arab spring and the internal popular movements demanding comprehensive political reform. On the economic front, the Gulf countries are facing the development benefits and the unemployment problem that started to appear in spite of the high growth rates that they achieved thanks to the large and prolonged boom in oil prices. On the strategic level, the Gulf states face the threat of Iranian expansion that started in Lebanon and Iraq and then Syria, and ended in Yemen, leaving the Gulf states besieged by Iranian influence either through direct existence or by proxy through Shiite militias that owe them loyalty (Nasser, 2017).

The Gulf region is automatically turning into a key player in the process of making Russian foreign policy, as a result of several factors see (Zedan, 2013), (Al Tahlawi, 2014):

The Gulf region is the largest single source of energy resources for production and export in the world, and Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Iraq are among the largest oil exporters in the world.

The Gulf region - and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in particular - is one of the most importing regions of the world.

The importance and place of the Gulf region; it is also the center of Islamic civilization, and a wide space for intellectual dialogues about relations between civilizations. It is also the source and field

of sectarian competition and its implications for regional, international and politics.

The Gulf Cooperation Council made the Arab Gulf a sub-region in international and regional politics, and stepped up its importance on the Palestinian issue in Middle East relations.

Russia's efforts to return to the Middle East, and the Gulf has become the most important gateway to it, and in it there is more than one approach directly to the question of Iran, and indirectly the issue of Syria

Russia believes that stability in the region is the cornerstone in protecting its growing interests, and that the Arab Spring revolutions brought nothing but chaos and instability, unlike the United States, which sees chaos as a guarantee of its interests, and although Russia has made extensive efforts to arrange its conditions in the region, Russian officials With many visits to the Arab region, but soon the winds of change blew in the Arab world, which posed a grave danger to the future and interests of Russia, and therefore Moscow must reconsider its foreign policy towards those countries. These challenges that Russia and the Gulf states face can serve as a basis for cooperation between the two parties. It is an opportunity for Russian-Gulf cooperation. It also represents the common interests, especially in the energy sector, as a basis for cooperation between them.

Despite the long history of unconstructive relations between Russia and the Gulf countries, many points of convergence remain. There are reliable and cooperative opportunities to rebuild constructive and fruitful relations for both parties. this does not require changes and a waiver of their principled positions on important fateful issues on the other hand It is known that Russia is passing through the most difficult conditions today and is facing the most difficult challenges. On the economic front, the decline in oil prices and Europe's efforts to reduce dependence on Russian gas imports represent a major challenge for the Russian energy sector (John & Vladimir , 2004).

It is well known that Russia and the Gulf countries are among the most important producers of traditional oil in the world. This means that coordination between them is extremely important for the oil market and its stability. The energy field is one of the most important areas of mutual interest that requires Russia and the Gulf countries to cooperate with the oil sector. It also represents a special importance for the two parties in which opportunities for cooperation appear great, especially at the present time. As the oil market passes through

a period of fundamental change due to the American shale oil boom. After, some countries relied on shale oil as an energy source. So the need for close cooperation between the traditional oil producers, whether from inside or outside of OPEC, in order to maintain a price level below the cost of shale oil producers. Cooperation and coordination between Russia and OPEC countries is necessary for the interests of both parties, especially since Russia and the Gulf countries are still dependent mainly on oil, and need to maximize their returns despite market conditions that do not support high levels of prices as the previous ones in the past years (Al Aqabi, 2010).

In the field of economic cooperation between Russia and the Arab Gulf countries, the first conference was held in Jeddah in 2003, with the participation of businessmen from the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Russia, and the conference touched on expanding trade and investment relations for basic industries such as petrochemicals, oil and gas refining, minerals, food, medicine, electricity and water. The Russian trade relations with the UAE have also evolved, and as evidenced by this, the RIA Novosti Agency held a press conference on the topic of "Russia - UAE: new attitudes towards developing economic, cultural and commercial relations. The Emirati-Russian relations witnessed a great convergence in political visions, interests and positions, which prompted the two parties to enhance them strategically, especially in the economic track through the conclusion of a number of commercial, investment and tourism exchange agreements. In the summer of 2013, he established the Russian Investment Fund (RDIF) and the Abu Dhabi Investment Exchange Company (\$ 2 billion) to search for investment opportunities within Russia to attract more Gulf investors. The positive developments that have taken place in many Emirati-Russian relations, including many economic fields, are a driving force and a catalyst for expanding the role of the private sector to contribute to developing cooperation and enhancing strategic partnership with beneficial investments for both countries (Sheikh, 2014)

The Result

Russia launched an initiative to improve relations with the Middle East, which fell significantly under Gorbachev and Yeltsin. The relations between Russia and the countries of the Gulf region were marred by a bit of Luke warmth during a certain period of time for purely political reasons, but

they returned again to their first life, and we are witnessing several activities of existing cooperation between Russia and the Gulf countries, whether in the political, commercial, economic, tourism, and investment fields.

Russia has established good working relationships with all major actors in the Middle East: Islamic governments hostile to the United States (Iran and Syria), as well as those that support the United States such as (Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar) in addition to (Iraq and Afghanistan); as well as Israel and Fatah Even Hamas. Russia aims through its relations with the countries of the Cooperation Council to influence the policies of the Gulf countries towards other issues in the Middle East, as it wants to take a lead in international situations such as: the Syrian conflict, and the Iranian nuclear negotiations (Abdelrazek, 2004).

Russia's Lukoil and Saudi Aramco established in 2004, the joint "Luxar" company to discover and invest gas fields in the northern part of the Rub Al-Khali desert. The participation of the Russian "Oil" and "Lukoil" companies in the development of the four northern Kuwaiti oil fields, which are projects that cost between \$ 7-8 billion. In UAE, The "Al Taweelah - Fujairah" gas pipeline, which has a length of 240 km², is being implemented by Russia's Stroy Trans Gas, and was completed in 2009.

Russia cooperated with the Sultanate of Oman in the framework of the "Consortium" project to build a pipeline in the Caspian Sea to transport oil from Kazakhstan through Russian territory to the Russian port of Novorossiysk on the Black Sea. On the level of nuclear energy projects, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries cooperated with Russia to be the accredited body for the construction of these energy structures. This is similar to what is currently happening in Iran and India. After Russia regained its economic power, it began dealing with the world with new innovative strategies and clarity, rejecting the unipolar world.

Russia is one of the largest oil and gas producers in the world, and the largest oil exporter outside OPEC, as it usually seeks to maintain high energy prices despite tensions and conflicts in the Middle East, as it has caused huge losses to the economy of the Gulf countries due to lower oil prices. The volume of trade exchange between Russia and the countries of the Cooperation Council is very low compared to the Gulf's trade relations with China. This may be due to the fact that Russia is futile in trade, although the latter is working to correct this deficit, but the desired results may take some time (Al Khazar, 2008).

Conclusion

The Russian-Arab relations in general, and the Gulf in general, need more documentation and interdependence with Russia, because there is a balance between the powers in the Middle East region, so that the United States is not unique to the region and is practicing a policy of alignment for Israel, also to ensure the diversity of sources of food, medicine, and weapons. at the same time, Russia is as keen on its relations with the Arab Gulf states as it is on the relationship with Iran. The lack of mutual trust between the two sides threatens the interests of the countries of the region, and he suggested launching a process that would allow the start of dialogue between the two parties, and an international meeting on ensuring security in the Gulf region.

In the changing world, Moscow's allies are not necessarily Washington's foes, and vice versa. Cooperation between Russia and Gulf States is based on their shared interests, in particular, fighting international terrorism.

Communication between Russia and Gulf States regarding the Syrian problem was progressing rather unevenly. The sides adopted diametrically opposed positions in respect of the incumbent president's fate and in regards to which Syrian opposition groups should be considered moderate. At the same time, both Russia and the Gulf Arabs were seeking settlement to a conflict which destabilized the regional situation and boosted the threat of terrorism. Russia and Gulf States concur on the future of Syria's state system, supporting its territorial integrity, secular identity and protection the rights of ethnic and religious minority groups. The two parties are also united by the common goal of combating world terrorism, in particular the Islamic State, the liquidation of which is seen as the priority mission of the global anti-terrorist campaign.

Both sides today are going through a critical stage in their recent history. Russia today is targeted and threatened by the Western expansion, whether economic expansion through the European Union or military expansion through NATO. This is in addition to the direct American military presence in Afghanistan and some Central Asian republics. As for the Gulf countries, they suffer an unprecedented strategic return. They are besieged by the Iranian expansion in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, as they suffer the consequences of the "Arab Spring" and the popular movements demanding reform that have taken their effects on the expansion into the Gulf. These

challenges and the economic and strategic risks faced by Russia and the Gulf states can represent good ground and nucleus for normal relations and constructive cooperation between the two parties.

References

- Abdelrazek M. (2004). *The Arab Gulf in Contemporary Russian Strategy*. Regional studies, 131 p.
- Al Aqabi A. (2010). *International Relations An Analytical Study of Fundamentals, History and Theories*. Baghdad: Al Rewad Publisher.
- Al Khazar F. (2008). Iranian-Russian relations: current developments and future prospects. *Iranian Studies*, 50-55 p.
- Al Tahlawi A. (2014). Restoring the role: the domestic and international determinants of Russian politics. Arab Center for Research and Studies, 205 p.
- CIA (2018) *The World Factbook* — Central Intelligence Agency. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
- Creswell J. (2013) *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. United States of America: SAGE.
- Iskanderov P. (2017) *Russia and the Persian Gulf: Windows of Opportunity*. Strategic Culture Foundation. Electronic edition.
- John O. & Vladimir K. (2004). A Risky Westward Turn: Script and Ordinary Russians. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2-10 p.
- Mahmood O. (2018) *View from the Gulf*. Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies.
- Nasser G. (2017). *Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Russia: Problems of history, economics and politics*. The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 1-20 p.
- Naumkin V. (2011) *The Arab Spring and the Global International System*.
- Russia and the Gulf Countries in the Context of the Syrian Crisis. (2016) Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Moscow: 2 – 6 p.
- Salman H. (2010). *Global order and the future of state sovereignty in the Middle East*. Master Thesis.
- Sheikh N. (2014). *Russia and geostrategic changes in the Arab world*. Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.
- Tkachenko S. (2014) *The Concept of an Energy Superpower and Relations Between the Russian Federation and the European Union in the Energy Sector*. Quality Economics.
- Zedan, N. (2013). *Russia's role in the Middle East and North Africa from Peter the Great to Vladimir Putin*. Cairo: Arab Science.