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Gulf Power Shift: Arms, Oil, and the New Middle East Order

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the partial power shift in the Gulf region within the changing geopolitical landscape of the Middle East which is being influenced by the overlap of energy transitions, arms existences and great power politics. Based on the neo-realist and political economy approaches, this paper analyzes how key regional actors, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Qatar, are again rebalancing their strategic actions in the face of a falling dependency upon external security guarantees, and a fluctuating hydrocarbon market. These results indicate that a slow move towards renewable energy and fluctuating oil prices are restructuring rentier state models, and incentivizing economic diversification and activism in international politics. Simultaneously, growing military spending and the rise in native defense-industrial sector are pointers to a shift to strategic autonomy and deterrence in an emerging multi-polar environment. The argument in the article is that the Gulf is shifting to a hybrid order that is characterized by strategic hedging, partnership diversification, and intricate interdependence driven by US-China rivalry and regional competition.

INTRODUCTION

The Gulf region, and more so the Middle East, has always had a strategic geopolitical central location in the world due to its huge deposits of hydrocarbons, maritime strategic routes and relentless security wars. Since decades the politics in the region were based on the oil political economy, which was supplemented with the external security guarantee and was mainly comprised of the United States. But this somewhat stable order is in the middle of radical change and a more open and dynamic geopolitical environment is taking form. The new "Gulf power shift" is a convergence of the resultant energy dynamics, increasing



capabilities of the military authorities, and the strategic rebalance both at the regional and global levels (Chams 2025).

Gulf economies such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar have traditionally relied on revenues of hydrocarbons to sustain rentier forms of economics that characterized not only interior governing forms of the state, but exterior behaviour in terms of foreign policy. The result of this wealth, which was rooted in petroleum, was to provide these states with certain leverage by using the instruments of energy diplomacy and financial leverage and security had been more or less subcontracted to outside forces. The United States, in particular, clung to an hegemonic position through military establishments, military alliances and large-scale shipments of arms, thus, maintaining a security architecture, which, at the same time, was characterized by structural dependency and stability (Sanjian 2003).

The Gulf region is experiencing a radical and multifaceted change in terms of political and security situation, prompted by a series of changing global power balance, economic diversification of the region, and increasingly dynamic security environment. Oil, which is traditionally considered the viewing-due of the economic and geopolitical power of Gulf states, remains on the dominant role in shaping the political economy of growth of Gulf states. Nevertheless, the unfolding of energy trends around the world and the volatility of oil markets are increasingly uncertain about the future of oil as the main engine of regional development (Bukhari, 2025). In reaction to this, gulf countries including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar have embarked on ambitious projects to diversify themselves and reduce their long-term reliance on hydrocarbon revenues and grow sustainable economies (Bukhari, 2025). These changes of economic priorities are restructuring domestic rule as well as international relations.

Most current structural changes have been experienced in the modern age and these changes are already changing this status quo. First, the world energy markets are undergoing great changes caused by price volatility, levels of technological innovation as well as gradual shift of renewable energy. The forces are pushing the Gulf countries to the policies of economic diversification, and phase out long-term dependence of hydrocarbons. National reform drivers, investments into sectors other than oil and adaptive reactions towards maintaining economic resiliency and geopolitical relevance in a post-oil path are adaptive reactions (Tabet 2024).

Second, the region will be able to view the spectacular rise in military expenditure and establishment of national defence forces. Local armaments production, hi-tech military weaponry and multi-faceted security affiliations are also beginning to be invested by the UAE states. It is not only a long-standing competition that has added to this trend particularly on the aspect of cyber warfare, unmanned systems and even hybrid threats. The growing pressure on the industrialization of defense armies, as well as a proliferation of weapons, auger a larger shift to a greater autonomy in strategy and an augmented capability in deterrence (Abdelhafez 2024).

Third, the gulf situation in terms of the ability to exert influence by the external powers is evolving in regard to the evolving global power dynamics. Though it remains a major player in security, relative strategic retrenchment of the United States has given the other powers which include that of China an opportunity to increase its foot print on the region. The growing activity of China via energy trade, investing in infrastructure and through diplomatic efforts can be seen as an example of a more multipolar order emerging as a result of increased interactions among actors in the international system. In turn, the Gulf states are also adopting hedging strategies, upon which they are also striving to stabilize their relations with the competing global powers in terms of maximizing their security and economic interests (D. Petrou 2025).

At the same time, the Gulf states are progressively faced with intricate security problems. The increase in competition with Iran, the restructuring of the world power systems, the changing role of the United States have initiated the significant rise in the military expenditures and the formation of the local military power capabilities (Bukhari and Khan, 2024; Bukhari, 2025). This militarization process is not only a response to external threats but also a symptom of a more general desire to have strategic independence and leave

traditional dependence on external security assurances (Bukhari and colleagues, 2024). Contributing to this is an emerging strategic order of increased military capabilities, diversified defense relationships, and strategic flexibility. This work is an attempt to cognise how such inter-related things as oil geopolitics, militarization, and realignments in the world order are reshaping a new political and security order in the Gulf region, which is a part of the wider discourse of global power transitions.

These are being made in connection with the changing currents in the regional co-operation and competition. Diplomatic normalization, shifting alliances as well as internal political reforms are redefining the balance of power across the gulf and in the whole of Middle East. The changes in leadership and the reforms in governance in the Gulf states are also contributing to the increased orientation in the foreign policy of the Gulf states (Akkas and Altiparmak 2022).

It is on this basis that this paper will be a study of the dynamic shift in the Gulf power by analysing the intersecting nature of the role of arms dynamics, oil geopolitics and the changing strategic correlations. It argues, basing its arguments on understanding international relations and political economy, that the Gulf is in a transitional phase between an externally oriented, oil-based system of security to a more complex, multipolar order of strategic hedging, diversification of the economy and localization of military power. This paradigm provides a delicate understanding of how these convergent processes are factorializing of the regional order, and how the bonds of stability and conflict within the Middle East region are being formed (El-Kasem 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on the Gulf region has changed significantly since the traditional rentier state theory into a more complex analysis of geopolitical transformation, militarization and economic diversification. There is an increasing scholarly opinion that there is a structural power shift within the Gulf which is caused by the combination of energy transitions, arm dynamics as well as the transformation in global alignments.

- **Oil Geopolitics and Remaking Rentier States.** Classical literature on Gulf politics is founded on the notion of rentier state where countries like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar derive the bulk of their earnings through oil and gas exports. This model describes the way that hydrocarbon wealth helped these states to be politically stable, have large welfare systems, and have influence by means of energy diplomacy. Nevertheless, the recent scholarship reveals that there is a shift propelled by global energy changes including price volatility and the long-term movement towards renewable energy (Sela and Friedman 2025; Tahreem et al., 2025). Empirical research indicates that the Gulf economies continue to be highly reliant on hydrocarbons with oil and gas earnings constituting a significant portion of government revenues and exports. Simultaneously, diversification policies like those of the Vision 2030 initiative in Saudi Arabia are indicative of the effort to make the country less susceptible to the volatility of the oil markets. The literature is more inclined to see this transformation as a move not towards rentier dependency, but towards post-rentier adaptation, in which states attempt to hold onto influence, but reorganize their economic basis accordingly (C. Petrou 2025; Uddin, 2025).
- **Militarization of the Gulf and Arms of Dynamics.** One of the key literature streams is the speed at which the Gulf is militarizing and how this is affecting the power dynamics in the region. According to research conducted by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, it is possible to note that the Middle East continues to be one of the largest importers of arms in the whole world currently. In Asia and the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, nine of the top ten largest arms importers in the world were found between 2019 and 2023 (Rettig and Rubinovitz 2024). This pattern is further supported by the pattern of expenditure of military. The total military expenditures around the globe are estimated at about 2.44 trillion military expenditures by 2023, with a significant growth of approximately 9 percent by the region of the Middle East, due to an increase in regional tensions and security issues. The numbers demonstrate that the Gulf states are not simply large-scale purchasers of weapons; but also a significant driving force in the world defense markets (Ullah and Xinlei 2024;

Shah et al., 2025). Previous research accentuates reliance on the influential suppliers, especially the United States and European states. But more recent literature points to a change towards localization and diversification of suppliers in the area of defense. To take an example, Gulf countries are actively investing in the production of domestic arms and also establishing relationships with other actors across the globe, including China and European countries. This is indicative of a broader policy of strategic independence, and hedging in an uncertain international system (Madani 2024; Kausar et al 2021).

- **Regional Security complexes and Regional Rivalries.** The Gulf power shift is also viewed through the perspective of the theory of the complex of regional security, which focuses on the role of rivalries (in particular, between Iran and the Arab Gulf states), in shaping the military and political dynamics. It is proposed in the literature that such rivalries have fuelled arms procurement and led to the creation of a regional arms race with states eager to augment their deterrence capabilities (Rettig and Rubinovitz 2025; Hsu et al., 2025). The conflict of Yemen, Syria and Iraq has further militarized the region, scholars argue, making it a very securitized environment. It has contributed to the high demand of the high-technology military systems such as the missile defense systems, drones, and cyber capabilities. The increased involvement of non-state actors and hybrid warfare have also broadened the scope of the security concern beyond the conventional threat posed by the military (Abi Saleh 2025; Noor et al., 2024).
- **External Forces and the Creation of a Multipolar Order.** The shift of position of external powers is another major theme in the literature. In the past, the United States held the upper hand in the security architecture of the Gulf as it was the country accorded the military protection in exchange of the stable energy supply. Nonetheless, recent research points out that there has been a slow transition towards a more multipolar order, with new actors including China taking an increasing role in the region (Salisbury 2024; Sarmad et al., 2018). In China, the main motivation to join is the security of energy and the economic benefits, in particular, through investing in infrastructure and negotiating the long-term contracts based on supply of the oil products. Concurrently, Gulf states are broadening their strategic affiliations, talking to many worldwide powers to ensure that they gain maximum advantage in geopolitical terms. Such a tendency has been commonly referred to as, strategic hedging, where states do not rely too heavily on any specific external actor (Fakhro 2024; Khan et al., 2021).
- **Diversification in Economy and Reorientation of strategy.** The literature also highlights the importance of economic diversification redesigning the power structures at the Gulf. Because the world may face no clear forecast of demand on fossil fuels in the long term, Gulf states are looking to invest in non-oil related aspects including technology, tourism, logistics and renewable energy. These are not only economic but also geopolitical initiatives since they are aimed at maintaining influence in an evolving global system (El-Kasem 2025; Khan et al., 2020). Research indicates that foreign policy change is strongly connected with economic diversification. Gulf states are gradually seeking to have an independent and assertive foreign policy, and are also deep into regional diplomacy, conflict mediation and economic partnerships with other nations globally. This shows the transformation of passive actors who are importantly dependent to the more active regional powers (Shehata 2023; Sarmad et al., 2020).
- **Synthesis and Research Gap.** In general, evidence in the literature shows that the Gulf region is experiencing a multidimensional change that is being propagated by the interplay between oil geopolitics, weaponized politics, and the shifting global alliances. As much research has been done on individual aspects of this subject, such as the rentier state theory, arms imports, and energy transitions, there is a growing need to find comprehensive studies that explore interactions of these factors to transform regional order. The current literature tends to disaggregate oil, security and geopolitics when they are really flowing together in an emerging power shift in the Gulf. This study

aims at filling this gap by studying the interdependent roles of arms, oil and strategic realignment as a force towards a new order in the Middle East.

The focus on centrality of oil in determining the political economy of the Gulf states has been a consistent feature in the literature on the Gulf region. Although oil still remains a major source of revenue, as of recent times, there has been a move towards diversification of the economy as the Gulf states look to diversify themselves in order to lose reliance on hydrocarbon exports. Bukhari (2025) highlights the importance of this diversification not only responding to the risks of energy transitions but also to the need to achieve sustainable economic growth in the context of an increasingly multipolar world economy. The state investments in sectors like technology, tourism and logistics reflect the diversification efforts and also indicates shift to less rentier-based economies, more hybrid-based models.

Simultaneously, the soldiers of the Gulf are becoming increasingly militarized, which is a lot of scholarly concern. According to Bukhari and Khan (2024), the Gulf states are reacting to the threats in the region, especially the intermittent rivalry with Iran, through strongly increasing the amount of defense expenditure and acquiring highly advanced weaponry. Rising militarization is also accompanied by the attempt to form the indigenous defense forces, which will decrease the dependence of the region on the traditional Western security providers (Bukhari, 2025; Noor et al., 2025). This response to strategic autonomy (as noted by Bukhari 2025) is indicative of the wider geopolitical reconfiguration of the Gulf, where Gulf states are seeking to align with multiple global powers, such as the United States, China, and Russia, and to the extent possible increase their geopolitical leverage and flexibility.

The importance of the outside powers in the security dynamics of the Gulf has been a chief discussion in the literature. Bukhari and colleagues (2024) emphasize that there is an increasingly important role of China in the area, especially in the economic and strategic partnerships. This new Sino-Gulf alignment is a sign of the new global power structure, whereby the Gulf states are seeking to balance relations between their traditional allies such as United States and new power structures, such as China and Russia. The fact that Gulf states are also actively involved in seeking multi-alignment strategies in order to have maximum strategic autonomy amid the ever-more complex international order is further emphasized by the work on global governance and policy transformation by Bukhari (2024).

The relations in the Gulf within the region have also become an object of rather academic attention. Although, historically, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has been functioning as a rather unified bloc, latest tensions, such as the Qatar diplomatic crisis, have underscored the increasing fragmentation within the region. Bukhari and Khan (2024) posit that this fragmentation is a subset of a larger trend of pragmatic cooperation and selective engagement where the Gulf states are looking at their actions in a manner in which they find their national interests being looked into and not their collective national unity. These changes highlight the transformation of the region to be less ideologically oriented and more flexibly and interests-led in foreign policy (Bukhari and others, 2024).

On the whole, the literature offers a well-rounded comprehension of the changing relations in the Gulf area. The transformation of the political and security landscape of the Gulf has been ongoing, with the oil diversification, militarization, and multi-alignment strategies playing key roles in influencing the future course of events in the region. The current study will be based on this rich body of work to examine how these interlinked factors: economic diversification, militarization, and global realignments, are reshaping the political and security order of the Gulf to provide a holistic outlook of how the region is undergoing transformation (Bukhari, 2025).

METHODOLOGY

It is a qualitative research that analyzes the geopolitical change of the Gulf region based on the dynamic relationship between arms dynamics, oil geopolitics, and regional change of alignments. The study is based on the understanding of international relations and political economy frameworks to examine major actors, such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, and Iran. They are analyzed by means of leading thematic

content analysis which involves analysis of academic literature, policy reports, defense and energy databases and publications of international organizations. The research focuses on three important themes: oil geopolitics and energy transition, arms transfers and militarization and the changing role of global powers and regional alliances. A more interpretive, inductive approach is used in order to find how these factors remake the regional order in the Middle East. An important weakness is the fact that secondary data will be utilized due to the fact that the geopolitical situation of the region is changing fast.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

- **Structural Change:** The Gulf region is experiencing significant structural shifts, which are motivated by energy geopolitics, military buildups and changing global alliances. The conventional oil based regional order is transforming into more complex, multipolar structure. The Continued Centrality of oil continues to play a central role in the political economy of Gulf states, although there is a restructuring of the role. The countries that are still reliant on hydrocarbon revenues include countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar who are pursuing diversification strategies as a way of mitigating their vulnerability to global energy transition. This is the beginning of a new trend of hybrid economic models with non-oil sectors (e.g., technology, tourism, logistics).
- **Trends in Militarization:** A notable upswing in Defense spending has occurred in the Gulf states, where the priority had shifted towards advancing the weapons systems, missile defense, drones, and cyber capabilities. It is among the largest arms importers, but also more and more oriented towards domestic defense production and strategic alliances beyond the traditional suppliers, as an indication of a wish to gain greater strategic independence.
- **Security Dynamics at Regional Level:** Rivalries, especially among the Gulf Arabic states and Iran affect the regional security. Such tensions lead to arm acquisition and military preparedness, which lead to security dilemma. But new types of competition and collaborations are taking shape, like diplomatic normalization and regional conflict resolution initiatives.
- **Reconfiguration of External Power Influence:** As much as the United States has continued to remain one of the key actors in the sphere of security, the hegemony of this country is being increasingly complemented by the economic and strategic presence of China in the sphere of security. The Gulf states are also seeking to exploit multi-alignment strategy with various global power to gain maximum economic and security interests, rather than depending on alliances that were based on dependency.
- **Economic Diversification and Foreign Policy:** There is a strong correlation between economic diversification and foreign policy change. Reducing their dependency on oil workers, Once the Gulf states start being less reliant on oil as the primary economic activity, they become more assertive and independent in their approach to foreign policy, and consequently to regional diplomacy, mediation and international investment. It is an indication of redefinition of their international roles.
- **Transformation to a Multipolar System:** In general, the Gulf region is becoming less of a single-faceted and externally protected order of the traditional Gulf region and more of a one-dimensional, militarized, and multipolar regional order. This change is typified by simultaneous continuity and processes of change, whatever prospects oil still has in the region still does not make it a sole determinant of regional power structures.

DISCUSSION

- **Transformation of the Gulf Region Geopolitical.** The present study shows that, in Gulf region, a multidimensional change in terms of interactions of oil geopolitics, militarization, and global alignments, cumulatively altering the geopolitical balance in the Gulf region.
- **Political Economy Perspective: Economic Diversification, and the Rentier State Model.** In the past, Gulf countries and their regional influence had been greatly dependent on the revenues of their



hydrocarbons to ensure domestic and global stability. But the evidence suggests these states are going towards economic diversification due to the declining predictability of the oil market as well as the trends towards energy transition across the whole world. The importance of oil as a source of revenue has continued to be supplemented by investment in other non-oil sectors such as tourism, technology and logistics etc. This transition is a change of strategic reconfiguration where the oil wealth is spent to fund post-oil economic preparedness as well as a geopolitical influence.

- **Perspective with Security Studies: Strategic Competition and Militarization.** The trend of increasing the level of militarization of the Gulf area is indicative of systemic insecurity of the region, and strategic competition, which can mainly be traced back to the tensions with Iran. Gulf States are now making huge expenditures on defense, purchasing hi-tech weapon systems as well as developing home-based military complexes. This is an indication of their search of strategic independence as it is demonstrated in diversification of weapons suppliers and in increasing local defence potentials. Gulf states are not only developing more self-accommodating and multi-sourced defense infrastructure.
- **International Relations Perspective: Moving towards Multipolar Regional Order.** Gulf region is in the process of changing to multipolarity, as opposed to unipolarity. Although the U.S. still continues to play a crucial role in security matters, the balance between its economic and strategic power is growingly balanced by the growing economic and strategic power of China. Gulf states are also pursuing multi-alignment, at least retaining their relations with the different global powers to enable them to enjoy maximum strategic flexibility. The change shows how the reliance on one outside force has been replaced by much more accommodating, interest-based, agreements.
- **Geopolitical Regional View: The changing Intra-Gulf Relations.** The relationship between the Gulf countries is changing to other forms of rivalry. Besides the constant tensions between the two countries — Iran and the United States, there are increasing signs of diplomatic overtures, selective de-escalation activities within the region. This is the malady of competition and cooperation as reflected in the Gulf states who are both dealing with security threats on the one hand, whilst at the same time seeking to find a more flexible approach to foreign policy by expanding regional stability and economic cooperation.
- **Development and Governance Perspective: Striking a balance between Domestic Change and External Projecting of Power.** The economic diversification efforts are directed not just at the necessity to reduce the dependence on oil but also at the need to enhance the legitimacy of the states through the process of modernization and globalization of these states. The fact that more is spent on defense and a more active role in geopolitics speaks of the necessity to take care of security of the regime in a rather volatile regional environment. This twin approach reminds the interweaving effect of the domestic reform, and the foreign policy transformation.
- **Smith Geographical and Temporal Scope.** The research is centered around the country of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and the strategic status of Iran, Israel and the U.S. The years 2015-present can be described as the turning point of the Gulf politics, with an event as grand as the Yemen conflict, Qatar crisis, and Abraham Accords, the Gulf politics have found a new angle to operate in. These occurrences have torn up the earlier unitary Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) bringing new tendencies of alignment, competition, and selective collaboration.
- **Thematic Scope: Oil Politics, Arms Transfer, and regional order transformation.** The paper focuses on three areas that are interrelated and interdependent: oil politics and energy security, arms transfer and military alliances, and transformation of the regional order. Oil has been a key part of the power structure of the Gulf states, and arms transfers and military alliances are indicative of the security dilemmas posed by inter-regional rivalries, especially with Iran. Combined, these areas are the factors behind the shift in the regional order, more so than ever before, the traditional ideological

alliances were changed to be specific agreements, driven by interests, rather than traditional ideologies.

- **Key Independent Variables.** Some of the key independent variables in this study are the strategies employed by the oil production in the OPEC and OPEC plus arrangements, imports of arms and the movements of emerging normalization procedures with Israel. These are the main variables that directly impact economic and strategic positioning of the Gulf states, affecting their overall geopolitical strategies.
- **Dependent Variable: The Middle East Regional Order being transformed.** The dependent variable is the change in the Middle East order of states into an ideologically-based blocs to strategically and economically-oriented alliances. This change represents a more general shift in the exercise of power within the region in which the Gulf states are increasingly started to bilateral forms of flexibilities, transactional, interest-based relations.
- **Intervening Variables: Rivalries and Changing security Dynamics.** Competition with Iran, variability in the U.S. security commitments, GCC tensions, and alterations in oil demands of the world are moderating factors within the context of outcomes. The security rivalry with Iran has facilitated the modernization of the military equipment and formation of alliances, as there is uncertainty about the U.S. strategic involvement in the long term. Splits within the GCC undermine the cooperation of decisions and world demand turns into a determinant of the oil production policies and the economy plans.
- **Analytical Focus: Important Indicators.** This analysis concentrates on three main dimensions that comprise of oil, military and political indicators. Oil indicators are based on production quotas, export volumes, and pricing policies; military indicators examine arm imports, military agreements and participation in joint military training and exercises; and political indicators look into diplomacy, involvement with or participation in treaties and involvement with other nations in a military training and perhaps a military exercise. These measures give a holistic approach in the evaluation of change in structure of the Gulf regional order.
- **Delimitations.** The research is narrowed down to strategic behavior at the state level and does not delve into domestic politics as well as non-state forces. This provides clarity of analysis, but constrained at the macro-levels of transformations.
- **Some contribution is expected: The Hybrid Gulf Order.** The study presents the notion of a Hybrid Gulf Order that requires describing the change in the ideologically based unity toward vertical strategic pragmatism in the Gulf geopolitics. This notion can be used to explain how the Gulf states are preserving aspects of the traditional alliances but are very active in terms of diversifying their geopolitical and economic approaches. The results should relate better to wider policy concerns and application especially in energy-importing regions and those needing energy security in their foreign and economic policy planning such as South Asia where awareness of Gulf dynamics is vital in resource economizing as well as in their foreign and economic policy formulation.

CONCLUSION

The report finds that a radical structural shift with the dynamics of oil geopolitics, militarization, and changing alignments around the world is underway in the Gulf region. Even as oil remains one of the major pillars of state power, its role is being redefined through diversification initiatives and reform long-term economic reforms. Those attempts are an indication of a strategic change in the traditional rentier models to greater resiliency and hybrid economic forms. At the same time, the growing military spending, the projection of defense potential, and the further intensification of regional conflicts all indicate the tendency of securitization of the region. This tendency of increasing the level of militarization can be explained by the idea that the Gulf states want to have more strategic autonomy and be self-reliant, especially in the context of the continuous tensions with Iran and the changing balance of power. The

results also point to the progressive transformation of the traditional gulf security order, which used to rely on external security protection especially that of the United States. This externality dependency is being reduced into a more multipolar and flexible system as the region becomes more multipolar and flexible. The growing presence of China and other world players illustrates the multi-alignment approach taken by the Gulf states in an effort to maximize their strategic sovereignty. Summing up, the Gulf can be characterized as the shift of relatively stable, oil-dependent and externally secured order in the Gulf to a more intricate, competitive, and diversified regional order. The economic and security aspects are becoming more and more integrated, as the Gulf states are treading a shifting geopolitical landscape in order to ensure their interests on both short and long-term basis.

Recommendations

- **Strengthening Economic Diversification to be Resilient to Long-Term Shocks.** To prevent the long term susceptibility to changes in the international energy markets, the Gulf states should focus on the continuation and growth of the economic diversification programmes. The aim of such programs should be to invest oil revenues in strategic plans in sustainable sectors like technology, tourism, renewable energy, etc. so that the economies in the region may still remain stable as they graduate beyond oil dependency.
- **Enhancing Trust-Establishing Policies and Diplomatic Systems.** Regional players need to take proactive roles in creating confidence-building strategies and effective diplomatic systems to reduce the risks posed by continued security contests, most especially, between Iran and intra-Gulf tensions. It should be done in de-escalation, trust building and having clear communication channels to reduce misunderstandings to prevent further escalation of a conflict.
- **Strengthening Regional Arms Control and Security Dialogue.** In the light of the increasing militarization in the Gulf, there is a pressing need to set up and strengthen regional mechanism of arms control dialogue. These mechanisms ought to seek to control the rapid growth of the military capabilities, minimise the likelihood of arms races, and curtail the further increase of the regional security dilemma so that the build-ups in defense might not negatively affect the situation of regional stability.
- **Adopting Balanced Multi-Alignment Foreign Policies.** Gulf countries would do well to have a balanced foreign policy that ensures productive and pragmatic relationships with the Western powers as well as emerging global powers such as China. Such multi-alignment will allow Gulf states to protect their local autonomy and strategic interests as well as enjoy the benefits of having different international partnerships in terms of economic, security and diplomatic.
- **Economic, Security, and Technological Planning The plan should integrate economic, security, and technological planning.** The policymakers should see to it that expansion of defense does not interfere with long-term development objective and fiscal sustainability. To make sure that military investment seeks to support the overall national interests of Gulf states, a holistic approach involving economic, security, and technological planning are necessary to ensure the long-term stability and prosperity of the Gulf states.
- **Promoting Regional Cooperation on Energy Transition and Climate Adaptation.** It is essential to engage in a further regional cooperation on energy transition and climate adaptation. The Gulf States must cooperate to come up with strategies to cope with the abandonment of hydrocarbon reliance, and this transition would be stable, well orchestrated and backed by concerted efforts on climate resilience, sustainable energy sources and environmental regulations.

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