

TURKEY'S MILITARY PRESENCE IN QATAR AND KUWAIT: A SECURITY UMBRELLA FOR GULF'S STABILITY?

ANALYSIS



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Abstract: With the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2008, Turkey became the first non-Gulf country to engage with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) through a strategic dialogue mechanism. Turkey's ties with the region have been influenced by the larger regional dynamics influenced by the Iraq war, the Arab uprisings, the Syrian and Libyan civil wars, and the 2017 Qatar crisis with the Gulf states. Amidst all these crises, Turkey's military access to the region has been rising and its national strategy for improving military trade with the region has been successful. This analysis paper will focus on Turkey's controversial military presence in the Gulf through its military base in Qatar and military cooperation with Kuwait.

Introduction

Turkey's political, military and economic relations with the Gulf states were institutionalized in Jeddah with the 2008 Strategic Partnership Agreement which positioned Turkey as the first non-Gulf country to engage with the region through a strategic dialogue mechanism. It was a milestone not only for Turkey's interests in developing further economic and political cooperation with the Gulf states, but also for the latter's interest in enhancing their power through regional cooperation with an alternative external force to the US, with the aim of mitigating Iran's rising regional influence in the post-Iraq invasion period.¹ This special status paved the way for Turkey's cooperation with the Gulf states to ultimately expand to the military domain.

The hosting of the Turkish military base in Qatar in 2016, the first in the Gulf, demonstrated the regional security divergencies among the Gulf states. The base in Qatar created diplomatic and political tension among the Gulf states, as was made clear by the inclusion of the base's termination in the list of the 13 demands by the Arab Quartet, which included Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt, in the 2017 Qatar crisis. In 2019, Turkey's military engagement also expanded to Kuwait through the Joint Defense Plan. Considering these two military initiatives with Qatar and Kuwait, the nature of Turkey's engagement in the Gulf has been transformed to a combination of military, political and economic relations at the bilateral level. While the establishment of bilateral military cooperation with an external actor has led to a perceived decline in GCC unity and raised the levels of distrust among the six members, it also opened the way for Turkish foreign policy makers to expand their perceptions of regional security to the Gulf.

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Factors Underlying Turkey's Military Access in the GCC

Rather than comparing the cases of Qatar and Kuwait, this analysis focuses on the logic behind Turkey's broadening strategic and bilateral cooperation with Gulf states and underlines the ambiguous and nontransparent nature of Turkish military involvement in the Gulf. The reason behind the selection of these two countries is their current rising military trade and political cooperation with Turkey outside of the GCC framework. In this initial analysis, we make three main arguments while assessing Turkey's regional interest in the Gulf. First, Turkey's regional role in the Gulf is evaluated not only on the basis of its military capability or economic and political interests, but also on the basis of its strategic bilateral relations with specific Gulf states based on mutual pragmatism. However, even if positive outcomes are achieved as a result of these strategic relations, these relations also exacerbated intra-GCC tensions and influenced other GCC actors' perceptions of Turkey as a regional threat. Secondly, Turkey is a rising military exporter in the region and its involvement in Gulf affairs encourages Turkish decision-makers to increase their economic and military role not only in Gulf states' development, but also their institutional crises and bilateral problems. Thirdly, Turkey's military initiatives in Qatar and Kuwait increased the level of distrust among the GCC members, while also raising domestic critiques towards Turkish foreign policy particularly towards the construction of close strategic relations with Qatar.

Is Turkey Still a Strategic Partner of the Gulf?

While depicting Turkey's military presence in Qatar and Kuwait, an extended analysis for its strategic partnership with the rest of the Arab Gulf states is required. Initially, we scrutinize the question whether Turkey is Still a Strategic Partner of the Gulf. Due to the tremendous shifts in regional security dynamics, the concept of soft power appears to be inadequate or even irrelevant for understanding Turkey's current regional security engagements with the Gulf. Rather, it seems more plausible to define it within a purely hard-power outlook combined with Turkish decision-makers' economic ambitions. For years, diplomatic relations between the Gulf states and Turkey were quite limited and modest due to the historical tensions between the Ottomans and Arab tribes, and Turkey's

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domestic politics that oriented it towards Western powers. The 2003 invasion of Iraq was a turning point that alerted the Gulf states and Turkey about their common security threats in post-war Iraq and mitigating Iran's influence in Iraq's new political structure.²

Establishing security agreements and memorandums in fact enabled Turkey to take a more active role in the Gulf as a strategic ally.³ This mutual security perception was illustrated with a Memorandum of Understanding which was signed in Manama in May 2005 and the Strategic Partnership agreement in Jeddah in 2008 to increase economic cooperation, exchange technical expertise and information, and establish free trade zones. This was followed by ministerial level meetings in Jeddah in 2008, Istanbul in 2009, Kuwait City in 2010, Istanbul in 2012 and Riyadh in 2016. In addition to ministerial level strategic dialogue meetings, a Joint Plan Action was issued in 2011 including cooperation in trade and investment, agriculture and food security, transport and communication, energy, electricity and water, environment, health, culture, education, economy, and fiscal and monetary policy.⁴ During this period, Turkey's defense relations with the Gulf states were implemented through initiatives of military trade, military training, military education programs and agreements for exclusive deals for overflight privileges.

Tactical Military Alliances with the GCC

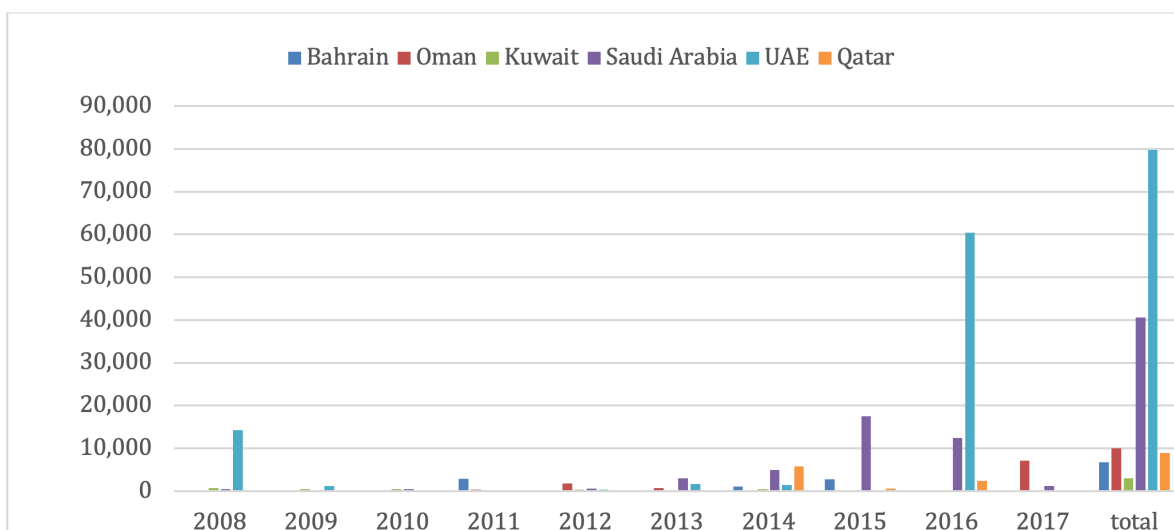
The Gulf states have a historical trend of politically and militarily attaching themselves to regional and non-regional states to assure their security through signing bilateral and international agreements. By entering into a strategic dialogue period with Turkey, a member state of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Gulf states indirectly initiated a partnership with NATO such as the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative in addition to their willingness to cooperate particularly with France, Germany, the UK and the US.⁵ The first initiatives to establish military relations with Turkey were done by Saudi Arabia and the UAE in 1996, followed by Kuwait in 2000, Bahrain in 2004, and later Qatar and Oman in 2006. Although Qatar-Turkey military cooperation has recently been under the spotlight since the establishment of the Turkish military base, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were in fact the first two GCC members to heavily conduct military relations with Turkey (Figure 1, below).

Turkey has been a rising military equipment exporter over the last 20 years and was ranked as the 15th largest arms exporter between 2011 to 2018 by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.⁶ Furthermore, Gulf states have enormous military spending despite their

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small populations; for instance, Saudi Arabia was ranked the 3rd largest importer, while the UAE was ranked the 15th in the world with the highest share in military expenditure among the other oil monarchies. As Figure 1 shows, beyond just military exports from Turkey to the Gulf states in last 10 years, the UAE has the highest share in total military import volume reaching almost \$US 80 million followed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (US\$ 40 million), whereas none of the other Gulf kingdoms exceed more than US\$ 10 million. However, there are few issues to be noted while assessing the data. First of all, the amount of exports to Kuwait are less but have been quite substantive since 2000, according to the extended data by the Observatory of Economic Complexity in 2019. Secondly, political tensions have affected Turkey's military exports to the UAE, however, the data for the current years reflect agreements and deals signed in the previous years before the strain in relations. This is why although Qatar and Turkey have signed giant military trade agreements in recent years, it is still not visible in the export data. For instance, Turkey's defense firms signed production agreements with Qatar worth almost US\$800 million during the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (DIMDEX) in 2018.

Figure 1: Turkish Military Exports to GCC Countries (in the Thousands of US Dollars)



Source: The Observatory of Economic Complexity (2019), <https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en>

Thirdly, the military alliance between Turkey and Saudi Arabia has a unique circumstance, as mutual pragmatism underpins the cooperation in the defense field despite political tension. According to Figure 1, military trade decreased by 2017, but military alliances in terms of joint training and military coordination continued to flourish. When we look at the political ties between the kingdom and Turkey, the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Saudi Arabia in 2015, directly after the death of King Abdullah, was to strengthen bilateral military and economic cooperation with King Salman. President Erdogan became one of the first presidents to congratulate King Salman, probably with high hopes for Salman's traditional Islamist stance to reconstruct regional alliances in favor of Turkey's military and economic interests. This was followed by Turkey's participation in the counter-terrorism coalition of 34 countries led by Saudi Arabia which aimed to create a military block against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) and Iran. Turkey was invited as the guest of honor to the Saudi Armed Forces Exhibition which illustrated Turkey's willingness to work closely with Saudi Arabia in the military sector.⁷ Turkey and Saudi Arabia, hence, have increased cooperation and coordination on Syria, and regional unity against the twin threats of Iran and the ISIS.⁸ Likewise, the arrival of Saudi troops to Turkey for training and exchange of technical experience in combined and joint operations, including logistics and command control in April 2018, indicates that mutual pragmatism governed the Kingdom and Turkey bilateral relations even after the 2017 Qatar crisis.

Diverging Regional Security and Foreign Policy

The divergence of Turkey's regional security and foreign policy preferences from Saudi Arabia and the UAE became clear by mid-2016. This period increased Turkey's distrust of Saudi Arabia and the UAE as regional dynamics seemed to develop against the Turkish foreign policy preferences in the Middle East such as the weakening of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, Iran's reinforcement of its regional influence and even developing dialogue with the local actors of the neighboring states, and lastly the ISIS targeting of Turkey. In addition to Saudi Arabia's anxieties and distrust over Iran's regional influence, Turkey's divergent interests with Saudi Arabia and the UAE began to endanger its military and trade relations with the two Gulf states and Egypt but did not end the mutual pragmatism between the Gulf states and Turkey.

Qatar's decision to station a Turkish military base in 2014 demonstrated a perceptual shift among Gulf states towards building independent policies based on their own security calculations

At the domestic level, Ahmet Davutoglu, the previous Minister of Foreign Affairs who shaped Turkish foreign policy strategy, was blamed for Turkey's problematic foreign policy decisions and pushed to resign, illustrating the domestic constraints and crisis among Turkish foreign policy actors. On the other hand, the Turkish economy entered into a hard period of currency crisis since the beginning of 2018 which in turn forced Turkish decision-makers to recalculate their foreign policy decisions. Following the Qatar crisis, Turkey's exports particularly to the UAE declined 66% and imports by 32% in 2018, whereas the UAE had been Turkey's biggest trade partner in 2017.⁹

Qatar's decision to station a Turkish military base in 2014 demonstrated a perceptual shift among Gulf states towards building independent policies based on their own security calculations instead of institutional ones. The 2016 coup d'état attempt in Turkey and the 2017 crisis brought Turkey and Qatar closer to each other in terms of their regional priorities and security understandings in contrast to those of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. This period revealed that Turkey's status as a strategic partner to the whole Gulf had been transformed into being a strategic ally of individual Gulf states based on their level of mutual threat perceptions and common regional security priorities.

Kuwait and Qatar's heightened sense of threat from Iran and Saudi Arabia respectively, and Turkey's regional isolation appeared to be two major reasons for Turkish military deployment in Qatar and the initiation of a military agreement with Kuwait. This military coordination with Turkey also gave Qatari and Kuwaiti officials a new regional perspective of their fate being independent from Saudi regional priorities and the rise of their awareness of state individuality.¹⁰ It encouraged Kuwait and Qatar to only further reinforce the autonomy that both states had already been striving to achieve from Saudi Arabia even before the Arab uprisings.

At this juncture, the agreements cannot be interpreted as serving only Turkey's defense industry and economy, but as also easing Qatar and Kuwait's distinct threat assessments that differed from Saudi Arabia and the UAE to varying degrees. Even before King Salman's reign and the ambiguous economic projects lead by Crown Prince Mohammed

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bin Salman, Qatar was particularly perceived as a small country claiming autonomy in the kingdom's backyard. Furthermore, Qatar-Turkey and Kuwait-Turkey military and strategic relations cannot be viewed independent from the unstable dynamics of Gulf states' regional security understandings and fluid bilateral relations with each other and the US. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to view relations with Turkey as moving on a faultless line. Rather, Turkey's military relations with Qatar and Kuwait could be reversed by emerging regional security crisis and how these Gulf states approach these crises.

Making Sense of the Turkish Military Base in Qatar

Many reasons have been given for the hosting of the Turkish military base in Qatar. Some viewed it as a symbolic message, portraying the Turkish troops as the return of the Ottomans to Qatar and the Arabian Peninsula after more than a century.¹¹ Others argued the military base should be understood strategically in terms of Turkish power projection in the Gulf.¹² On the other hand, as Iran has historically been perceived as a strategic threat to Turkey's regional ambitions, the Turkish base has also been understood as a message to Iran to signal a new sphere of Turkish influence with its Gulf allies.¹³ Moreover, a third reason could lie in Turkey's high interest in Gulf states' defense industry, as establishing military agreements with Gulf states is an important step for Turkey to sell military equipment to Gulf states despite their recent financial problems.¹⁴ In terms of content and scope of military cooperation, the details of the military base in Qatar are highly confidential, meaning its future implications for the Gulf remain ambiguous.

Initially, Turkish foreign policy towards Qatar was determined by Turkish decision-makers' feeling of regional isolation and "precious loneliness" especially after President Mohammed Morsi's fall in Egypt. The ambiguous losses and gains of each side in Syria war, and the July 2016 coup d'état attempt in Turkey brought the countries closer to common regional security priorities and interests. Among other Gulf states that have military relations with Turkey, Turkish decision-makers perceived Qatar as a more reliable partner that shared similar concerns in most of the regional developments, crises and wars.

In addition to Turkish decision-makers' perception of change in the regional power distribution, another sudden shift occurred in their perception towards Turkish national power and an opportunity to expand their military power into the Gulf by peaceful means. For Qatar, this process was accelerated by the June 2017 crisis when Saudi Arabia, the UAE,

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Bahrain and Egypt cut their ties and imposed an air, land and sea blockade on the country. However, after they severed relations with Qatar with various accusations such as supporting extremism, Iran's activities, and acting outside of the framework of GCC unity, Turkey directly stated its open support for Qatar and raised the number of troops stationed in the military base up to 250 soldiers.¹⁵

The establishment of Turkey's military base in Qatar is an outcome of an interplay between domestic challenges, regional crisis and change of perception by both sides' decision-makers towards their neighbors. Following the leadership of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (2013-), who took over power from his father Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani (1995-2013), Qatar adopted an ambitious foreign policy. The shift in Qatari foreign policy from a mediator to an assertive actor made its regional neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE, become increasingly suspicious of its foreign policy decisions which appeared to be contrary to Saudi and Emirati interests. The sense of growing distrust towards Qatar has become more visible after Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood, hosting members on its territory and its distinct regional perception of the evolution of regional crises, particularly in Egypt, Iraq and Syria.¹⁶

On the other hand, Turkey and Qatar agreed to cooperate on several regional conflicts, such as in reconstruction of Yemen and supporting the reconciliation process in Libya in accordance with international efforts to disarm militias such as those of Libyan Field-Marshal Khalifa Haftar.¹⁷ More significantly, Turkey and Qatar cooperated financially and militarily in arming Syrian opposition groups against the Assad government in Syria and backing the elected President Mohammed Morsi in Egypt. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia and the UAE supported Al-Sisi's coup in Egypt and Khalifa Haftar's bid to control Libya, which further tensed Qatar's relations with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain.¹⁸ Turkey became an almost pariah state due to claims of increasing domestic "authoritarianism," while Qatar was cut off by a boycott from its neighbors due to claims of supporting extremism in the region.

The Ambiguous Nature of the Agreement

The military base agreement between Turkey and Qatar, which was signed in 2014 and ratified by the Turkish Parliament in June 2015, came as a surprise to regional states.

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Prior to the military agreement in 2014, Turkey and Qatar signed a defense industry cooperation agreement in 2007, and a military training agreement in 2012.¹⁹ According to the 2014 agreement, Turkish base capacity included navy, army, air, and special forces and military training with “Altay” tanks, “Firtina” self-propelled howitzers, and other arms.²⁰ It also includes a *casus foederis* article stating that if one country is attacked, the other country will come to assist it. When the GCC crisis 2017 erupted, Erdogan iterated Turkey’s military support for Qatar as part of Turkey’s commitment to regional peace: “the only reason for your existence here is friendship, peace and trust...To be with our brothers and friends in difficult times is one of the greatest heritages that our ancestors have left us...Moreover, throughout history we have not hesitated to give this support whatever the cost”.²¹

The agreement between Qatar and Turkey, officially titled the “Implementation Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the State of Qatar on Deployment of Turkish Forces into Territory of Qatar,” signed on 28 April 2016, established Turkish military presence in the Gulf for the first time in more than a century. After the agreement for establishing a Turkish naval base in Qatar, Turkish company Aselsan and Qatari Barzan Holding started a partnership project named BARQ which will pave the way to increase military exports from Turkey.²² Hence, the agreement signaled that Turkey could act as an insurance broker of Qatar’s security in the emergence of a sudden crisis.

A Security Umbrella for the Gulf’s Stability?

Turkey portrayed its military base as a security umbrella for Gulf stability and avoided portraying it as a military asset only for the security of Qatar against the other Gulf states. The head of the Qatar-Turkey Combined Joint Force Command (QTCJFC), Colonel Osman İlercil emphasized that the Turkish military was invited by the state of Qatar to actively engage in military drills which will help both countries gain experience from one another.²³ After the establishment of the Turkish military base, the two countries formed the Supreme Strategic Committee and declared their strategic partnership at all levels. In March 2021, Turkey and Qatar further signed a Military Health Education and Cooperation Protocol that provided mutual exchange programs for Turkish and Qatari military students.²⁴ Despite Binali Yıldırım, former Turkish Prime Minister, making it clear that the Turkish base in Qatar was not directed against anyone and that its presence aimed to contribute to the security

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and stability of the whole Gulf region, Saudi Arabia and the UAE tended to view the Turkish base as a military guarantee for Qatar, where US, British and French military bases have already been operating long before the Turkish one.

Forging Ahead with Military Cooperation in Kuwait

Turkey and Kuwait have maintained strong diplomatic relations and robust trade since the 1970s. Turkey's support for Kuwait during Iraq's 1990 invasion especially holds significance in the memory of the Kuwaiti people and decision-makers. Despite the defense sector being a significant area of cooperation between the two countries, prior to the agreement in 2018, Turkey and Kuwait had already made agreements in cultural relations and aviation in 1975 and 1977, an agreement on economic, technical and industrial cooperation in 1982, and a pact for encouraging and protecting investments in 1988. Between 2008 and 2014, the two sides signed a number of agreements at the ministerial levels, including the exchange of military expertise, training and military cooperation, and joint military drills, environmental protection, maritime transport, preservation of natural resources, and promoting industrial exports.²⁵ Following the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, relations seemed to improve as a result of Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's quick condemnation of the attempt.

Kuwait, in accordance with its 2035 Development Plan, has 6.5 billion US dollars and 30 projects in Turkish construction companies, which can obviously provide economic benefits to Turkey in times of crisis.²⁶ During the initial period of the Turkish economic crisis in June 2018, Kuwait like Qatar announced its support for the lira and offered to provide KD500 million (US\$1.36bn) to Ankara to help shore up the Turkish lira.²⁷ During this period, Kuwait National Assembly Speaker, Marzouq Al-Ghanim, highlighted the state tradition of Turkey and Kuwait's continuous support for restoring the lira's economic standing as such: "Turkey is not a banana republic, it's rather a state of history and traditions... Endeavors to financially collapse Turkey will not be successful".²⁸

Following Erdogan's visit to Sheikh Al-Sabah in 2017, Kuwait and Turkey signed six agreements in different sectors, including a Protocol of Cooperation in educating and training members of Turkey's Gendarmerie General Command and the Kuwait

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National Guards, investment and cooperation protocols in science and technology at the level of joint military cooperation.²⁹ In October 2018, Turkey and Kuwait reached a joint defense plan to enhance military coordination in 2019, including exchange of experience and know-how. According to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the agreement was signed by top military officials from both sides and planned “for accomplishing harmony, sharing experience and unifying efforts”.³⁰ Therefore, the defense agreement with Kuwait should be understood as a continuation of their bilateral military relations, rather than as a significant leap in cooperation or a prelude to the establishment of a Turkish military base in Kuwait.³¹

The crucial part of the agreement’s announcement was its timing that came just after Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s visit to Kuwait. Although the deal was formulated before the Crown Prince’s visit to resolve a longstanding dispute over the neutral zone, an area of 2,230 square miles of disputed territory between Kuwait and the Kingdom, it was a move that supported Kuwait’s diversification of military security and power against the Saudi state.³² Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had already had a crisis in 2014 over the shared Khafji and Wafra oil reserves that have the capacity to pump 500,000 barrels a day. Following the crisis, production in Wafra was halted in 2015 while Khafji was shut down earlier in October 2014 for environmental as well as technical reasons, as announced by Kuwait Oil Minister Bhakeet Al-Rashidi.³³ However, the real reason behind the dispute was argued to be the result of Kuwait’s objection to the Chevron Corporation that manages Saudi Arabia’s 50 percent share until 2039. Since cutting production caused \$18 billion in losses for Kuwait,³⁴ it was also important for Saudi Arabia to end the dispute in order to decrease Iran’s oil exports. Especially after the US sanctions on Iran, which are constricting global oil supplies and enabled oil prices to reach extremely high levels, the dispute with Kuwait became more serious and problematic for the Saudi side.³⁵

Like the Qatari case, relations between Kuwait and Turkey have improved at the same time that relations between the two countries and Saudi Arabia have worsened. Military cooperation with Kuwait came at a time of Saudi and UAE aggression towards Qatari foreign policy decisions, discussions of Saudi financial help to the Syrian Democratic Forces (PYD) that Turkey considers a direct national security threat, and Jamal Khashoggi’s murder in Turkey. Although Kuwait has never challenged the Saudi hegemony in the regional security complex, Kuwaiti-Saudi relations have been based on mistrust and tensions since the 1960s. Beside the problems in extracting

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crude oil from the Saudi–Kuwaiti neutral zone, relations had already been tempered after Kuwait decision-makers refused to send troops to Bahrain to silence demonstrations in 2011. Moreover, Kuwait did not participate in the Saudi-led coalition in the Yemen war despite Saudi pressure, did not boycott Qatar and did not label the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. Rather, it preferred to maintain a mediator role in regional affairs as well as diplomatic dialogue with Iran. As rivalries intensified in the Middle East in the aftermath of the Syrian war in 2011, new multilateral blocs began to be formed based on each party's regional priorities.

Kuwait's threat perceptions raised during King Salman's reign and after the Qatar crisis with the fear of being exposed to hostile actions from the Saudi-UAE-Bahrain axis, given the Donald Trump administration's continuing support for the policies of King Salman's government. This, given Kuwait's anxieties that allying with Iran might empower Kuwaiti Shias, presented Turkey as more stable partner for the country to balance the Saudi-Bahrain-UAE axis. Additionally, Kuwait maintained security ties with the US despite concerns about the stability of this relationship, particularly with the Trump administration's ambiguous foreign policy in the Middle East.³⁶ At this juncture, Turkey and Kuwait shared similar concerns such as preventing the expansion of Iran's influence in Iraq and balancing the Saudi-Bahrain-UAE and Egypt axis. However, cooperation between Kuwait and Turkey may not enhance regional security in the long term.³⁷

Conclusion

Turkey's military and strategic relations with Qatar and Kuwait are not independent from the unstable and elusive dynamics of the Gulf states' regional security understandings and fluid bilateral relations with each other. Consequently, Turkey's relations with the monarchies of the Gulf do not follow a steady path and are not shielded from regional challenges. Qatar and Kuwait's regional security perceptions towards their Gulf neighbors, as well as Turkish reconciliation with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, will heavily influence the future of Turkish military presence in the region. In contrast, the emerging regional security crisis as well as the recent Al-Ula reconciliation have a great potential to affect Turkish military relations with Qatar and Kuwait.

Until recently, Saudi Arabia and the UAE viewed Turkey's regional policies (notably in Syria, Egypt, and Libya) and military engagements with Qatar and Kuwait as a threat to the GCC security consensus. Despite the latest shift in discourse towards peace, trust and friendship in regional security rhetoric of the Gulf states since the last months of 2021, the sustainability of the military relations of Kuwait and Qatar with Turkey will depend on the capability of the two Gulf states to balance the security consensus rhetoric in the GCC with their independent security arrangements with Turkey.

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