



## 6<sup>TH</sup> TÜRKİYE - GULF DEFENCE AND SECURITY FORUM 2022 DECLARATION

**6<sup>th</sup> Türkiye - Gulf Defence and Security Forum** whose main theme ““New Balances, New Roles, New Alliances” was held by TASAM National Defence and Security Institute, together with the 8<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Security Conference on the date of **04 November 2022** in **Ramada Hotel & Suites by Wyndham Istanbul Merter**, simultaneously as a sub-event.

Speakers and protocols from various countries and regions, and from different fields and sectors, have participated in the Forum. Diplomatic representatives and delegations from the Gulf countries have also taken part. In the Forum, speeches and presentations were made by local/foreign experts, academics and diplomats. Relevant authorities from Türkiye and the Gulf were also represented at the Forum, and all sessions were followed institutionally.

The following issues of vital importance in present and future of Türkiye, the Gulf countries and the region were discussed at the Forum; “New Global Regional Dynamics and the Gulf”, “Rethinking Priorities and their Management”, “New Pandemics; Cyber Security, Food Scarcity, Production-Consumption Security”, “Co-Existence in the Future Security and Defence Ecosystem”, “Defence Industry | Land - Sea - Air - Space | Police - Gendarme - Intelligence - Strategic Sectors”.

**As a result of the Forum, the following determinations and recommendations were made, and it was decided to bring them to the attention of all relevant authorities and the public:**

1. The content, vision, proactivity and depth of the declarations of the first five Forums, published under various names, were confirmed. To the Forum, which was launched in 2017 together with the Qatar Armed Forces Center for Strategic Studies; The indifference of the Qatari side since 2020, its lack of commitments in the second and third Forums and its insensitivity to initiatives have been noted carefully and sadly, with a bad day friendly reflex.
2. The transformation of Türkiye - Middle East or, more narrowly, Türkiye - Gulf States relations, where strategic dialogue is just developing despite the strong historical and cultural background, from a fragile axis to a cooperation axis that will adapt to new balances, new roles and new alliances is an obligation rather than an option. Seen with vision and foresight, it has been tested in various crises, where history and the spirit of the time have long reminded this.
3. As the first country outside the region, with the Strategic Partner Status (2008) to adopt a high-level regular institutional dialogue, besides the USA and the EU; especially commercial relations with the countries of the region developed gradually, and the trade volume between the parties increased exponentially in this process. Among other factors, the search for strategic dialogue based on trust has an important role in these developments, which have serious positive results for both sides.





4. Apart from the brotherhood of religion, language, history and geography, “strategic interdependence and building trust” is the basic mental threshold in front of Türkiye - Gulf States relations. Correct management of priorities and differences between countries so that they do not turn into regional weaknesses and security gaps will be possible by focusing on common risks and opportunities.
5. The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is important in terms of the geopolitics and geostrategic position of the Gulf. In this rivalry dating back to the Safavid period, the division between Shiite and Sunni on a regional and sectarian axis is a critical issue. After the revolution in Iran in 1979, the regional power struggle in Tehran - Riyadh relations also spread to the Middle East and Gulf countries; especially after the Revolution, expansionist strategies in the foreign policy of the Shiite regime established in Iran, have become a national security problem for the Gulf and the Arab world. For this reason, although the basis of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) after the Revolution is seen as the Shatt al-Arab problem, it is also possible to evaluate it as a result of the security problems between the Gulf and Iran.
6. As a result of the developments in the Middle East and Gulf region since 1980, especially with the September 11 attack and the overthrow of the Saddam regime by the international forces established under the leadership of the USA in March 2003, Tehran's sphere of influence increased in Arab countries and this situation has sharpened the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran.
7. The Arab Spring, which started in December 2010, further strengthened Iran in the Middle East and triggered the Shiite-Sunni sectarian tension for the Gulf countries. Especially the ongoing civil war in Syria and Yemen, has brought along geopolitical and geo-economic problems in the Gulf countries.
8. Since the invasion of Iraq, the impact of Iran's Shiite-oriented expansionist and containment policies on Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut and Sana'a has increased the perception of national security threat in the Gulf countries, especially in Saudi Arabia, and in the Arab world. In addition, it is observed that the Shiite Houthis control the capital Sana'a and the regions in the north of the country in Yemen, leading to the emergence of a regional "alliance belt" in the Middle East.
9. State in Saudi Arabia; bases its legitimacy on important power centers such as dynasty and ulama. In the process, it is seen that the Regime weakened with the transformation of these power centers. To compensate for the weakness, the support of citizens, mostly young Saudis, began to be sought. In this process, Mohammed bin Salman managed to gain significant support from young Saudis who demanded change with the steps he took in the fields of education, culture, sports, women's rights, entertainment sector and tourism.
10. Sympathy for Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a young leader in his 30s, and his policies has begun in Saudi society, which has been ruled by elderly kings for many years and has a relatively young population, two-thirds of whom are under 35 years old. He sees leading society's demands for change as an advantage over rival princes on the road to the Saudi throne.



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However, it is also known that the sections, especially the dynasty and the ulama, who thought that this change would have consequences for them, took a stand against the Prince and his policies. Today, the country is witnessing tension between the young mass that demands change and makes up the majority, and a structure that opposes change and Mohammed bin Salman's policies.

11. Türkiye's relations with the Gulf countries; develops in parallel with the changing dynamics on a global, regional and local scale. Kuwait is of strategic importance in this context. Kuwaiti Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Mohammed Khalid al-Hodher made an official visit to Türkiye in April 2016, and military cooperation was developed in the following period. As a matter of fact, a joint defence cooperation plan for 2019 was signed between the two countries. Within the framework of this plan, Türkiye - Kuwait Military Cooperation Committee meetings began to be held. The meetings held within the scope of the Gulf Defense and Aviation Fair, where Turkish products were also exhibited, created a new atmosphere in the trade of defense industry products, especially unmanned aerial vehicles. The crisis process that Qatar experienced in 2014 and 2017 and the chronic problems with the USA led Kuwait to build strategic cooperation with global actors such as China and Russia and with regional actors such as Türkiye. After 2010, the two countries entered into a process of especially military and economic rapprochement.
12. Relations between Türkiye and Iran have been affected by the establishment process of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the US policy towards Iraq. The US invasion of Iraq increased regional tension and competition. The end of the occupation led to the development of non-state actors. In the chaotic environment that emerged for Turkish policy makers, the idea that the PKK and the KRG were not in the same equation was supported by the decision of joint struggle against the PKK in 2006, and Türkiye's official communication with the KRG began. Thus, Türkiye and the KRG have developed cooperation options in the fields of economy and security. While the development of Türkiye's relations with the KRG, such as the Iraqi Turkmen Front, worries Iran; Iran's increasing control over Shiite groups and its ongoing conflict with the USA have led to an increase in regional competition in Iraqi territory.
13. Iran's post-Revolutionary security and foreign policy approach has been a source of uncertainty regarding regional and global crises. Tehran has shown a firm and unbending position against other examples, although in some cases it is more pragmatic. This pendulum-like model makes it difficult to study and predict Iran's response to regional and global problems.
14. The new model proposal, titled Ideo-Pragmatic Model (IPM), is expressed as the model in which the security and foreign policies of ideologically driven authoritarian states such as Iran are best explained. Depending on the nature of the threat to the survival of the state, the country chooses to follow either pragmatic or ideological approaches. The same model can be used to analyze the security and foreign policy approaches of countries such as Cuba, North Korea and Venezuela.







15. The Iranian Protests, reminiscent of the Arab Spring uprisings, turn into an ongoing internal conflict in Iran, which has a critical position in the security equations of the Gulf. Tehran, which created a wide militia network from the "oppressed masses" by using the sectarian fault lines in the region with the support of the people after the 1979 revolution and called the Arab streets to revolt against the Arab administrations, is now facing the nationwide popular movement. While some experts argue that the military/security capacity of the Iranian regime is sufficient to suppress the popular uprising, a detailed analysis of certain internal and external factors reveals the limits of the Tehran administration's pressure power.
16. The spread of the demonstrations throughout Iran, their continuity, the presence of women and young generations at the forefront, the new opposition paradigm, which transcends the ethnic/political division and which is different from the previous protest movements, targets the Regime's ideological foundations and existence. Among other factors, the turning point of the nuclear negotiations and the internal conflicts triggered by the transition to the post-Khamenei era prevent the Regime from taking an active stance against the protesters.
17. Iranian political-military elites who securitizing the protests; claims that the USA, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Kurdish organizations were behind the uprising. Based on this claim, the Revolutionary Guards, which launched a missile attack on Northern Iraq, are signaling that they will launch a ground operation in the region. In addition, some circles close to the regime, targeting Saudi Arabia, accuse Riyadh of "conducting covert operations in the country to destabilize Iran" and demand "response to the Saudis". At this point, it is possible to talk about the effects of the internal turmoil in Iran on the two important countries of the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.
18. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Islamism was reflected in the foreign policies of states and interstate relations as two effects. First effect; is to direct the political powers to implement foreign policies aimed at realizing the Islamic Union. The second effect is to mobilize the political powers against the internal and external enemies that are supposed to be against the Islamic Union. The indirect effect of Islamism on the foreign policies and interstate relations of the states in the same period was to revive the anti-Islamist ideological foreign policy stances. Islamism has stimulated two types of ideological movements. These are supra-nation-state pan-ideologies and national and sub-national identity-based ideologies. The final result, paradoxically, was that Islamism contributed to the realization of the very opposite of the goal it ideally pursued, adding a new dimension to the already existing divisions among Muslims.
19. Newly developed military technologies, on the one hand, require states to act on the basis of innovation-oriented military strategies, on the other hand, they cause a change in the ground of interstate military competition at the global level. States that act with the aim of gaining technological superiority in the military field naturally construct their defense and security policies based on the technologies they acquire. For this reason, developing military technologies have the capacity to directly affect the national security of states. With the change in the dynamics of conflict and the emergence of a new generation war environment, the conventional threat assessment habits of states are changing. In the face of emerging new





generation threats, it becomes impossible for actors who do not have technological competence to maintain the rapidly continuing military competition.

20. The developments in the last ten years, including the pandemic, which have had an equal impact with the developments in the century, have been a critical milestone for the change of production, consumption, growth and conventional power standards, including security and defense. Again, scenarios and preparations for the reinterpretation of the national and international immune system and strategic transformation have become a priority issue. In this context, studies and cooperation with the Gulf Countries for the "Security/Defense/Space Ecosystem and Strategic Transformation of the Future" have become the main balance priority.
21. The sixth of the Türkiye - Gulf Defense and Security Forum, which was institutionalized as a global brand and held in conjunction with the Istanbul Security Conference; it has made a strategic contribution to the healthy management of the parameters of mutual dependency and trust building and to create a common consciousness, and has become a partner in the search for a stronger coexistence in the new architecture.

**04 November 2022, Istanbul**

